

‘Formation of separate joint advisory body of customs under study’

Chief Collector Customs Zeba Hayee Azhar has said that formation of a separate joint advisory committee of customs having representatives of Collectorate and Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry is under consideration. While speaking at the Lahore Chamber on Thursday, the chief collector customs said the primary objective of the Collectorate is to facilitate the business community which will not only boost the economic activities but will also help generate more revenue.

She said the checking of documents is their task but nobody is allowed to harass the business community. In case of such an issue, the businessmen can approach the Collectorate, she added. There is a dedicated reforms team for WeBoc system that monitors the issues. She said a team would be sent in case of any specific issue regarding WeBoc system.

She said that a scanner has already been installed at Mughalpura Dry Port where staff tries to clear consignment within 24 hours. The Federal Board of Revenue will be suggested to designate all branches of the National Bank to receive customs duty, she added. Speaking on the occasion, LCCI President Abdul Basit asked the Customs Department to join hands with the business community to accelerate economic activities. He said that undue delay in release of the consignments cause huge financial loss to the importers as they have to bear demurrage and other expenses.

At present custom duty can be paid at few branches of National Bank that causes multiple problems, he said, and suggested that all branches of the National Bank should be allowed to collect customs duty. The LCCI President said though WeBoc system is a good step, still a lot of improvement is required. He said there are limited options to correct errors once information is entered. The Director General Valuation should hold meetings in Lahore to listen the business community's point of view regarding the valuation.

LCCI Senior Vice President Amjad Ali Jawa and Vice President Muhammad Nasir Hameed Khan pointed out that banks are not issuing Form-I for Iran due to lack of banking system between the two countries. They said that post audit recovery notices being served on the importers are unjustified as goods came into the country after appraisalment. They also demanded of the FBR to bring down duties and taxes on smuggling-prone items to get rid of the menace of smuggling.

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