

Iran, Algeria sign several MoUs



National Desk

Iran and Algeria signed several memoranda of understanding on various fields in Algiers on Sunday in order to further expand relations between the two countries.

The signing ceremony was attended by Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi and his Algerian counterpart Abdelmadjid Tebboune. They also chaired a joint commission of high-ranking delegations from both countries.

During the meeting, the president referred to Iran's significant economic progress, saying, "Iran's high capacities in the economic field are suitable for the development of mutual cooperation in the fields of energy and technology, engineering, industrial, petrochemical and finance with Algeria".

He also called for further improvement of the level of economic and commercial relations between Tehran and Algiers. Raisi described Algeria as a lead-

ing country in the fight against hegemony and colonialism in the world. He also pointed to the two countries' common stances regarding various regional issues, especially the fight against terrorism. The Iranian president said that Iran considers the development of Tehran-Algiers relations as a basis for strengthening regional and international ties.

Heading a high-ranking politico-economic delegation, Raisi arrived in Algiers on Saturday to attend the 7th meeting of the leaders of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF).

The GECF, which is comprised of 13 permanent members and seven observers, was established in 2008, based on an initial proposal by Iran as one of the world's largest holders of natural gas reserves.

The Iranian president also held separate meetings with other top officials from the 19-member gathering of the world's leading natural gas producers. Raisi's trip marks the fourth visit of an Iranian president to the North African country, which took place after 14 years, since former president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's visit in 2010.

Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi (R) shakes hands with his Algerian counterpart Abdelmadjid Tebboune in Algeria's presidential palace in Algiers, on March 3, 2024. [president.ir](#)

Neighborly ties to help Pakistan solve challenges



By Nozer Shafiei
Subcontinent affairs expert

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

Pakistan's parliament elected Shehbaz Sharif from the Muslim League party prime minister.

What Pakistan's parliament pulled off was actually a compulsion because none of the major parties could muster the necessary quorum to form a government in the parliamentary elections. Independent candidates affiliated with the Tehreek-e-Insaf party led by former prime minister Imran Khan won 93 seats, and the Muslim League party headed by Nawaz Sharif secured 75 seats. The People's party led by Bilawal Bhutto also bagged 54 seats. Therefore, none of the parties managed to form a government because they did not garner the majority in the parliament.

Therefore, Imran Khan's rival parties teamed up to form a government and stave off political instability. Not only in Pakistan but also in other countries, coalition governments tend to be fragile. Some parties might pull out of the coalition midway. Also, a coalition government inevitably faces a strong opposition in the parliament.

This adds to the complexity of running the country for a government embroiled in an unfavorable economic situation and facing security and political challenges, especially in its dealings with neighbors, Afghanistan and India. Particularly, the Pakistani Taliban remains a major challenge for any government in this country. In addition, the new government is up against a strong and well-supported opposition whose leader is behind bars. Hence, while the election of Sharif appears to be a fitting decision that could help manage the internal political crisis of the country and prevent ongoing street protests, he will undoubtedly encounter challenges.

It seems that one of the strategies of the new government to tackle its political and regional challenges is to enhance cooperation with its neighbors. Iran is among these neighbors that have maintained good relations with Pakistan. Tehran has always prioritized the security of its neighbors and views any instability across the borders as detrimental because continued instability poses a threat to Iran's national interests. Accordingly, alongside economic, cultural, and political cooperation, it has consistently fostered good ties with its neighbors, including Pakistan. Now, it appears that Sharif's government will prioritize bolstering relations with Iran. The completion of Iran's gas transmission pipeline to Pakistan can pave the way for stabilizing and strengthening Sharif's government in Pakistan as a first step. Sharif, in his inaugural statement after assuming office as prime minister, affirmed that Pakistan would continue to enhance bilateral relations with its neighbors, particularly Iran. It seems that the new government acknowledges the significance of regional cooperation with its neighbors, and this can assist the new government in moving forward.

Shehbaz Sharif elected Pakistan's PM for second time

Pakistan's newly formed parliament elected Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday as prime minister for a second time, three weeks after uncertain national elections caused delays in the formation of a coalition government.

He beat Omar Ayub, the candidate backed by jailed former Prime Minister Imran Khan, who secured 92 votes. Sharif returns to the role he held until August when parliament was dissolved ahead of the elections and a caretaker government took over. No single party won enough seats to form government on their own, Reuters

reported. "Shehbaz Sharif is declared to have been elected the prime minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan," National Assembly Speaker Ayaz Sadiq said, after announcing Sharif had secured 201 votes, above the required 169 votes in the house.

The declaration was met with loud protests from the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) party backed by Khan. The lawmakers called for Khan's release and shouted slogans alleging Sharif had come to power through electoral rigging. In a wide-ranging speech,

Sharif touched on a number of topics, including the need for economic reforms as well as international relations, but stopped short of announcing definitive changes in policy. He invited the opposition for talks about reconciling political and policy differences.

The Feb. 8 election was marred by a mobile internet shutdown, arrests and violence in its build-up and the unusually delayed results triggered accusations that the vote was rigged.

Sharif, 72, is the younger brother of three-time prime minister Nawaz Sharif.



Candidates backed by Khan gained the most seats but the PML-N and the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) agreed to form a coalition government, which enabled Shehbaz Sharif to be elected as prime minister after his brother stepped aside. Khan is currently serving prison

Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif [AFP](#)

terms in multiple cases and has been barred from seeking or holding office. Sharif replaced him as prime minister after his ouster in a no-confidence vote in parliament in April 2022.

Parliamentary elections go to 2nd round in at least 15 cities

National Desk

Iran's parliamentary elections went to the second round in at least 15 cities, including the capital, after many candidates fell short of the 20% threshold needed to secure a parliament seat in the initial round.

According to unofficial media reports, 15 candidates from Tehran, including the current Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, have so far managed to enter the parliament, while other 30 candidates will compete in the second round for remaining 15 seats.

Nearly 150 current lawmakers will be absent in the next parliament. Some of them did not manage to garner enough votes, some were disqualified by the Constitutional Council, and some of them did not register for elections. On Friday, Iranians went to the

polling stations across the country to elect new members of parliament and the Assembly of Experts - an 88-member body in charge of overseeing the activities of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution with a position of authority to either appoint or dismiss the Leader.

Preliminary results from the elections showed that 41 percent of the more than 61 million eligible voters cast their ballots during the elections.

Iranian Interior Ministry said more than 25 million voted on Friday. The polls opened at 8 a.m. local time (04:30 GMT) on Friday and the voting began at 59,000 polling stations across the country, with more than 15,000 candidates competing for 290 seats in the Iranian parliament, and 144 candidates vying for positions in the eight-year-term Assembly of Experts.

Palestinian minister: Cease-fire more important than having food under fire

International Desk

The caretaker Palestinian Health Minister Mai al-Kaila said that "the cease-fire is much more important than having food under fire" as international mediators are trying to broker a 6-week cease-fire in the Gaza Strip.

"The top priority is to have a cease-fire," she said from Ramallah in the occupied West Bank. "People are running from one place to another just to save their lives. People all over the world should mobilize to push for a cease-fire."

"The second call is, stop providing Israel with weapons. Third, make Israel accountable in front of the international law," Al-Kaila added. A Hamas delegation arrived in Egypt's capital on Sunday for talks on the cease-fire after indications that Israel has provisionally accepted a six-week pause in fighting before the beginning of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. Qatari and US mediators also arrived in Cairo on Sunday. A Hamas official said if Israel were to meet its demands - which include a com-

plete military withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and stepped-up humanitarian aid - this would "pave the way for an agreement within the next 24-48 hours". Another unnamed Palestinian official told Reuters, however, that a cease-fire deal was still not imminent, saying: "We're not there yet."

A US official said on Saturday that Israel had "more or less accepted" a deal presented by mediators. Increasing the flow of aid is crucial. The local health ministry said on Sunday that 15 children had died from malnutrition and dehydration at Kamal Adwan hospital in Beit Lahya, and the UN has said about a quarter of the total population is "one step away from famine".

Hamas has indicated its negotiating position could be influenced by the deaths of 115 Palestinians in Gaza who were killed after Israeli troops opened fire near a crowd of people scrambling to get food from an aid convoy on Thursday. Since October, Israel's strikes on the Gaza Strip have claimed the lives of more than 30,410 Palestinians - mostly women and children.



SUBJECT: Cancellation of International Tender

Notice no. 1402

سایپا آذین

Tender notice no. 1402 related to Saipa Azin co, which was published in Iran daily newspaper dated 24/06/2023 for 4,000 T of foam material (polyol and isocyanate) is hereby cancelled due to unavailable circumstances.