



## PRESS RELEASE

PAKISTAN AFGHANISTAN JOINT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

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### **PAJCCI urges facilitation at Ghulam Khan and Kharlachi borders for strong Pak-Afghan economic bond**

Upon successful completion of PAJCCI's 8<sup>th</sup> focus group discussion at Islamabad on November 10, the visits as part of series of Stakeholders and Committee Meeting were planned for North Waziristan. The two border crossings, Ghulam Khan and Kharlachi are very instrumental especially for bilateral trade however infrastructure challenges needed immediate attention.

PAJCCI met clearing agents, traders, customs, NLC and National Bank representatives at Ghulam Khan border. The participants unanimously put forth security concerns to be more vital and emphasized that even though situation is better now but it needs to be further smoothen for enhanced trade and connectivity. The role of PTCL in ensuring internet connectivity is lauded however it was urged to have some alternate mechanism as Torkham so as to ensure uninterrupted connectivity. In PAJCCI's last meeting in October issue related to internet connection at customs was raised which has been addressed and appreciated by traders and clearing agents.

Recent notification of allowing Afghan registered vehicles to Bannu/Peshawar was well received however traders mentioned that Customs and NLC clear the consignments but FC is still not allowing this movement which makes this facility untapped. They registered that previously also it was allowed till Miranshah which did not happen since a year because of FC permission. They established that policies if not implemented do not reap any benefits rather affect the credibility. It was also urged that like Torkham and Chaman where permanent road passes are issued by Embassy to transporters, Ghulam Khan and Kharlachi should also be given these as currently they are working on temporary ones and due to their access to Embassy in Kabul most of them are expired. Custom representative suggested that embassy can have their desks at border to renew the road passes saving transporters from this issue and will make process faster.

President North Waziristan Chamber, Haji Qadeerullah, emphasized that trade quantum can be significantly increased from this side and congestion and Torkham can be dealt with easily if basic problems are resolved on urgent basis. He appreciated PAJCCI and role of Chairman

Zubair Motiwala for providing them this platform for registering their concerns and making joint efforts for resolution of the matters at hand.

At the moment pedestrians are not allowed through these crossings, hence it was urged that it should be allowed as both sides are finding it very difficult to connect. Keeping humanitarian crisis and liquidity crunch in Afghanistan, participants also requested to ease the process of payments across the border. The transporters are not allowed to carry more than Pkr 10000 which is not even enough to replenish the fuel, additionally no co-driver is allowed which causing lots of accidents is keeping in view the difficult travelling terrain where support is needed. It was jointly requested to extend the cash limit and allow a co-driver.

Secretary General PAJCCI, Faiza, shared the quarterly progress report of PAJCCI in bringing genuine issues to light and facilitate solutions, coordination and communication with government institutions, Parliamentary group and related forums. She informed the house that PAJCCI has conducted 15 meetings so far and has been instrumental in developing Government to Government relationship. It was noticed that several notifications issued recently either reaches late or are not communicated at the right time, which reduced the impact of implementation.

The forum stated that such meetings be conducted frequently so that their issues can reach right entities. The meeting was also attended by Major Shahnawaz Khan, Manager Operations NLC, Hammad Kazmi, President Kurram Chamber, Humayun Wazir, Custom Agents Association, Raja Asjad, Inspector Pak Customs, Haider Khan, President Clearing Agents and other traders and custom / clearing agents.

