



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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Trading Border between Swat Pakistan and Afghanistan must be opened for realizing full trade potential: PAJCCI

In continuation to PAJCCI's stakeholders meeting, the recent being held in Swat to explore mutual opportunities and deliberate upon issues of critical concern. This meeting is part of PAJCCI's commitment to connect all chambers with Afghanistan business community and to strengthen B2B relationship between Pakistan & Afghanistan.

President Swat Chamber Adnan Ali appreciated the efforts to involve all regional Chambers and remarked that PAJCCI's facilitation will go a long way in providing economic opportunities in the region and established that trading with immediate neighbors is efficient and profitable for both sides.

Zia Sarhadi; VP PAJCCI led the delegation including Shuja Muhammad; Director & Ajmal Safi; Director from Afghan Chapter. He said that Swat holds very close ties with Afghanistan, has strong business network which remained sustainable in every era and will serve as a strong platform to built long term regional trade corridor.

Faiza Zubair; Secretary General PAJCCI apprised the house regarding PAJCCI's activities, efforts and achievements over the past few months. She informed about recent visit of Afghan business community delegation, PAJCCI's efforts in increasing PKR trading items, reduction in duties, engaging the Parliamentarians, presenting reports to Speaker NA and MOC Standing committee of Senate, suspension of EIF and E form and other ongoing measures to facilitate business community, budget proposal to rationalize tariff and recent meeting with SBP.

Participants informed that they had imported corn/corn husk recently via Torkham as nearest border from Swat is closed but due to unnecessary scanning and delayed clearance; by the time goods reached Swat, season had already ended and caused huge loss to traders. They hugely criticised role of NLC and lack of facilitation from their end. They also demanded that SBP must implement business friendly policies especially in context of Afghanistan as there are no banking channel operations and it is a huge market for Pakistan.

Swat business community showed huge interest in importing minerals, lithium, soap stone and raw material for furniture which was a high revenue product before the closure of nearest border crossing.

In addition, there is a huge potential to trade in cosmetics, iron scrap and raw material for crafted furniture.

Swat has been a traditional trade partner of Afghanistan and was using Bajur border for bilateral trade which was closed after August 2021 due to regime change in Afghanistan. There are four border points connecting Swat and Afghanistan however “Nawapass” border crossing has infrastructure on both sides and GOP must take measures to open it at the earliest possible instance. This will ensure additional trading post to boost exports & contribute towards revenue for both countries. At present Swat traders have to pass through Torkham border which is already congested due to multiple reasons, increases cost of business because of distance and hampers the seasonal trading activities.

They also showed interest to invest in Afghanistan whereby PAJCCI offered to facilitate and arrange business community visit to Afghanistan for exploring investment and joint venture opportunities.

Zubair Motiwala, Chairman PAJCCI reiterated PAJCCI’s vision to work towards socio-economic uplift of the region and will make all efforts in facilitating business community of both sides. HE urged that EIF and E form should be discontinued further till alternate mechanism is in place. He highlighted that in past, Bajaur served as gateway for Swat to Afghanistan and it has helped both sides in conducting bilateral transactions effectively however current uncertainty and difficulty in payment processing across the border is gravely affecting the quantum of business and should be taken up seriously.

The meeting was attended by members of business community, office bearers of Swat Chamber, Deputy Director TDAP Swat Noman Bashir & EO TDAP Swat Fazal Wadood.

