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# Cross-LoC trade via Poonch picks up pace

## Traders look forward to travel permits

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The cross-LoC trade via Chakan-da-Bagh in Poonch district has gained momentum after Union Home Secretary RK Singh reviewed the trade and discussed with cross-LoC traders various issues concerning them during his visit to Poonch on May 17.

"Following instructions by the Union Home Secretary, the Customs Department is now responding positively to us. We are being allowed to export banana, mango and garlic to PoK," said Pawan Anand, president of the Jammu and Kashmir Chamber of Cross-LoC Trade.

Dry and green coconut has not yet been exported to PoK, he added.

For the past more than two years the trade from Chakan-



da-Bagh had come down to dry chilli only.

Anand said after instructions from the Union Home Secretary, the number of trucks from Chakan-da-Bagh had been increased to 50 per day on trading days.

"The trade has picked up from Chakan-da-Bagh, rekindling the hopes of Jammu-based traders of a much healthier trade with PoK traders in the coming days," said Anand.

He hoped that the Home Secretary will live up to his promise of adding new merchandise to the export list to

bring the cross-LoC trade back on the rails.

"After the Home Secretary-level talks between India and Pakistan in Islamabad, we are eagerly awaiting the announcement of new items to be included in the export list to give a boost to the trade," he said.

Rajinder Vaid, another cross-LoC trader, said, "We are looking forward to a banking facility between the two sides to further strengthen the trade. If it happens, it will be a shot in the arm."

The cross-LoC traders in the state have been demanding banking and communication facilities, travel permits to visit PoK to see the quality of merchandise and fix rates before placing orders for their imports. The trade takes place four days a week from Tuesday to Friday.