

# India urges Afghanistan to boost exports

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New Delhi

**COMMERCE** secretary Rahul Khullar on Thursday called upon Afghanistan to develop its export sector, the growth of which has only been 16 percent last year.

"Schemes like zero-duty access for all SAARC countries have opened trade opportunities for Afghanistan. They can export products at zero duty. It is for them to figure out what they would like to export," said Khullar.

Several Indian businessmen also participated in the event, Rebuilding Afghani-

stan: The Road Ahead organised by FICCI.

The India-Afghanistan parliamentary forum addressed issues spanning from investment opportunities to problems faced by the Indian traders in Afghanistan.

Priyanka Mittal, Director of KRBL Ltd, voiced her concern about the unorganised payment mechanism of the country. "There is no established payment mechanism in the agricultural export sector. The traders pay through cash, which makes it difficult for us to maintain an account of the transactions," said Mittal, adding

## 'Schemes like zero-duty access have opened trade chances for Kabul'

that geographical limitations also prevent companies from having a smooth commercial relation. "Several times our containers are detained in Iran and because of high duties the cost of the product goes up thrice."

The spokesperson for Afghanistan parliamentary delegation, Mohammad Noor Akbari, assured that the country would address the

problem of cash payments. "However, we need to work together to solve these issues," he said.

Among the other challenges of establishing business in Afghanistan, the deteriorating security infrastructure of the Islamic nation poses to be a threat to the commercial interests of the traders' community.

Abhijit Sarkar, a specialist in marketing with HPCL-Mittal Energy Ltd, said though imports from Afghanistan have been made duty free, the exports to the nation through trade route in Pakistan costs a huge sum for the traders here.

## INDIA'S EXPORTS GROW SLOW AT 3.2%

**NEW DELHI:** India's exports grew by a sluggish 3.2 percent to \$24.50 billion in the first month of the current financial year, after recording nearly 21 percent growth in 2011-12, commerce secretary Rahul Khullar said on Thursday.

Imports increased by 3.8 percent to \$37.9 billion in April year-on-year, leaving the monthly trade deficit of \$13.4 billion.

—PTI

Similar hurdles were discussed along with an insight into the several roles that India could play in the rehabilitation of Afghanistan.

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