

India may soften visa curbs

By Waseem Ashraf Butt

GUJRAT: The High Commissioner of India in Islamabad, TCA Raghwan, has hinted at softening of visa policy for business community.

According to him, visa policy of both the countries is so strict that it needs to be addressed.

A workshop at the Indian High Commission in Islamabad is likely to be organised at the end of January to discuss relaxation of the visa policy after seeking an input from various chambers of commerce, he said while speaking to local business community at the Gujrat Chamber of Commerce and Industry here on Thursday.

The Indian HC said that there was a great potential of bilateral trade between the two countries.

"If Iran and Afghanistan relations with the US can improve, why not the relations between India and Pakistan, the two most important countries of South East Asia."

Mr Raghwan said that the prime minister of Pakistan had already expressed his desire to strengthen his country's relations with India. India, he said, also wanted better ties with its neighbouring Pakistan.

He said a meeting of the commerce ministers of the Saarc countries was being held in New Dehli, whereas an India show was also scheduled to be held in Lahore in February which should be visited by local businessmen.

He said trade balance situation should be taken into consideration.

He said India awarded the most favourite nation's status to Pakistan in 1996, but last year's exports of Pakistan to India had been \$0.5bn whereas trade between India and China had almost touched \$100bn.
