

500 more products Customs decides to expand ambit of self-clearance

KARACHI: The customs department decides to expand the restriction of self-clearance on 500 more products falling under 15 tariff lines by January 20, 2019.

According to details, the customs department has expanded the ambit of self-clearance restriction on 500 more products falling under 15 tariff lines and its implementation will be effective from January 20, 2019.

The public notice issued by Appraisement South said the commercial importers of multiple consumer products consignments, imported against a single index, in a mix of 3 or more items, falling under public notice 1 of 2017 will also be required to file goods declaration for the clearance of goods only through a customs agent, licensed under section 207 of the Customs Act, 1969.

The notice further stated that the goods declaration would be cancelled in case of violation of said directives besides other punitive action under the relevant provision of the Customs Act 1969 would be taken against commercial importers and clearing agents.

Customs sources are of the view that this decision would help the authority curbing Hawala-Hundi and other malpractices besides reducing trade deficit, which is one of the major concerns of the incumbent government.

Moreover, they said that from January 20, 2019, it would be mandatory for commercial importers of aforesaid products to file GDs through customs agents and in case of any violation, action would be taken against both importers and clearing agent.

They said that in past, the self-clearance was promoted under FBR reforms to ensure maximum facilitation for trade but after its misuse, the customs department has firstly imposed restriction on self-clearance in 2017 and now the same is going to be expanded on 500 more products from January 20,, 2019.

Replying to a question, they said this facility was mostly being misused for money laundering and now this measure would help the customs department to curb this illicit activity and ensure documentation.

On the other hand, customs clearing agents have expressed resentment over the said decision, saying that the customs department instead of removing system flaws took such measures, which would not only create more problems but also remain unable to yield desired results.

MUHAMMAD ALI