

## Air Freight Unit: proposal to increase working hours sent to FBR

The proposal floated by the customs agents to extend the working hours at the Air Freight Unit (AFU), Karachi, to 24/7 has been forwarded to the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) for approval. Speaking to the Business Recorder, Chairman FPCCI Standing Committee on Customs, Arshad Jamal, said that the Collector Preventive, who did not attend the standing committee meeting on Friday, held a separate meeting with the committee at his office where he informed that the department has forwarded the proposal given by Arshad Jamal and his team to extend the working hours to 24/7 and increase customs workforce at the AFU, Karachi, to the board for approval.

Replying to a question, he said that the committee meeting was attended by the representatives of three terminals - Gerry's Dnata, Shaheen Airport Services and Royal Airport Services where the representatives of Gerry's gave electronic presentation in which they informed the participants that the company had imported automated clearance system.

This system which will be operational within next couple of months is capable not only to scan and arrange all import and export consignments for examination automatically but also manage stacking of cargos for inward and outward movement.

During meeting, the representative informed that Gerry's was ready to extend its working hours from 8x6 to 24x7 but customs was reluctant in this regard, due to inadequate workforce, causing delays in examination and feeding of its reports in the system. They further apprised that the Gerry's was facing shortage of space as its shed was completely destroyed in airport attack and customs department had so far not allocated additional space to the company for its operations.

Therefore, the company has signed an agreement with other Airport services including Shaheen Airport Services and Royal Airport Services to move its cargos in their bonded place to address the issue of space shortage. However, the customs department has neither allocated additional space to the Gerry's nor allowed to move cargos in the sheds of other services, causing problems for the company to provide maximum facilitation to the trade, the representative informed during meeting.

Presently, Gerry's is providing services to nearly 20 airlines operating in Pakistan while rest of the other services has less number of airlines for operations hence the disapproval from customs department to move cargos in the sheds of other services appeared unjustified as the movement of cargos would be done from one bonded area to another, Arshad said. Moreover, he said that the committee unanimously agreed to forward a proposal to the FBR in order to get approval for Gerry's to move cargos in the sheds of other services, if it was needed, and it would definitely facilitate the trade, immensely.

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