

**Trading across Border Index: Pakistan improves 31 positions on rank**

ISLAMABAD: In a major achievement towards ensuring ease of doing business, Pakistan has improved 31 positions (from 142<sup>nd</sup> to 111<sup>th</sup>) on the rank of Trading across Border Index, said a press release.

The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) made trading across borders easier by focusing three crucial areas: enhancing the integration of various agencies in the Web-Based One Customs (WEBOC) electronic system; reducing the number of documents required for import/export clearances; enhancing capacities of Pakistan Customs officials for playing a pro-active role in smoothly regulating border trade.

Climbing up the ladder in Trading Across Border Index has enabled Pakistan in jumping up 28 places – from 136<sup>th</sup> to 108<sup>th</sup> – in World Bank (WB)'s "Ease of Doing Business 2020" and securing a place among the top 10 countries have done the most in the corresponding/past year to improve the ease of doing business in their countries.

This milestone has led Pakistan to be the sixth global reformer and first in South Asia that has brought ease in doing business for the national/international trade.

Border facilitation is among the top priority areas as per the comprehensive policy laid down by the government.

Concerted efforts by Pakistan Customs, under the FBR, led to impressive performance in terms of compliance to the provisions of the World Trade Organization (WTO)'s Trade Facilitation Agreement; hence, complementing Pakistan's rise in Trading Across Border Index.

The Pakistan Customs has pursued implementation of effective customs controls, so that compliant trade is thoroughly facilitated, while lesser/non-compliant trade is diverted to detailed scrutiny. This strategy worked well, as conceived by Pakistan Customs, and has gone a long way in reducing the dwell time (at the borders/ports) for imports/exports in Pakistan by increasing the percentage of clearances through Green Channel.

For instance, the time required for documentary compliance to effect exports has been reduced from 55 hours to 24 hours, and the time required for overall border compliance to effect exports has also been reduced from 75 hours to 24 hours.—PR