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REOPENING OF TURKHAM, CHAMAN PASSAGE WAYS AND ITS EFFECTS ON THE AFGHAN MARKETS



Despite being a landlocked country, Afghanistan is highly dependent on imported goods. Therefore, carries out its trade relations with the neighboring countries, especially Pakistan through land.

Apparently, Afghanistan has somewhat overcome the trade obstacles that are created for not have having border with sea, by establishing air corridors, especially via Chabahar port.

However, the coronavirus has severely affected the world economy recently. The virus has not only crippled the economies of developing countries, but has debilitated the economies of developed countries. In order to prevent the virus, almost all countries of the world have restricted or completely shut down travels abroad. In this regard, Afghanistan and Pakistan also considered similar precautions. Subsequently, the restrictions harshly effected the Afghan markets and the prices of basic goods peaked. Although the Afghan government strived to control the prices, but still seems abundantly high. On 20th Hamal, 2020, the Afghan government announced that the two key borders will reopen for trade. Here, we analyze the effects of Torkham, Chaman passageways reopening on the Afghan markets.

Borders Shut Down and Its Effect On Afghan Markets

During the video conference of SAARC countries on March 13, the Afghan president requested SAARC countries to uphold the borders open for the trade of basic goods. The request of the president was welcomed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Health Minister of Pakistan Zafar Mirza. Still, Pakistan closed Chaman and Turkham gates on 3rd and 16th March in order to prevent Covid-19 spread. Subsequently, the prices of basic goods significantly increased due to hoarding attempts in Afghanistan.

In order to avoid further probable increase in the prices, the Afghan president proclaimed to the people on 17th March that 24000 tons of wheat will be distributed from govt's reserves to needy people. He further ordered the release of basic goods from northern ports without any penalty and tariff. He expressed his optimism about the import of 7500 tons of wheat from India in the near future. In addition, the chamber of commerce and investment assured that the basic goods will be imported as usual, which consequently, reduced the fears of scarcity of basic goods among the people.

Since July, 2019 to January, 2020, exports of Pakistan to Afghanistan has reduced from 676.2 Million to 633.1 Million, which indicates 7% drop. The reduction points out that Afghanistan has discovered other ways out to replace trade with Pakistan. However, Afghanistan's request from Pakistan to reopen the gates also shows that the country is as enthusiastic as usual to have trade relations with Pakistan and considers them mutually beneficial. This is due to the fact that the trade between both countries is not only economical for Afghanistan, but exports also benefits the economy of Pakistan, which is experiencing downturn since a while. As the international trades has decreased significantly worldwide, reopening of Turkham and Chaman passageways for trade will stabilize the markets and impressively reduce prices of goods. In addition, the reopening will play a constructive role in peace process and improve political links between both countries.

In 1965, Afghanistan and Pakistan signed the Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA), which was renewed in 2010. According to the agreement, Pakistan will allow Afghan trucks to access Wagah border of India through Pakistan. In return, Afghanistan will facilitate Pakistani trucks to reach out to Afghan markets.

During the first visit to Pakistan in 2014, President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani expressed that he hopes to have 5 Billion worth of trade with Pakistan. However, due to political distrusts, provision of obstacles for Afghan businessmen by Pakistan and repetitive closure of borders, caused millions dollars' loss for Afghan traders. After some auxiliary actions and efforts, Afghan merchants showed lesser interest in tradewith Pakistan and the government also started to find other resolutions for trade. Subsequently, Afghanistan increased trade relations with India and Iran via Chabahar port, and Pakistan lost a huge portion of Afghan markets.

Conclusion

Opening of Turkham and Chaman Passageways for 3 days every week by Pakistan can lead to economic development and facilitate employment for both countries. Therefore, in order to overcome economic problems and combat the coronavirus, both countries are required to find and enable persistent and affective resolutions.

Trade relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan are greatly challenged by obstacle created on the border, especially on Pakistan's side, where merchants are forced to pay heavy taxes. Therefore, according to reports, Pakistan's exports to Afghanistan have decreased from 141,5 Million USD to 89.9 Million USD since last year.

Reopening of Turkham and Chaman gates can reduce demand and prices of basic goods in Afghanistan. Moreover, the reopening can facilitate an environment of trust between both countries and effectively connect the middle Asia and the southern Asia, which can consequently increase enthusiasm of countries in region for peace in Afghanistan.

For economic betterment, overcoming obstacles such as resolving visa problems, reducing taxes and tariffs and avoiding unexpected border shut downs can be effective to provide opportunities for the people of both countries, lead to economic prosperity, and establish comprehensively constructive relations during the current crisis.

The Afghan government should not presume the reopening of borders with Pakistan as a key to all problems, but considering the recommendation of António Guterres, Secretary General of UN, should strive to eliminate violence with the

help of the international community and humanitarian organization. Additionally, compared to any other time, the government need to attract humanitarian aids of international communities during the current crisis.

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CHILDREN VIGOROUS ACTIVITIES DURING QUARANTINE DAYS



The world has been facing a COVID-19 pandemic for more than one hundred days. The virus was initially originated from Wuhan of China, and spread to each part of the world. As of this writing, the number of people infected with the COVID-19 has exceeded two million, and the number continues to rise every hour. The total of victims of the pandemic is more than 177,000 in the world, where the United States is the first in terms of disaster and death.

Since COVID-19 is incurable, all countries have taken preventive steps to combat the virus, one of which is quarantining residents of cities and towns where the disease has spread. Following the spread of the disease in the country, the Afghan government has quarantined a number of cities in the country after one another, including the city of Kabul, which has an estimated population of six (6) million. While the educational centers were became closed prior the quarantine of the cities.

Now that millions of children have been stopped from attending school in order to prevent further spread of the COVID-19, what parents should do to protect their children from damages of being at home on the one hand; and on the other, the quarantine times should not have them to neglect their education. In this analysis,

an effort has been made to provide appropriate recreational, educational and health solutions using the viewpoints of experts:

Creating Happy Atmosphere Inside Family

There is no doubt that the COVID-19 pandemic has put the people of world, especially those living in Afghanistan under serious economic and psychological pressure. For the reason that a lot of people in our country work daily and get a piece of bread at night. It should be natural that in such an atmosphere, the oppression of the COVID-19 and the economic pressure, patience will become decreased and the level of human tolerance will become to an end.

As a result, efforts should be made to create a contented atmosphere at home for all family members, especially children. Because without such an atmosphere, the tolerance for children at home is reduced, which can cause serious physical and mental harms to them. The crisis passes (perhaps too early and perhaps too late); however, the damage of not paying attention to children during quarantine can remain in children's souls and bodies for years and will hurt them. Creating a cheerful environment means not solely not putting children under pressure and threats at home, but also enjoying being at home with their family members.

Constructive Activities

- From the time when children have encountered a new situation during the quarantine times, it is indispensable to pay enough attention to their recreational matters along with their educational and training concerns due to their mental and physical health. Healthy inside housework is one of the most important and key tools for keeping children exultant during the quarantine, which are as follows:
- Do exercise at home with children; however, the exercise should be suitable to their age and should not be physically harmful to them. Hold sports competitions with them and intentionally finish the competition in their favor, in which case the children will enjoy the competition on the one hand; and on the other hand, the feeling of winning the competition will make them feel content and jubilant.
- Watch useful and educational TV channels together with children. Since watching TV can have many positive and negative effects on children, quarantine is a good time to get used to what children are watching and what they are not. It is also necessary to repeatedly draw children's attention to the positive and educational aspects of the program.

- Engage children in household works. For children's participation in housework, on the one hand, creates a sense of responsibility for them, and on the other hand, they become more experienced in housework.
- They should be told humor and stories and meaningful riddles. On the one hand, it is a good activity for children, and on the other hand, they can be taught a lot indirectly.
- Design jobs for children that are both entertaining and educational, because not only do they not bore children, but they can also be useful for the reproduction and flourishing of their talents.

Having an Educational Timetable

There is no doubt that many children in school want to be promoted to a higher class sooner. The COVID-19 pandemic and the quarantine times may have created anxiety in children who have fallen behind in their studies. The first task of parents is to remove this anxiety and stress from their children's minds. Then making an educational timetable in accordance with the age of the children and have them practice it with patience so as not to tire the children. Here are some important things to keep in mind when it comes to the timetable during quarantine times our children:

- Prioritize learning basic textbooks in schools such as language, mathematics, physics, and chemistry in higher classes. In this case, both the stress of the students due to the school's delays will be eliminated and the learning of the mentioned subjects during the school period will solve their more of problems.
- Besides these textbooks, Islamic books should be taught to students, including the Prophet's Character, the stories of the prophets, the principles of Islam, and other books. The aim is that a book will be selected from among Islamic books and explained to children in simple language. Related Islamic textbooks of the school can also be used in this matter.
- Encouraging children to have open study is one of the things that must be taken into account during quarantine times. From the time when children are very interested in fiction books, someone can get use of simple fiction books and child literature.
- The opportunity for family gatherings, such as spending time on meal, should be used to create an intimate and friendly atmosphere among family members. Performing prayers together with children and having a few useful words with them after praying can have good educational benefits for them.

- Holding low level informational and mental competitions can be used as an interesting educational activity for children during the quarantine times.

Health Education

Health education should be a part of children's quarantine activities. At these days, we need to teach children about health issues in a way that they will remember and pay attention to them for many years to come. The short-term implications of this are that we help our families fight the pandemic and other contagions, and in the long run they help the country to have a healthy and sound society. Observing family health concerns can lower overall treatment costs and reduce the pressure on the national budget.

Nowadays, the pandemic of COVID-19 is at the headlines of the global news. Exaggeration in the news and analysis of COVID-19 even frightens adults, let alone children. Keeping children away from this kind of news and analysis is vital. Our children need to be aware of COVID-19 pandemic and its spread, but exaggerating the news and analysis of the disease can hurt children spiritually, because children's spirits can hold out bad news for a long time.

Washing hand frequently, avoiding handshake and close contact with others, wearing masks and gloves while going outside are some of the things that have been told to children and adolescents frequently in order to take them seriously.

Conclusion

Since millions of children are quarantined due to the spread of the COVID-19 and are stopped from attending school, parents need to pay more attention to their children in terms of their recreational, educational, and health aspects. Due to the lack of proper attention to children during quarantine causes children to have their times wasters and to become harmed spiritually and physically. Some of these damages may last for many years.

Creating a joyful atmosphere at home, making a good educational timetable, engaging children in positive activities and providing proper health education are some of the things that parents should heed during quarantine days.