

A two-day All Chief Commissioners' Conference on Customs matters organised by CGST, Central Excise and Customs, Bhopal Zone

Transformative role of AI and other technology in Customs functioning highlighted

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The Central Goods and Services Tax (CGST), Central Excise and Customs, Bhopal Zone, organised an All Chief Commissioners' Conference on Customs matters at Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh on 15-16 February, 2024. Shri Sanjay Kumar Agarwal, Chairman, Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC), presided over Chief Commissioners Conference.

The conference was attended by Shri Surjit Bhujabal, Member (Customs); Smt Aruna Narayan Gupta, Member (IT & Taxpayer Services); Pr. DG, DRI, Shri Mohan Kumar Singh; Pr. Chief /Chief Commissioners of Customs Zones and Pr. DG/DGs of Directorates of CBIC; officers from CBIC and other departments including Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) ; Food Safety Standard Authority of India (FSSAI) ; Central Drugs Control Organisation (CDSCO) ; Wildlife Control Crime Bureau (WCCB) ; GST Network (GSTN); and Plant Quarantine etc.

This conference provided a platform for discussion and analysis of Customs functioning and further requirements of business process simplification, automation, infrastructure towards the India's vision of 2047. The Indian Customs is involved in collection of approx. Rs. 2.13 lakh crore in FY 2022-23 (apart from IGST duties on import) and seizure of contraband goods of value of more than Rs. 6,000 crore and discharges critical border control functions.

In his keynote address, CBIC Chairman highlighted the need for standardisation of processes and to adopt the way of 'Reform, Perform, Transform' in all our activities to achieve efficiency.



In his address, Member (Customs) highlighted the key initiatives taken by the Customs and the need to take steps to align with the changing trade scenarios and global developments. DG, DRI, emphasised on the essentiality of intelligence in trade facilitation and for economic and environmental security.

The theme of the first day of conference centered around 'Enhancing Customs Efficiency' involving sessions on performance improvement, customs clearance processes, smart infrastructure requirements of Customs and Human Resources related issues.

The Customs is manning around 320 Ports, which includes 33 International Airports/Air Cargo Complex, 63 Seaports, 126 ICDs, 11 International Railway stations and 28 Foreign Post Office (FPO). It also processes more than 1.30 crore of declarations in a year and may exponentially increase in the coming years. Through the use of risk-based clearance process, more than 82%, import consignments get expedited clearance which reduce dwell time and cost for EXIM stakeholders. The matters deliberated includes digitisation of remote Land Customs Stations (LCS), the use of modern equipment, functioning of K9 units (Dog Squad), Track and Trace Units in Customs for enhancing efficiency. The appropriate changes in Human Resources and upskilling to complement the same was also felt during the discussions.

Day two of the conference centered around 'Ease of Compliance' in Customs functions which included sessions on Technology, Customs engagement with different Government Departments, process simplification for the Trade etc. The matters discussed include use of AI and other technology needs in customs functioning and have transformative approach in Customs automation. The issues related to process standardisation, improved grievance redressal and logistics improvements which can support the trade facilitation were also discussed.



CBIC Chairman acknowledged and appreciated the work done by the Indian Customs across the country and further suggested the need to scope for upgradation in infrastructure.

In his valedictory address, CBIC Chairman congratulated the Bhopal Zone for organising the conference where various technical matters, valuation and classification anomalies, enabling new technology and AI for fast delivery of services, supply chain and utilisation of potential of officers and upgradation of Infrastructure and skills of staff were deliberated upon.



CBIC Chairman also thanked all the participants for attending the conference and offering their suggestions. Member Customs indicated the need for adopting innovative approaches and leveraging the talent pool of young minds to find solutions.

Member (IT) emphasised the seamless linkage between processes and technology for enhanced trade facilitation. At the end, Shri C.P. Goyal, Chief Commissioner, Bhopal, thanked all the participants for attending the conference and making it a success.

Earlier, Shri Chandra Prakash Goyal, Chief Commissioner, Bhopal Zone, welcomed all the dignitaries and participants of the two-day conference.



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