

Name of Paper : THE TRIBUNE

Published at : NEW DELHI

Dated : 3 MAY 2012

# Indo-Pak trade back on track in Attari



Trucks line up at the Integrated Check Post at the Attari border before crossing over to Pakistan on Wednesday. Photo: Vishal Kumar

## Traders were on strike for last 5 days against 'excessive' handling charges at the ICP

PERNEET SINGH/TNS

AMRITSAR, MAY 2

After a five-day strike, bilateral trade between India and Pakistan through the Attari-Wagah land route returned to normal today with traders resuming export and lifting of goods imported from the neighbouring nation. The traders had been protesting "excessive handling charges" at the new Integrated Check Post.

Sources in the ICP said 84 trucks loaded with soybean were exported to Pakistan even though the total number of trucks that were cleared stood at 126. Sources attributed the gap

between the number of trucks cleared and those which crossed over apparently to shortage of labour on the other side of the border. Jaspal Singh, a clearing agent, confirmed that over 120 trucks of soybean were cleared for exports to Pakistan today.

However, the imports have declined with only 24 trucks loaded with cement, dry fruits and dry dates arriving today.

A spokesperson of the Confederation of International Chamber of Commerce and Industry attributed the drop to their appeal to Pakistani traders to restrict supply, particularly of gypsum and cement, so

that they could lift the stock that had piled up at the ICP during the strike.

"Moreover, the availability of trucks is also less these days owing to the ongoing harvest season," he said.

The traders have also started lifting goods imported from Pakistan, whose stocks were piling up for the last four-five days. Sources said around 100 truckloads of goods were lifted from the ICP today.

Manav Taneja, an Amritsar-based trader, said there were around 28,000 bags of cement lying in the ICP, besides 7,000 to 8,000 bags of dry fruits, which they have started lifting after resumption of trade today.

## A FIRST: NEWSPRINT EXPORT VIA ATTARI

The Attari-Wagah land route would witness for the first time the export of newsprint to Pakistan on Thursday. Amritsar's Khanna Paper Mill, which is the fourth largest paper mill in India, would be sending its newsprint via the ICP to Pakistan.

Mill director Suneet Kochhar said, "This is for the first time in history that newsprint will be exported from India to Pakistan, as earlier it did not figure in the positive list for trade between the two nations. The major newspapers benefitting from the move will be The Dawn and Jung Group.

Earlier, they were importing newsprint from other coun-



tries." He said the newspaper industry in Pakistan, where paper costs Rs 28 per copy, will get a taste of cheaper options by using the newsprint from India. Earlier, Khanna Paper Mill had been indirectly exporting its paper and board to Pakistan via Dubai. The first load of 10 MT newsprint will cross over to Pakistan tomorrow afternoon, he added.