

RECORDER REPORT

**Human intervention to be minimized in trade process:
Shabbar**

KARACHI: Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Chairman Shabbar Zaidi has said that ultimate goal of incumbent government is to minimize human intervention in trade process for ease of doing business and this process has been initiated.

Speaking at the inaugural ceremony of installation of fixed gantry scanners with grant aid from Japan at West Wharf, Shabbar said that whole paradigm of customs and taxation system had now changed and human intervention would be minimized for ease of doing business and for the purpose, the process has been initiated. He also lauded the efforts of Japan to assist Pakistan in this regard.

He said that although Pakistan had been passing through difficult time for last 15 years, the government during last 10 to 15 months was working on economic development, speedy cargo movement, fiscal management and its recovery and added that efforts were being made to curb illicit activities in trade mechanism.

Furthermore, Shabbar said that Pakistan had a glorious past in 70's era and government was working for new future glory of port city; adding that Pakistan was relevant for trade, commerce and travel.

Chairman FBR further said they were looking for logistic affairs for trade and striving to improving trade mechanism and for eliminating unnecessary role of middleman that causing to add inflation and value of goods. He said that government's foremost objectives were logistic, transportation and management of goods for ease of doing business.

Earlier, the government of Japan has extended assistance to Pakistan Customs and FBR for establishment of three new state of the art Kon-Intrusive Inspection Containers Scanning Terminals at East and West Warf in Karachi Port and Port Qasim.

Under the Japanese grant assistance, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) implemented "The Project for Security Improvement in Port Karachi and Port Bin Qasim" amount of JPY 1.877 billion (approximately PKR 2.78 billion Pakistan Rupees)

An inauguration ceremony was held at Karachi whereby Kuninori Matsuda Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan and Syed Muhammad Shabbar Zaidi, Chairman FBR inaugurated newly established Containers Scanning Terminal at East Warf at Karachi Port.

At the handed over ceremony, Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan said Karachi Port and Bin Qasim Port were considered the busiest ports of Pakistan and were greatly contributing to the trade and economic activities of the country.

These ports are not only important for Pakistan's economic prosperity but also have greater significance as international trade ports due to its geographic location. The scanners installed would not only help in detecting illegal trade and smuggling to combat terrorism but would also improve the performance of ports to boost international trade.

He further emphasized the hope that the grant aid from Japan would support the work of Pakistan customs and would further strengthen the existing bond of friendship between the two countries.

Shigeki Furuta, chief representative of JICA Pakistan said that the project would provide adequate technological support to Pakistan Customs to ensure compliance of Security and Facilitation in a Global Environment (SAFE) Framework standard set by World Customs Organization (WCO). He elaborated that the project would improve the ability of Pakistan Customs to detect and deal with high-risk consignments and increase efficiencies by expediting the clearance and release of goods.

Furthermore, the working environment of the custom officers would also improve, who were bound to conduct physical inspections of all inbound and outbound consignments.

Dr Jawwad Uwais Agha Member Customs (Operations) FBR while expressing his gratitude to government of Japan stated that the Non-Intrusive Inspection (NII) functionality imparted by these scanners would enhance trade facilitation by Pakistan Customs and hoped that this cooperation would continue in future as well for other ports in the country.

Under this project, three NII container's scanning terminals have been constructed at East & West Wharf at Karachi Port and Port Bin Qasim, which includes Scanner, terminal building, image scanning & analyzing equipment, waiting room for container's driver, and backup facility for electricity.

Each Scanning terminal have been directly connected with Web Based One Customs (WeBOC) system with scanning capacity of 7-8 containers per hour with total capacity of scanning over 450 containers per day altogether in 20 hours which is the estimated net operation hours under the 24 hours operating conditions. The project also trained 60 officers of Pakistan Customs as Image Scanning Analyst for effective utilization and future sustainability of project.

The Japan funded project will facilitate the increasing volumes of cargo traffic at ports as well as provides essential security to the global supply chain and will contribute to the socio-economic development of Pakistan by generating revenue collection and trade facilitation.

Meanwhile, Arshad Jamal, vice president FPCCI and chairman APCAA, who also attended the ceremony, appreciated the efforts of Japanese government and Pakistan customs for the installation of scanners.

He said that customs department, which was supposed to issue procedure before the ceremony, had so far not issued procedure yet and added that module for scanning should be added in the WeBOC that empowered concerned appraiser or deputy collector to mark the consignment for scanning as like they were marking consignment for examination through system.