

Meeting of Indo-Pak Customs authorities in the Mid of January

Collector Customs Ali Sulman Abbassi has said that a fresh round of talks with Indian Custom Authorities over the issue of cement export to India by trucks is going to be held in the mid of January this year and hopefully the issue would be resolved. He was speaking at the Lahore Chamber of commerce and Industry on Wednesday. LCCI President Irfan Qaiser Sheikh presented customs related proposals that could help give quantum jump to the country's exports. LCCI Senior Vice President Kashif Younis, Vice President Saeeda Nazar, former Presidents Iftikhar Ali Malik, Sheikh Mohammad Asif and Mian Anjum Nisar also spoke on the occasion. The Collector Customs, while agreeing with the LCCI President proposal, said that the sector-specific committees to check under-invoicing should be formed and both the Customs department and the Lahore Chamber need to sit together to finalise its modalities so that the committees could be notified without any further delay. He said that the Customs department was well aware of the fact in after granting the MFN status to India the volume of trade between the two sides would jump manifold and the Wagah would be the largest port in the country five years down the line. Therefore, he added, the private sector should initiate consultation with the NLC that is presently handling all the infrastructure related issues at Wagah. Regarding import-export data sharing, the Collector Customs said that the Customs department is ready to extend all out support to the chambers of commerce in the country in the larger interests of the economy and arrangements would soon be made in this regard. Speaking on the occasion, the LCCI President Irfan Qaiser Sheikh said that there is urgent need to check Under-invoicing in imports as it is severely hurting the local trade and industry. He said that India is constructing a large warehouse facility spanning over an area of 120 acres near Wahga check post at the Pakistani border. This warehouse will facilitate the Indian businessmen in their business with Pakistan. But on Pakistani side there are no matching facilities for facilitation of Pakistani Exporters. Moreover, presently there is no facility to handle shipments in liquid form, at Wahga border. This requires your immediate attention.

He also urged the Collector Customs to provide data of import and export between India and Pakistan, especially through Wahga border on daily basis. This will help us to gauge the quantum of present trade as well as to judge the future impact after liberalization of trade between the two countries.

The LCCI President said that we fail to understand as to why there is a difference in the procedure of valuation being done at Karachi Customs and Lahore Customs in most of the items. It is becoming an important factor in shifting of businesses from Lahore to Karachi. Therefore, we urge you that rule of valuation of imported goods should be same on all the ports of the Country.

He said that many of LCCI members have complained against the undue interrogation and harassment by the Custom Intelligence on the consignments which are duty-paid and cleared from the dry port. We demand that once the consignments are fully cleared by Customs then no further actions and questions should be asked by Customs officials. He suggested that LCCI and Lahore Collectorate should have regular monthly meeting between the stakeholders, which is not being held

since quite a long. This will help to tackle the Customs related issues of the Wahga border. LCCI former Senior Vice Presidents Tahir Javaid Malik, Sh. Muhammad Arshad, former Vice President Irfan Iqbal Sheikh, Nasir Saeed, Ch. Wajid Ali, Fahim-ur-Rehman, Khamis Saeed Butt and Abdul Razzak Babbar also attended the meeting.

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