

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

Dated: 30.04.2018(Monday)

E-Paper

Commerce ministry asks FSSAI, customs to cut import clearance time of food cargoes

NEW DELHI: The commerce ministry has asked FSSAI and customs authorities to clear import consignments of food products in about 48 hours at ports with a view to promote ease of doing business at trade front.

Currently, it takes as many as five to eight days to get import clearance for a food consignment, a government official said.

The move would help India improve its ranking in Trading Across Borders, one of the ten parameters of ease of doing business.

India ranked 146th in Trading Across Borders component, out of 190 countries ranked by the World Bank in its latest report.

The official said Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) was also advised to carry out clearances under the risk management system.

Under this system, import customs clearance procedure is carried out randomly as scrutinising every paper and checking all the consignments increase logistics cost of traders.

"We have asked FSSAI to give clearances in a shorter time as food items are perishable in nature. The time should be reduced to about two days," the official added.

The move assumes significance as the Prime Minister's Office has directed the ministry to take immediate steps on streamlining procedures for trade with a view to facilitate movement of goods across borders and improve India's ranking in ease of doing business.

When contacted on the matter, FSSAI CEO Pawan Kumar Agarwal said:"Food import clearance is being streamlined".

FSSAI IN NEWS

Although the government has reduced the number of mandatory documents required for import and export of goods to three in each case, it takes time to get approval.

As per the World Bank report on ease of doing business, India's ranking has improved to 100th from 130th.