

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
FINANCE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:741
ANSWERED ON:27.02.2015
CUSTOMS CLEARANCES
Joshi Shri Pralhad Venkatesh

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government/Central Board of Excise and Customs (CBEC) has asked some agencies including food safety and standards authority of India, plant protection quarantine and storage department, animal quarantine department and drug controller of India to benchmark their infrastructure and manpower required for round-the clock operations at various ports in order to bring down the dwell time;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether these organizations have complied with Government's instruction to avoid further delay in customs clearances at ports;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (e) the corrective steps taken by the CBEC/Government in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JAYANT SINHA)

(a) & (b) : Yes Madam. Agencies such as food safety and standards authority of India, plant protection quarantine and storage department, animal quarantine department and drug controller of India were asked to do an internal assessment including relocation and redeployment of staff for facilitating round the clock clearance at various ports.

(c) , (d) & (e) :

(i) The Drug Controller of India has issued directions on 16.12.2014 to the port offices under their jurisdiction at sea and airports to function on 24x7 basis with effect from 15.01.2015.

(ii) Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has operationalised the online Food Import Clearance System (FICS) in phased manner at 5 major locations namely Chennai, Kolkata, Mumbai, New Delhi and Cochin which can be accessed 24x7 by all the users. FSSAI has already implemented 24x7 import clearance operations at Delhi airport and at Nhava Sheva port, Mumbai on 20.10.2014.

(iii) Directorate of Plant Protection, Quarantine and Storage, in compliance of instructions, is making all efforts to avoid delay in clearance at ports notified as entry points. 24x7 plant quarantine clearance activities are carried out at Delhi, Kolkata and Mumbai airports while services at air cargo Chennai are being provided as and when required. Further, plant quarantine work is attended until late evening at Trivandrum, Bangalore, Cochin and Calicut airports, as and when required.

(iv) As regards animal quarantine, imports of livestock and livestock products are allowed only through six designated ports i.e. Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Hyderabad and Bangalore. The imported consignments of live animals are cleared by quarantine officers at these ports on 24x7 basis.