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FINANCE MINISTER ASKS CUSTOMS ADMINISTRATION TO FUNCTION ON PRINCIPLES OF TRANSPARENCY, PREDICTABILITY, STRONG LEGAL PROCESSES AND PRODUCTIVE USE OF IT TO SERVE STAKEHOLDERS EFFICIENTLY AND TO ENHANCE COMPETITIVENESS OF INDIAN BUSINESS

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The Union Finance Minister Shri Pranab Mukherjee said that the modern customs administration should function on the principles of transparency, predictability, strong legal processes and productive use of information technology to serve the stake holders efficiently and to enhance the competitiveness of Indian business. The Finance Minister, Shri Mukherjee was addressing the retired and serving officers of Customs and Central Excise, representatives of trade and industry and senior officers of the Ministry of Finance at a function organized, here today to celebrate “50 years of the Customs Act 1962”. The Finance Minister Shri Mukherjee asked the Customs and Central Excise department to further enhance its efficiency and deliver on all fronts with a focus on certain strategic objectives including increasing competitiveness of Indian business by use of modern Customs operating methods and facilitating legitimate trade by improving Customs control systems and reducing administrative burden. Other present on the occasion include Minister of State for Finance Shri Namo Narain Meena, Finance Secretary Shri R.S. Gujral, Chairman, CBEC, Shri S.K. Goel, Shri M.G. Abrol, Former Chairman, CBEC and Shri Pawan Munjal, MD & CEO Hero Moto Corp Limited among others.

The Finance Minister, Shri Mukherjee asked the Customs department to enhance protection of the society against safety and security risks by developing effective risk management methods and ensuring protection of financial interests of the country. Shri Mukherjee asked them to enhance cooperation with Customs administration, Governmental agencies and with the business aiming at improved business compliance. The Finance Minister Shri Mukherjee said that it is important that capacities of officers are enhanced by focused training both in domain expertise and in leadership and management skills. He said that the Customs department has to continuously focus on enhancing its capacities for development of human resources, building infrastructure for harnessing the benefits of automation and other relevant technologies. The Finance Minister said that the department should aim to adopt best global facilities that facilitate trade and business communities. Shri Mukherjee said that the initiatives taken by the department should result in greater certainty for business and provide for more effective tax dispute resolution mechanisms to enable legitimate businesses to plan and conduct their activities in a smooth and predictable manner.

The Finance Minister Shri Pranab Mukherjee said that there has to be an environment of trust and continuous dialogue between the Customs and the trade. He said that as active and responsible partner in this relationship, business has also an important role in providing timely and accurate information, voluntary

compliance and integrity. The Finance Minister Shri Mukherjee said that he believes that partnership between the taxpayers and the taxmen is the best path for the progress of trade and industry as well as the prosperity of the nation.

The Finance Minister Shri Pranab Mukherjee said that he is confident that the officers and staff of Indian Customs will continue to strive hard to fulfill the onerous responsibility cast on them and rise to the occasion to meet the future challenges. He congratulated them for the services they have rendered over the years and hoped that they will continue to do so in the future as well.

Later, the Finance Minister Shri Pranab Mukherjee released the calendar to commemorate the Heritage of Customs. He also released on this occasion a Customs Manual and an On Site Post Clearance Audit (OSPCA) Training Manual. Later, the Finance Minister presented WCO certificates of Merit to the officers of the department and trade representatives.

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