

### **Illegal imports of tea, textile and tyres curbed**

ISLAMABAD: The quantum of smuggled goods in to the country decreased during the first five months of the current fiscal year as data reported by the Pakistan Customs showed higher collection of duties and taxes.

Formal imports of five commodities — prone to smuggling — through legal channels increased by over 55 per cent, latest data showed. In Pakistan, illegal trade insquantified through fluctuations in imports of items under the Afghan transit trade and an increasing trend in imports of those items in the comparable period.

The Customs Department has expressed satisfaction over the rise of imports through official channels as it increased tax collection for the national exchequer allowing it to meet the annual revenue collection target.

Official data compiled by the Pakistan Customs showed that the import value of five commodities — green tea, black tea, tyres, textile products and electronic goods — jumped Rs333.566 billion during July-November from Rs214.659bn last year.

Customs duty collection from these commodities also grew 48.5pc to Rs93.739bn in the first five months of current fiscal year from Rs63.109bn last year.

During the period, import value of these products under the Afghan transit trade declined to Rs82.514bn from Rs168.100bn last year, falling by nearly 51pc.

FBR Member Customs (Operations) Tariq Huda told Dawn that the decline in transit trade of smuggle-prone items is the outcome of strict enforcement and border management in coordination with law enforcement agencies. "We struggled on the border as well as in other areas which led to a decline in smuggling", he claimed.

He said that local production of tyres and textiles increased during the period under review. The manufacturing data released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) showed production of most products except motor tyres failed to record positive growth indicating that the demand is being met through imports.

Meanwhile, data on smuggling of petroleum products and auto parts is not available, which are also causing harm to local industries.

The import value of tyres reached to Rs27.310bn in the first five months of current fiscal year from Rs7.376bn over the last year, reflecting an increase of 270pc. In-transit import of tyres fell by 64pc to Rs8.888bn during the period under review as against Rs24.645bn over last year.

However, the formal imports of tea during the period under review also grew 35.4pc to Rs37.679bn as against Rs27.833bn last year. In Afghan transit, import of tea dipped by 65pc to Rs2.25bn as against Rs6.4bn.

The import of green tea under transit trade dropped by 1.3pc in the first five months of the current fiscal year to Rs6.147bn as against Rs7.624bn last year. The regular imports of green tea grew 28pc to Rs1.287bn as against Rs1.004bn over the last year.

However, the import of textile products through regular channels increased by 57.5pc to Rs245.1bn as against Rs155.58bn over the last year. Subsequently, imports of textile products under the Afghan transit trade dropped by 50pc to Rs62.76bn as against Rs125.4bn over the last year.

Moreover, imports of electronic goods under the Afghan transit trade declined by 39.4pc to Rs2.456bn as against Rs4.05bn over the last year. No tangible growth was reported in imports of electronic goods on regular channels during the period under review.