



PRESS RELEASE

PAKISTAN AFGHANISTAN JOINT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

Tel No: 021-99332675-6, Fax: 021-99332677, Email: info@pajcci.com

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PAJCCI's business delegation from Afghanistan arrived to attend 8th focus group discussion in Islamabad targeting resolution of pending issues for strengthening confidence building across the border

Chairman PAJCCI while deliberating on the progress report of PAJCCI's last quarter emphasized on the significance of conducting *Series of Stakeholders and Committee meetings*, whereby concerns are gathered across the border on real time basis and presented to relevant authorities for resolution. He also lauded support of Government departments engaged in rigorous discussions with PAJCCI and facilitated resolution of several issues tabled during the interactions promptly.

To further the cause, PAJCCI is organizing 8th Focus Group Discussion in Islamabad on November 10, 2021 involving private stakeholders from Pakistan and Afghanistan and public sector representatives from Pakistan. The Afghan business delegation led by Khan Jan Alokozai, Co-Chairman PAJCCI, arrived today via Torkham to attend this significant forum.

For the first time after new regime in Afghanistan, the delegation visited last month also to attend meetings arranged by PAJCCI and this follow up visit is significantly vital to help resolve remaining issues.

Zubair Motiwala informed that during the quarter a lot of issues related to revolving insurance guarantee, movement of perishable goods on priority, extension in deadlines by State Bank of Pakistan for applying new regulations, allowing trade with Afghanistan in PKR, Chaman border opening, extension of on-arrival visas to Afghan businessmen, allowing movement of empty containers via other border crossings to avoid congestion at Torkham, allowing Afghan registered vehicles to move till Bannu / Peshawar, abolishing sales tax on fresh fruits / vegetables from Afghanistan and assuring reduction in physical examination, easing pedestrians movement especially of students and patients, have been resolved and added to relief across the border.

He shed light on issues that will be taken up in this meeting so that plausible solutions can be discussed accordingly. The most important being that APTTA and PTA must be finalized by engaging PAJCCI on behalf of business community across the border. He specified that a draft proposal after stakeholders' feedback has been prepared and also submitted to both the Governments in this regard. He urged Afghan Government to facilitate Pakistani businesses while accessing CIS countries with security and preferential treatment be given to Pakistani goods in Afghanistan by revisiting their tariffs. The investment policies should be facilitating at both the sides for joint economic growth. He added that issues like scanning

delays, lack of basic infrastructure at border like electricity, internet connectivity, banking facilitation and issues faced by NLC mainly due to delays and increase in charges, undue / illegal charges at multiple checkpoints, must be sorted on urgent basis to enhance confidence amongst the stakeholders.

Alokozai upon arrival at Torkham appreciated PAJCCI Pakistan side, customs and FC for ensuring their smooth arrival. He highlighted the fact that it's the right time to revive the trade, economic and people to people relationship with Afghanistan, capitalize on the most happening time of our history, and turn around this crisis to positive rebuilding of ties between two brotherly nations. Both sides of Businessmen community must project, protect and promote each other in their countries and become ambassadors of each other. Alokozai lauded Member Customs, Mr. Tariq Huda for immense facilitation and urged that both Governments must ensure finalization of APTTA this time for greater benefit. He also mentioned that group of Afghan Government officials are also visiting on 10th and PAJCCI is part of Government to Government deliberations, the proposals prepared by both sides are also presented to them to represent business sentiments across the border.

Motiwala welcomed the delegation and urged both the Governments to facilitate PAJCCI in its efforts to fully realize the potential of USD 5bn trade between two countries in next two years.

