

Security issues have been allowed precedence over economic cooperation. There have been few buyers in Afghanistan for that as trade with Pakistan offers no clear advantages to them. Afghanistan had already begun to use Iran more for transit trade. Iran becoming a possible alternative port should worry Pakistan, which wants to project Gwadar as the port of choice for the future. Closing the border eight times in a single year and following it up by imposing new duties is a poor approach to improve trade.

FUTURE MEASURES

The government has taken a positive first step to consider an exemption list. Much more is needed to restore the confidence of traders. Otherwise, the entire CPEC exercise could be of no use. Pakistan and Afghanistan trade has decreased from 2.7 billion dollars to 1.2 billion dollars in less than two years. Pakistani and Afghan traders voiced concerns at the sharp fall in bilateral

trade due to political tensions between the neighbours and impediments to the implementation of transit trade agreements.

The Pakistan-Afghanistan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PAJCCI) organized the 'Cross-Border Round table' in collaboration with Pakistani Centre for Research and Security Studies (CRSS) and a UK-based organization called Safeworld. At a joint press conference with Afghan traders at the end of talks in Islamabad, PAJCCI called on both governments to separate trade from politics. In a unanimous resolution released at the conclusion of talks, the traders said: "We want governments on both sides to segregate business ties from political and security tensions and suggest bilateral and transit trade needs rejuvenation."

In 2014, the two countries had pledged to boost bilateral trade to 5 billion US dollars in five years. Worsening relations, border closures and hindrances to implementation of transit agreements have

affected the trade volume. They called for confidence-building measures to overcome mistrust in the Pakistan-Afghanistan relationship that was not only hampering political dialogue but also significantly impacting economic cooperation between the two countries.

Afghan Chambers of Commerce President said Pakistani traders were interested in trade through Gwadar and Karachi port as they were near to Afghanistan. Afghanistan has been facilitating Pakistan trade with the Central Asian states and Afghan businessmen also want similar cooperation from the Pakistani side.

The delegates demanded a meeting of the Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Coordination Authority (APTTCA) on facilitating discussions to revive the economic transition leading to peace and prosperity across the border. Pakistan had hosted the last meeting of APTTCA, an important forum to deal with problems affecting smooth implementation of the 2010 revised transit treaty. ■

IBA-CICT TO PARTICIPATE AS AN ACADEMIC STRATEGIC PARTNER IN INFOSEC 2018 CONFERENCE

The Center for Information & Communication Technology (CICT), IBA Karachi and Total Communications Pakistan, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regarding the IBA-CICT's participation as an academic strategic partner for InfoSec 2018. The MOU was signed by Mr. Imran Batada, Director ICT & CICT, IBA Karachi and Mr. Faisal Rahim, CEO Total Communications Pakistan.

InfoSec, an annual high profile event of Pakistan in Information Security will have participation from the financial sector, telecom industry, armed forces, intelligence agencies, ministries, foreign missions, academia, and technology companies. The conference was initiated 10 years ago and this year for the first time, the IBA-CICT is collaborating with Total Communications as

an academic strategic partner. The event will be held on July 12, 2018.

Mr. Imran Batada congratulated the whole team of InfoSec conference and said, "The IBA management believes that these kind of collaborations would foster the productivity of the conference, the IBA-CICT would also actively help the organizers in the selection of the track, keynote speakers and moderation of the event, along with organizing a session."

Expressing his pleasure, Mr. Faisal Rahim, Project Director-InfoSec Conference said, "Together the IBA-CICT and Total Communications aim to deliver more effective conferences, while facilitating mutual sharing of best practices and expertise to make this platform relevant and effective for the IT Industry of Pakistan."

