



5TH PAJCCI'S COMMUNIQUE

15TH FEBRUARY, 2020
AN INSIGHT ON PAK-AFGHAN NEWS

- **FPCCI appointed convener of the Central Standing Committee for Afghan Transit.**¹

Mian Anjum Nisar, President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), appointed Zahir Shah as convener of the Central Standing Committee for Afghan Transit Trade 2020. As a convener, he will work on trade affairs and exports and imports and will play his role in resolving the problems and obstacles in the way of trade between the two countries. Zahir Shah commented that in this connection he would send a detailed report to the Federation of Pakistan, ministries and related institutions so that a strong and comprehensive strategy could be adopted in the future with this route through the Central Asian countries.

- **Pakistan to conduct two-days Afghan refugee conference from 17-18 February, 2020.**²

Pakistan is hosting an international conference in cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) titled “**40 Years of Afghan Refugees Presence in Pakistan: A New Partnership for Solidarity**” to mark the long stay of hundreds of thousands of Afghan refugees in this region. About 2.5 million Afghans have stayed in Pakistan since the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The event would be attended by senior level from UN, multilateral development banks, civil society and private sector. The conference intends to highlight commendable generosity and hospitality exhibited by Pakistan in hosting one of the largest refugee populations in the world and would deliberate upon key developments and milestones achieved along with the challenges faced during the 40-year-long evolution of the Afghan refugee situation.

- **Afghanistan officially inaugurated CASA-1000 Power Project.**³

Afghanistan's President Ashraf Ghani officially launched the construction of the CASA-1000 hydro-power scheme, one of the region's largest power plants, which will start from Kyrgyzstan and will reach into Afghanistan through Tajikistan and onward to Pakistan's Peshawar city. 1300 megawatts of electricity will flow from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to Afghanistan and Pakistan, out of which Afghanistan will receive 300 megawatts whereas remaining one thousand will be transmitted to Pakistan via Afghanistan territory. Meanwhile, Ambassador Pakistan to Afghanistan referred this as a gateway to economic boom for both Afghanistan and Pakistan, which will further strengthen the bond of companionship between the two countries. President Afghanistan established this as a step forward towards transforming Afghanistan into the region's energy transit hub.

¹ <https://nation.com.pk/10-Feb-2020/zahir-shah-made-convener-of-central-body-on-afghan-transit-trade>

² <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2153354/1-pakistan-hold-international-conference-afghan-refugees-feb-17-18/>

³ <https://tolonews.com/business/afghanistan-begins-work-casa-1000-power-project>

- **Pakistan, Afghanistan does not harness trade capacity given the opening of the 24-hour frontier.⁴**

With the introduction of the government's plan to enhance the operation by keeping Torkham border operational 24/7, the Pak-Afghan border showed an increase in exports by 33% along with 45% enhancement in imports whereby national exchequer earned 39% revenue in imports in last 6 months.⁵ Superintendent Custom Center at Torkham, Att-ur-Rahman shared that despite unfavorable condition and further challenges, the determination of the department's high officials in line with vision of Prime Minister Pakistan, this initiative was materialized and executed well. He added that lack of basic necessities and manpower challenges needs to be tackled promptly to register significant improvement.

The traders and businessmen believe that lack of coordination amongst related departments, deficiency of more exit and entry points, the absence of dutiful staff and basic facilities are hurdles that limits the productivity of said endeavor. National Logistics Cell (NLC) stated that almost 20% increase is witnessed after 24/7 scheme was put in place, however clearing agents blame NLC for creating barriers and delaying the clearances.

As per Pakistan Statistics Bureau (PBS) exports had seen a slight increase in the last fiscal year from Rs122 billion in FY18 to Rs128 billion in FY19, and further added that share of Pakistani exports had dropped from 7% to 6%. Experts believed if the issues of poor border management, extortion fees, strict security checking system and slow clearness of goods are sorted out then the bilateral trade between Pakistan and Afghanistan has a potential to increase up to \$5 billion.

- **Afghanistan launches Biometric system for issuance of business license.⁶**

Acting Minister of Commerce – Afghanistan, Ajmal Ahmady inaugurated the biometric system for allowing the issuance of business licenses quickly and with enhanced security. The General Directorate of Central Registration and Intellectual Property has undergone numerous positive changes lately and was able to distribute 19,000 licenses in 2019, which is 35.7% more in comparison to 2018. Co-Chairman PAJCCI, Khan Jan Alokozai was also part of the inauguration session and represented the business community at the forum.

⁴ <https://profit.pakistantoday.com.pk/2020/02/03/pakistan-afghanistan-not-exploiting-trade-potential-despite-24-hour-border-opening/>

⁵ <https://nation.com.pk/07-Feb-2020/pak-afghan-border-trade-up-33pc>

⁶ <https://menafn.com/1099640767/Afghanistan-Launches-Biometric-System-for-Business-Licenses>