



PRESS RELEASE

PAKISTAN AFGHANISTAN JOINT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

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PAJCCI lauds special efforts of H.E. M. Ishaq Dar, Finance Minister in ensuring opening of Pakistan – Afghanistan border: Zubair Motiwala

A joint delegation from Pakistan and Afghanistan under the leadership of Zubair Motiwala, Chairman PAJCCI, met under the aegis of Beyond Boundaries- A CRSS led project to discuss difficulties arising out of the abrupt closure of Pakistan-Afghanistan border.

Motiwala also had frequent discussions with H.E. Ishaq Dar, Finance Minister and on his persistent pursuance, on behalf of the Government of Pakistan, the borders were opened for economic occupations and other passengers.

The delegation during their visit also met Federal Minister for Trade and Commerce - H.E. Khurram Dastagir Khan, National Security Advisor - Lt. Gen (retd) Nasir Janjua, Ambassador Afghanistan in Pakistan - H.E. Mr. Omar Zakhilwal, Chairman Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Assembly of Pakistan - Mr. Awais Leghari, Chairman Pak-Afghan Parliamentary Friendship Group - Mr. Aftab Sherpao and Commerce Committee of the National Assembly of Pakistan.

Chairman PAJCCI extended his gratitude to all government officials on behalf of all the stakeholders across the border. He further requested for a waiver of any applicable port and shipping charges (detention / demurrage) applied to Afghan consignments / containers accruing from the closure of the border to limit the monetary losses of the business community.

The members of the delegation unanimously reiterated the significance of national sanctity and security and supported all measures that respective Governments may take to ensure the same. However, the same may not be continued at the beset of hurting the economic and social ties across the border through measures such as abrupt closure of the border for an indefinite period resulting in massive monetary losses and trust deficit.

At the outset, it was also decided to constitute a 6 member committee, comprising 3 members from each country's private sector and think tanks, to deal with the respective Governments on

pertinent matters as in the instant case matter of closure of borders. The joint committee should be consulted for advice before taking extreme measures such as closure of borders or revision of economic policies in general. The committee should also be taken into confidence before such actions that may hamper the overall business ties. This committee would act as economic and confidence building catalyst to ensure further enhancement of bilateral trade, rejuvenate regional linkages, promote joint investments.

Motiwala also highlighted that heavy demurrages, waiting time, uncertainty and diversion of both bilateral and transit trade to other avenues is causing psychological rift and is resulting in long-run instability in relations with the prime neighbor of Pakistan. He believed that both the Governments should keenly follow-up the matter and develop measures of a long term nature, for ensuring overall economic stability in the region.