

**Conditions imposed on imported items relaxed**

Acceding to the demands of commercial importers, the federal government on Tuesday announced to relax the conditions imposed on imported items, especially FMCG and food products including printing label in Urdu & English till June 30, 2019.

The Ministry of Commerce & Textile (MOC&T) amending the Imports and Exports (Control) Act, 1950 (XXXIX of 1950), has extended the date of printing the labels of all the imported items in Urdu and English till June 30, 2019, instead of earlier order of with immediate effect.

According to the SRO 438 (1)/2019, the government amending the earlier SRO 237 dated February 19, 2019, has said that the new directives will take effect from the 1st of July, 2019.

The fresh SRO also said that the consignments being imported shall have 50% (fifty percent) of the shelf life, calculated from the date of filing of Import General Manifest (IGM) instead of 66 percent (2/3rd) of the shelf life remaining from the date of manufacturing.

Pakistan FMCG Importers Association (PFIA) Chairman Anjum Nisar and Vice Chairman Muhammad Ejaz Tanveer welcomed the new order of the Ministry of Commerce & Textile and urged the government that the SRO 237 should be withdrawn completely instead of making amendments in it as it has created numerous problems for the commercial importers.

They said all items being imported by the commercial importers or FMCG sector are daily use items. These are high quality and hygienic food items which are not luxury goods and these should not be subjected to such treatment. They said the government should declare the earlier issued notification as null and void and facilitate this trade which is contributing millions of rupees in the government exchequer and providing jobs to hundreds of thousands of people directly and indirectly. The PFIA leadership also urged the government that demurrages, port charges and additional charges of shipping line, which importers had to incur due to delay in clearance of containers imported after February 19, 2019 due to SRO 237, should also be waived to save the importers from additional financial burden.

**ZAHID BAIG**