

## Indonesia, wisely-chosen ...

Its strategic location in Southeast Asia further adds to its geopolitical significance. Over the past few decades, the Southeast Asia region has experienced continuous growth. Analysts predict that the Asia Pacific region will become the epicenter of international politics and economy in the future, with Southeast Asia at its core. Therefore, forging strong ties with Indonesia proves lucrative and advantageous for any country, including Iran.

Equally noteworthy is Indonesia's successful journey toward industrialization. Despite being an archipelagic nation comprising diverse ethnicities and religions, it has triumphed over internal and external challenges, charting a favorable path for its own development. Consequently, Indonesia's experience holds valuable lessons for countries like Iran. In various spheres, including matters concerning Asia, the Islamic world, cooperation through international organizations, and the global political order, Indonesia can be seen as an ideal partner for Iran. Indonesia, along with Southeast Asia as a whole, possesses considerable potential. However, due to its considerable geographical distance from Iran and the availability of alternative regions to engage with, it has not received significant attention in the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic. Consequently, Indonesia has been largely overlooked by Iran.

Hence, the visit of Iran's President Ebrahim Raeisi to Indonesia presents a valuable opportunity to address this long-standing neglect and tap into a portion of Indonesia's untapped capacities for the benefit of Iran. It is important to acknowledge that the consequences of neglect spanning several decades cannot be fully rectified through a single trip. Nevertheless, President Raeisi's visit can serve as a pivotal moment for the advancement of bilateral relations between the two nations.

Indonesia, however, has its own considerations for fostering cooperation with Iran. These considerations include Western sanctions and the pressure exerted by the United States on countries to curtail collaboration with Iran. Nonetheless, through constructive dialogue, both countries can explore the establishment of a novel cooperation model that mitigates the impact of external pressure and sanctions, allowing for unhindered development of their collaboration or, at the very least, minimizing the negative repercussions on their bilateral ties.

Choosing Indonesia as the destination for the presidential visit and the pursuit of enhanced relations reflects a shrewd and forward-thinking decision. It is a choice that is poised to yield fruitful outcomes for Iran.

# Raeisi departs for Indonesia on political, economic mission



Iranian President Ebrahim Raeisi departs for a three-day visit to Jakarta, Indonesia, on Monday evening, May 22, 2023. **IRNA**

### International Desk

The Iranian President Ebrahim Raeisi left Iran for Jakarta, Indonesia, on Monday on a mission to deepen and expand the political, economic, and cultural ties between the two countries. Describing the current level of relations between the two countries as "unacceptable" and calling for its strengthening, Raeisi said several memorandums of understanding (MoUs) will be signed covering areas including economy, trade, customs, culture, and health. Stressing that both Muslim

countries are seeking a stable peace in the region, the Iranian President added, "Cooperating with friendly nations are among the policies of the incumbent government." Heading a high-ranking delegation, Raeisi's three-day visit will be made upon an official invitation by his Indonesian counterpart Joko Widodo. President Raeisi will also hold meetings with speakers of the People's Representative Council and the People's Consultative Assembly of the Republic of Indonesia.

Meeting with Iranian and Indonesian businessmen, scholars, intellectuals as well as Iranian expatriates in Indonesia will also be on Raeisi's agenda.

The Indonesian Trade Ministry announced on Wednesday that Jakarta and Tehran have concluded the final stage of negotiations on a bilateral trade agreement. The announcement came after the two sides finished a seventh round of talks.

Dubbed the "Indonesia-Iran Preferential Trade Agreement" (II-PTA), the trade deal will be signed on Tuesday during President Raeisi's stay in Jakarta to improve trade relations and boost the trade value, the Borneo Bulletin reported.

"Iran is a non-traditional trade partner for Indonesia. With this PTA, we hope to widen our export opportunities and expand our market reach," said the Ministry's Director of Bilateral Negotiations Johni Martha. "This will be the second agreement between Indonesia and the Middle East region — (with the first) signed on July 1, 2022, which is the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) with the UAE," the Ministry's Director General of International Trade Negotiations Djat-

miko Bris Witjaksono said here on Monday.

The PTA signing will continue with the ratification process, with each country formulating its own mechanism, Antara news agency wrote.

The products that will be listed in the PTA will include processed foods, pharmaceutical products, rubber, paper, textiles, wood, footwear, cotton, electrical machinery, motorized vehicles, manufacturing products, chemicals, and aluminum.

"Indonesia will provide lower tariff facilities for several products originating from Iran, including mineral fuel, oil and its derivatives, chemicals, steel, pharmaceuticals, mechanical equipment, fruits, processed foods, nuts, and wheat," Djatmiko said.

"We see Iran as a gateway to Central Asia. We already have (a trade agreement) with the UAE, but by entering Iran, we can enter surrounding areas such as Azerbaijan and even Turkey because we do not have a trade agreement with Turkey yet," he said.

A total of 1.81 million tons of non-oil goods, worth \$965 million, were traded between the two countries in the previous Iranian calendar year of 1401 (end-

ed March 20, 2023), the spokesman of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) Rouhollah Latifi told IRNA. Ahead of President Raeisi's arrival in Jakarta, the Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian published an op-ed published in Indonesia's "The Jakarta Post" English-language newspaper on May 22, describing the visit to Jakarta as a "turning point" in the bilateral relations between the two Muslim states.

Recognizing the need to strengthen regional relations, Amir-Abdollahian commended the performance of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and emphasized Iran's willingness to develop relations with other member states of the regional bloc within the framework of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation signed between the two sides in 2017.

"We consider Indonesia's chairmanship in ASEAN an optimal opportunity for developing relations with the other member states of this progressive grouping. We also welcome the possibility of regional connections between ASEAN and the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) in West Asia."

## Iran police vow revenge on terrorists that killed border guards



Iranian officials and military forces say goodbye to the bodies of five martyred border guards in Zahedan, southeastern Iran, on May 22, 2023. **ALIREZA SHAHRABI/IRNA**

Iran's deputy police chief expressed the force's determination to avenge the killing of five border guards in a terrorist attack

in southeastern Sistan and Baluchestan Province, which neighbors Pakistan. Speaking at the border guards' funeral ceremony in Sistan and Baluchestan's provincial capital, Zahedan, Brigadier General Qasem Rezaei warned the deceived individuals who are following in the enemies' footsteps that they "will definitely receive a decisive and firm response wherever it is necessary," Press TV reported.

On Saturday, five border guards were martyred in clashes with armed terrorists and anti-Islamic

Revolution groups in Saravan County.

"Today, Iranian police forces are more resolved than ever, and you will hear the news of the revenge in the near future," Rezaei added. The deputy police chief also emphasized that such incidents will not create divisions between Iran, Pakistan, and Afghanistan as the trio enjoy long-standing relations. "Pakistan has said that it will deal decisively with the perpetrators of the terrorist attack and that it is their final warning," he said.

### 'Our patience has limits'

The Iranian border police commander also warned neighboring countries to observe the principle of good neighborliness and not allow destabilizing activities on their soil.

"Our patience has limits," Brigadier General Ahmad-Ali Goudarzi said.

Over the past years, Sistan and Baluchestan has witnessed several terror attacks targeting both civilians and security forces. Saravan has been the focal point in clashes be-

tween Iranian forces and terrorist groups as well as drug traffickers.

On Sunday, Farah Azeem Shah, the spokesman of the Baluchistan Government in Pakistan, condemned the terrorist attack in Saravan.

Azeem Shah said, "The time has come for the governments and nations of Iran and Pakistan to send a strong message to these elements," stressing that the purpose of such acts of terror was to harm the brotherly relations between Pakistan and Iran.



**Mohammad Ali Rajabi**  
Cartoonist



## Iran slams G7 summit final statement

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani strongly condemned parts of the final statement of the Group of Seven (G7) summit in Hiroshima, Japan, including its baseless and fabricated allegations against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

As repeatedly stated before, Iran's nuclear program has only peaceful purposes, and nuclear weapons have no place in the Iranian defense doctrine, Kanaani stressed, according to IRNA.

He strongly rejected the selective statement and the illusory claims made by the members of this group that possess nuclear weapons.

"While the hegemonic policies of some of the G7 members have created insecurity and instability in the world, in general, and the region, in particular, they accuse Iran of destabilization," he stressed.

They have based their accusations on an erroneous interpretation of the resolutions of



G7 leaders discuss various issues around a table in Hiroshima, Japan, on May 19, 2023. **REUTERS**

the UN Security Council, of which they themselves are the main violators, Kanaani said. The Islamic Republic of Iran has never provided drones to Russia in the Ukraine crisis and continues to insist on a peaceful solution in this regard, he stated.