



Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and Pakistan enjoy unbreakable bonds and are determined to bolster their relations in different fields at all levels.

He said a key decision to increase bilateral trade volume to \$10 billion has been reached as he addressed a high-profile joint press conference with Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad on Monday. "In our meeting today, we (have) decided to promote bilateral relations between the two countries including political, economical, trade, cultural and others as far as possible," said Raisi, who arrived in Pakistan earlier during the day amid stringent security measures.

"You will probably find some individuals who do not favor expansion and good bilateral relations between us but who cares – it is not important. We believe that it is important to expand relations between our countries," added the Iranian president.



Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi (L) is officially welcomed by Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad, Pakistan on April 22, 2024.  
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"We have decided as a first step to increase trade volume between our two countries to \$10 billion."

The two sides – which currently have bilateral trade of over \$2 billion – also held a meeting earlier, and agreed on joint efforts to eradicate terrorism. Raisi noted that the Iranian nation has succeeded in turning cruel Western sanctions into an opportunity for the country's development and added that Tehran is ready to transfer its experience in the fields of science and technology, transportation and transit to Islamabad. "The entire Pakistani nation welcomes the visit of the Iranian President," Radio Pakistan quoted the PM as saying. In his address, Sharif said that

the two sides discussed religious, security and historic matters during their meeting. "Today is an opportunity to make this friendship a happy and prosperous one."

#### Call to end genocide in Gaza

The Pakistani PM also said Tehran and Islamabad have expressed their concern over Israel's war in Gaza and asked the world to immediately put an end to the regime's act of genocide in the strip. Sharif added that an independent Palestinian country with al-Quds as its capital should be established, Press TV wrote. He praised Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei's legitimate support for the Palestinian people. Israel waged its brutal US-backed war on Gaza on October 7 after the Palestinian Hamas resistance group carried out Operation Al-Aqsa Storm against the usurping entity in retaliation for its intensified

# Raisi: Trade with Pakistan to hit \$10b

atrocities against the Palestinian people. However, the Tel Aviv regime has failed to achieve its declared objectives of "destroying Hamas" and finding Israeli captives despite killing at least 34,151 Palestinians, mostly women and children, and injuring 77,084 others.

#### Signing accords

Meanwhile, Iran and Pakistan signed eight accords on varying subjects to enhance cooperation in the different fields including trade, science technology, agriculture, health, culture, and judicial matters. Raisi and Sharif witnessed the ceremony as the representatives from both sides signed the documents, APP reported. The establishment of free trade zones along with the common border crossings, cooperation in the cinema and media sector, animal health, security, cooperatives and social welfare, standard, legal and judicial assistance in civil and commercial affairs were among main

high-level delegation, comprising the foreign minister and other members of the cabinet, senior officials and a business delegation.

He was received by Federal Minister Riaz Hussain Pirzada. This is the first visit by any head of state to Pakistan after the February 8 general elections. The leader's visit comes after Tehran launched an unprecedented retaliatory attack on Israel last week. Meanwhile, a statement issued by the Pakistani Foreign Office (FO) had said Raisi will meet President Asif Ali Zardari, Senate Chairman Yousaf Raza Gillani and National Assembly Speaker Ayaz Sadiq.

"He will also visit Lahore and Karachi and meet with the provincial leadership," it added.

Pakistan-Iran relations," the FO concluded.

Later on Monday, Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari welcomed his Iranian counterpart Raisi at the President's House. "[I am] honored to welcome my brother President Ebrahim Raisi," a post on the official X account of the President of Pakistan said.

"We expressed satisfaction at the trajectory of bilateral ties and agreed to further strengthen our dialogue and cooperation to reinforce existing ties." He further said that Pakistan and Iran were bound by common religion, history and culture.

A public holiday was announced in Karachi Division on Tuesday in view of the "visit of



Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi (2nd L) and Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif (R) witness a ceremony of signing eight cooperation agreements in Islamabad, Pakistan on April 22, 2024.  
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issues of the documents signed between the two sides.

The Iranian president's visit comes at a significant time, especially in terms of rising tension in the region amid the Israeli aggression in Gaza, its attack on the Iranian consulate, and Iran's subsequent retaliation followed by strikes on its territory.

Raisi arrived in Pakistan on an official visit accompanied by a

"The two sides will have a wide-ranging agenda to further strengthen Pakistan-Iran ties and enhance cooperation in diverse fields including trade, connectivity, energy, agriculture, and people-to-people contacts," the FO said.

"Pakistan and Iran enjoy strong bilateral ties anchored in history, culture and religion. This visit provides an important opportunity to further strengthen

foreign dignitaries and to avoid inconvenience to the general public".

As per a notification issued from the Commissioner Karachi office, all government and private offices, educational institutions (public/private), would remain closed on Tuesday except the essential services and officials involved in emergency duties.

## Pakistan, security neighborhood ...

On the other hand, the most significant challenge facing the Islamic Republic of Iran in its neighborhood policy is finding ways to ensure the security of the region without the presence of extra-regional security providers. The "basic security" neighborhood policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in the medium and long term, can alleviate this challenge, provided its clear policy is successful.

According to this policy, each regional country, based on its capabilities and prioritized perceived risks, can assume a responsible role in ensuring regional security. In this scheme, Iran and its neighboring countries determine their security cooperation priorities within a cooperative and mutually beneficial framework and take steps to address them. This policy, in addition to being flexible in adapting to opportunities and challenges, will also be compatible with the ambitions of each neighboring country at the regional level.

If the policy is adopted, the incumbent Iranian government would find the opportunity to

fill the fundamental vacuum of a neighborhood policy by opening the door to dialogue through economic and cultural interactions. In turn, the continuation of successful dialogues in political, economic, and security domains can fulfill the basic function of a neighborhood policy. By increasing the diplomatic dynamism of the country and providing a new playing field for Iran, these capacities can significantly contribute to Iran's economy, politics, and security. If successful, this plan will eliminate the need for heavy expenditures to eliminate security gaps in relations with regional countries.

Enhancing the level of economic, cultural, and security cooperation between Iran and Pakistan can create a new power equation for economic development in the regional environment with the participation of Iran, China, and Pakistan. Cooperation on such levels creates the basis for enhancing the security coefficient of Iran and Pakistan. The necessities of the neighborhood policy in Iran-Pakistan relations not only lead to the enhancement of mutual power equations but also provide the

groundwork for preventing the spread of regional conflicts. Iran and Pakistan, within the framework of the neighborhood policy, have the necessary potential to enhance the level of mutual relations and combat extremism, terrorism, and crisis-inducing groups in the regional environment.

Economic issues play a very significant role in Iran-Pakistan neighborhood policy. Pakistan's large population and its energy deficit can be addressed with Iran's fuel reserves. Although the underdevelopment of border regions of Iran and Pakistan and the lack of communication and economic infrastructure are considered inhibiting factors, the economies of both countries can be intertwined with a softening of security-oriented strategies and enhancing the capacities of the para-diplomatic approach. This is because the neighborhood policy oversees long-term directions for reducing threats and furthering neighbors' interests. Recent changes in power equations at the global and regional levels also reinforce Iran's neighborhood policy toward Pakistan.

## IRCS to become BRICS Health Working Group chair



The Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) will become the chair of the health working group of the BRICS group of emerging economies.

IRCS Chief Pir-Hossein Kolivand in a meeting with Co-Chair of BRICS Civil Forum Alena Peryshkina introduced the IRCS as the main option for the chair of the health working group of BRICS, reported Tasnim News Agency.

During the meeting, Kolivand pointed to the achievements of the IRCS in recent years and added that the society is active in various fields such as render-

ing relief and rescue services to the vulnerable strata of society. Today, the Iranian Red Crescent Society, benefiting from three million volunteers and 70,000 expert rescuers and relief workers, offers quality road, mountain, and coastal relief services round-the-clock, he emphasized.

Presenting relief training services to students and schoolchildren is an example of the trend of developing public training among all walks of life in society, Kolivand added. He further noted that the society has taken effective steps

by utilizing 18 relief helicopters, and hundreds of the relief-and-rescue vehicles.

Rendering quality relief and rescue services to the earthquakes that happened in Turkey, Afghanistan, and Syria is a part of the other measures taken by the Iranian Red Crescent Society in the international arena which resulted in receiving the highest award of Turkey, Kolivand stated.

The Iranian Red Crescent Society's clinics are also active in several countries with the most experienced and expert Iranian doctors offering quality relief services to the people in Africa, Asia and Latin America, he added.

Co-Chair of BRICS Civil Forum, for her part, said that the Iranian Red Crescent Society enjoys high capabilities and potential in various fields both in national and international arenas.

After coordinating with the Iranian foreign minister, it was agreed that the IRCS would be the representative of Iran's civil society in the BRICS group of emerging economies, Alena Peryshkina added.