



PRESS RELEASE

PAKISTAN AFGHANISTAN JOINT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

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PAJCCI lauded across the border for facilitating resolution of delayed clearance of containers and trucks

The continuous efforts of PAJCCI across the border ultimately realized in clarifying back log of trucks and containers alongside Torkham border, which was intermittently pending since eight months. This unlawful detention not only devastated trust but has led to a shortage of containers and trucks in Pakistan leading to exorbitant rates imposed by shipping lines and bonded carriers along with the applicable detention charges, which is also accumulated on a daily basis on every container, raising the costs of business enormously.

In this regard, Chairman PAJCCI's letter to H.E. Ashraf Ghani, President Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, received overwhelming response and immediate intervention was initiated at the Afghan side. To complement the efforts at Pakistan side, Zubair Motiwala led a delegation comprising private stakeholders from both the sides and met the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Commerce, Ambassador Afghanistan and Directorate of Transit Trade for immediate resolution of the matter for good.

Ahmad Shah, Director PAJCCI – Afghanistan, mentioned that in lieu of letter by Chairman PAJCCI to H.E. President of Afghanistan, an immediate delegation was sent to the border for identifying the hurdles and an instruction to keep the border at Afghan side open for 24 hours, however, urged Pakistan side to expedite the matter. Faiz Muhammad, Former VP PAJCCI, specified that the stranded containers were more than 7000 in December out of which mostly re-routed through Iran causing immense business loss. DG Transit Trade, Dr. Sarfaraz Waraich assured that Pakistan side has also decided to keep border open till midnight and as per intervention of PAJCCI, all delayed containers were released by this Sunday.

President PAJCCI, Javed Bilwani, insisted that for future these matters be auto-resolved by implementing a prompt system of diagnosing operational issues that hamper the movements across the border by introducing real-time system showing the exact status. The system should also have “flag alarm” that instigates stuck containers at either side of the border.

Motiwala commented that this system must also show status categorically indicating Transit Forward / Reverse Consignment, Empty containers, Import / Export etc. and this data must be

shared with PAJCCI on real-time basis for quick analysis and dissemination accordingly. DG Transit Trade assured the same and in the meanwhile allocated three people each from Karachi, Torkham and Quetta to coordinate on continuous basis with Secretary General PAJCCI in this context. Secretary General PAJCCI, Faiza Zubair, also requested a waiver or relaxation in terms of detention charges for these trucks and containers as this issue was not under their control. She also highlighted the dire need of infrastructure development at both Torkham and Chaman border for timely release.

Chairman PAJCCI strongly urged both the governments to segregate business and trade ties from political tensions, and allow economics to function freely and help politics rather than politics obstruct the free flow of economic activities and believed that both the Governments would keenly follow-up the matter and would develop measures of a long term nature, for ensuring overall economic stability in the region.

Motiwala highlighted that Afghanistan is only country with which Pakistan enjoys a trade surplus and at this point of grave economic crises, the lost business with Afghanistan can bring fruitful results. He iterated that actual trade quantum is \$5 billion, with a potential to reach \$10 billion, but due to negligence and trust deficit it is stuck at \$1.7 billion.

Acknowledging the dire need of an immediate solution to matters in hand, Razak Dawood, Adviser to Prime Minister for Commerce, Textile, Industry, Production and Investment, ensured his commitment on behalf of the Government. In order to expedite the process, he entrusted Chairman PAJCCI to take the initiative of visiting H.E. Ashraf Ghani and deliberate on economic matters of significant importance, for paving the way forward on behalf of the Government. Subsequently, Ambassador Afghanistan, H.E. Shukrullah Atif also asked Chairman PAJCCI to formulate a hi-level delegation of private stakeholders to visit Afghanistan for joint investments, joint ventures and also to deliberate matter of economic significance with H.E. President Afghanistan.

PAJCCI was significantly acclaimed for its efforts recently in a hi-level press conference in Jalalabad and Governor, Customs, Transport and Trade Unions extended their gratitude for getting the issue resolved and exposing the matter at higher level.

