

PRESS RELEASE

Customs Duty Collections from the State of Punjab in 2013-14 are Rs.867.86 crores.

The Customs Commissioner at Amritsar, having jurisdiction over the states of Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Union Territory of Chandigarh, in a press conference today highlighted the performance in Customs duty collections and anti-smuggling functions for the **just concluded financial year 2013-14.**

2. It was informed by the Customs Commissioner, Sunil Sawhney, that the Dry Ports at Ludhiana, Dappar & Jalandhar and ICP Attari and Rail Cargo, Amritsar from where the cross-border trade between India and Pakistan takes place, are the major Customs revenue stations in Punjab. The cross-border trade between India and China, which is essentially barter trade, takes place from Shipki La in Himachal Pradesh.

3. Giving the details of the collections of Customs duties in the **financial year 2013-14**, it was informed by the Customs Commissioner that the revenue collections from the various ICDs in Punjab, mainly at Ludhiana, **were Rs.757.80 crores**, and **ICP Attari Rs.119.32 crores**, respectively and **aggregated Rs.867.86 crores**, after granting duty drawback of Rs.290 crores on exports.

4. The major items of import are Heavy Melting Scrap (HMS), Cement, Fibres & Yarns, Gypsum, Rock Salt, Chemicals, etc. The HMS and Cement constitutes bulk of the revenue collections in this Commissionerate.

5. It was further informed by the Customs Commissioner that consequent to his taking over in the end of December, 2013, a **number of trade facilitation measures for promoting the import and export trade** at the various Land Customs Stations have been taken, including constituting the **Permanent Trade Facilitation Standing Committee**, which comprises of the members of Trade and Industry Associations and other stake holders, i.e., Custodians and Customs Brokers **to resolve the procedural bottlenecks for cutting down the transaction costs** of importers and exporters. **Electronic Data Interface (EDI) has been commissioned at ICP Attari**, very recently to do away with the manual processing of the Customs formalities which will reduce the dwell time of cargo. The EDI has been started for exports and shall be introduced for imports by the May end. **On account of these trade**

facilitation measures, the revenue collections in January to March, 2014 have been higher by about 9% over the revenue collections in January to March, 2013, as against the Revised Estimate of 6% in the last quarter of the financial year, fixed by the Ministry, after passing the Vote of Account by the Parliament.

6. Besides the endeavour of the Customs Commissionerate to provide hassle-free Customs Administration to the importers and exporters, the Department has also stepped up its anti-smuggling functions at Attari Railway station, Sri Guru Ram Dass Ji International Airport and other formations to prevent smuggling of contraband. Similarly, the commercial frauds in imports and exports have also been acted against.

7. In order to beef up the anti-smuggling functions, an Air Intelligence Unit at the Airport and Rail Intelligence Unit at the Attari Railway Station were set up in January, 2014. On account of this measure, gold valued at Rs.3.91 crores concealed by passengers coming from Dubai was seized at the Airport and heroin at Attari Railway Station valued at Rs.374 crores was seized in 2013-14, which was found concealed in the Goods Train and Samjhauta Express passenger train coming from Pakistan during rummaging of these trains by the Customs officials. Further, Arms & ammunition, found concealed in the baggage of the passengers coming by train from Pakistan and also concealed in the Goods Train, were seized in 2013-14.

8. The details of major seizures of Gold, Heroin and Arms & Ammunition and commercial frauds detected in 2013-14 are as under:-

Sl. No.	Item	Quantity	Value (Rs. In crore)
1	Gold	13.485 kgs	3.91
2	Heroin	74.672	374.05
3	Arms & Ammunition	14 Pistols, 28 Magazines, 56 Live Cartridges	0.12
4	Commercial Frauds		9.18
5.	Other Misc. Goods, Red Sander Wood	24.270 MTs	2.39

ROAD MAP FOR 2014-15

9. Laying down the Road-Map for 2014-15, the Customs Commissioner informed that trade facilitation for genuine importers and exporters would continue to remain priority, particularly in the context of expected 24x7 functioning of ICP Attari, for the cross-border trade between India and Pakistan. For this purpose, the additional manpower and other resources, which would be required, has already been projected to the concerned authorities.

10. Further to prevent smuggling of contraband by concealment in the Goods Train and Samjhauta Express, joint rummaging of the trains alongwith Railways and Police authorities has been proposed to the Ministry of Finance for approval. At the International Airport, there is no banking facility available causing inconvenience to the passengers arriving from other countries for the conversion of their foreign exchange and for payment of Customs duties for which the matter has been taken up with the Department of Financial Services in Ministry of Finance for starting a bank counter within the Airport premises.

11. As the import export trade at ICP Attari is expected on 24x7 basis, the availability of the banking facility on Sundays and other holidays at ICP Attari is also being taken up with the Ministry.

12. It is also proposed to put up a 'Customs Photo Gallery' at the Attari Road Customs office for providing a snapshot of the rich legacy of Customs to the general public when they come to witness the retreat ceremony of the B.S.F.

13. The Customs Commissioner thanked the import and export community in general, for their compliance levels but also cautioned the deviant elements of taking deterrent actions against them for their recalcitrant behaviour.

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(SUNIL SAWHNEY)

COMMISSIONER CUSTOMS

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