

APCAA urges shipping agents to stop collecting hidden charges

KARACHI: All Pakistan Customs Agents Association (APCAA) has demanded terminal operators and shipping agents to stop collecting hidden charges from the traders.

The demand was raised by a delegation of APCAA headed by its acting chairman Arshad Jamal during meeting with the management of Karachi International Containers Terminal (KICT) on the other day.

During meeting, Arshad expressed resentment over unnecessary charges being collected by shipping agents and terminal operators from trade and added that APCAA would take up this issue at all relevant forums to resolve the same through meaningful dialogues.

He also apprised the KICT management about hidden heads of charges, I e, terminal service charges, fuel adjustment charges, data transfer charges and scanner infra-structure cess which he termed unjustified as the same were against the agreed terms with monitoring authority or trade organization.

The delegation has also submitted a comparative report on the charges being collected by shipping and terminals in Pakistan with Singapore, Dubai and India which established that shipping agents and terminals in Pakistan were charging highest rates with insufficient facilities.

Arshad said that trade was keen to pay against all expenditures but on real cost as per international standards. He, however, said that in Pakistan shipping agents and terminals were charging double handling fees along with other hidden charges.

He said that terminals were bound to collect charges on those services where the customs or any other agency rendered its services on behalf of traders like inspection, examination, weight, scanning or any other service along with demurrage and detention charges but these charges had to be fixed in consultation with the trade and customs.

If terminals are charging terminal handling charges (THC) from shipping agents then why they are collecting terminal service charges from traders, he questioned.

Furthermore, Arshad also cited that terminal was charging USD 7.00 on every import and export containers as scanner Infra Structure Cess without giving such service to trade for last 10 years and asked the terminal to disclose what amount being charged from shipping agents and what was the maintenance cost of scanners and its infrastructure.

Later, KICT management said that they were providing best 24x7 services to the trade and all these arrangements were not free of cost.

While admitting to collect charges from shipping agents, the KICT management appeared reluctant to disclose the amount and the maintenance cost of scanners and its infrastructure.

Furthermore, they said that terminals were issuing invoices with head of charges as per tariffs and no objection was raised on it so far and added that they had scanner facilities but the customs authority was not acquiring it due to high ratio of containers examination.

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