

Pezeshkian's trip to Pakistan

Tehran seeking \$10 billion trade with Islamabad



Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian (3rd R) is welcomed by Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif (2nd L) upon the arrival at the airport in Islamabad on August 2, 2025.
● AFP

International Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian arrived in Pakistan's

capital Islamabad on Saturday for a two-day visit aimed at enhancing relations between the two neighboring countries espe-

cially in economy. Heading a high-ranking delegation, Pezeshkian was welcomed by Prime Minister Shehbaz Shar-

if at Islamabad international airport.

Several documents for the expansion of bilateral cooperation are set to be signed between the two countries during Pezeshkian's visit.

Speaking before his departure, Pezeshkian said Tehran plans to increase bilateral trade volume to \$10 billion annually.

"Through Pakistan, we can connect to the Silk Road between China and Pakistan, and this road can connect to Europe through Iran," he said.

On his way to Islamabad, the Iranian president made a stop in Pakistan's northern city of Lahore where he held talks with former Pakistani prime minister Nawaz Sharif and the Chief Minister of Punjab, Maryam Nawaz Sharif. Pezeshkian also visited the tomb

of the renowned poet Muhammad Iqbal.

At the meeting, Pezeshkian expressed his appreciation for the support shown by the government and people of Pakistan during the recent Israeli-imposed war of aggression against Iran.

"If Muslims around the world unite, the Zionist regime will no longer be able to target independent nations one by one," the president said.

He also called for greater cooperation in science, industry, and agriculture between regional countries. "We must pool our strengths to form a united bloc and meet the needs of the Islamic Ummah ourselves," he said.

For his part, Nawaz Sharif praised Iran's resilience in the face of Israeli aggression. "We

stand with the Islamic Republic of Iran, and our resolve will be stronger than ever moving forward."

He said that through their resistance, the Iranian people not only protected their homeland but also reshaped Iran's global image.

"This was not merely a confrontation with one regime," he said, "but a courageous stand against global powers."

The visit marks the fifth official meeting between the two countries' officials in the past year. The Iranian president and Pakistani prime minister have been in constant contact over the past months, particularly following the escalation of recent military tensions in the region, highlighting both sides' resolve to improve bilateral cooperation.

Gov't spox says talks with E3 facing 'complicated situation'

International Desk

Iranian government spokeswoman Fatemeh Mohajerani said Tehran sees no obstacle in dialogue with European countries on various issues, describing the status of ongoing negotiations with the European troika as "complex."

"What is now taking place between Iran and the three European countries is an exchange of views on the nuclear issue, which has faced complicated situation," Mohajerani said in an interview with Russia's Sputnik news agency which was published on Saturday.

She said the ongoing negotiations between Iran, France, Germany and Britain are not aimed at reaching an agreement, adding that the negotiations have focused on the exchange of opinions.

Her remarks followed last week's meeting in Istanbul between Iranian officials and representatives from Britain, France and Germany, known as the E3. The closed-door session marked the first formal nuclear discussions since Israeli and US aggression against Iran in June.

The three European countries in recent weeks have threatened to trigger the UN "snapback" mechanism if no deal is reached between Iran and the United States.

Reiterating threats against Iran regarding the activation of the "snapback mechanism," German foreign minister

said on Saturday that his country is working together with its European partners to settle Iran's nuclear issue through diplomatic means and to prevent the escalation of new military tension between Iran, the US, and Israel.

In response to the question about Germany's objective in nuclear talks following the US attacks on Iran's nuclear facilities, Johann Wadephul said the European countries are talking to see whether they can negotiate on the issue or not. He said that in fact they are "negotiations for negotiations."

The snapback mechanism allows for the return of anti-Iran sanctions suspended under the 2015 nuclear deal from which the US withdrew in 2018 and the European parties failed to fulfill their commitments.

The 2015 deal, reached between Iran and the UN Security Council's permanent members – Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States – plus Germany, imposed curbs on Iran's nuclear program in exchange for sanctions relief. But it unraveled when the United States, during Donald Trump's first term as president, unilaterally withdrew from the accord and reimposed sweeping sanctions.

The Europeans had pledged continued support for the deal, but the mechanism intended to offset US sanctions never materialized effectively and many Western firms were forced to exit Iran.

Tehran calls on Tokyo to join global campaign to abolish WMDs



Hiroshima, Japan 1947

International Desk

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi called on Japan to join Tehran in leading a global movement to abolish weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) as part of concerted efforts aimed at maintaining peace and promoting disarmament.

Araghchi made the plea in an opinion piece submitted to The Asahi Shimbun and other Japanese media prior to the 80th anniversary of the US atomic bombings of the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

"Japan and Iran must lead a global movement for the total abolition of all WMDs: nuclear, chemical and biological," he wrote.

The top diplomat pointed out that Iran shared the pain and suffering of WMDs with Japan as it was targeted with chemical weapons during Iraq's imposed war in the 1980s.

He described the atomic bombings of the two cities on August 6 and 9, 1945, as "a testament to the devastating power of nuclear weapons."

"Many survivors carry physical and

psychological wounds that time has not healed," Araghchi wrote. "They have lived their lives in the shadow of those nuclear flashes, turning their trauma into tireless advocacy for peace and disarmament."

During a NATO summit meeting in June, US President Donald Trump equated the US attack against three nuclear facilities in Iran that month with the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

"That hit ended the war. I don't want to use an example of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. But that was essentially the same thing. That ended that war," he told reporters.

Araghchi took issue with Trump's comment, saying, "The remark was more than a historical misstep; it was a deep insult to the memories of the dead and the dignity of those still living with the consequences of those bombings."

He added that in Iran, "the comparison was received with particular pain and fury."

In 1987 during the Iran-Iraq war, the city of Sardasht in northwestern Iran



Sardasht, Iran 1987

came under a mustard gas attack from Iraq that killed about 130 Iranians and left several thousand with permanent disabilities.

Based on that experience, Araghchi wrote that Iran "has suffered from the effects of WMDs in its own modern history."

He added, "Few nations understand, as deeply as ours, the irreversible impact of WMDs. We must raise our collective voice to say: never again."

Israel bombed Iranian nuclear facilities, military sites and residential areas during its recent aggression against Iran, which began on June 13. The aggression claimed the lives of nearly 1,100 Iranians.

Iran retaliated with ballistic missile attacks on Israel. The United States also joined its ally Israel and bombed three Iranian nuclear facilities on June 22.

The 12-day aggression culminated in a unilateral cease-fire agreement that Israel was forced to accept after suffering heavy losses, which the regime shamelessly censored before the eyes of the public and the international community.

Transit expansion key ...

Iran has already declared its readiness to serve as a transit hub for Pakistani goods bound for Central Asia, the Caucasus, and Europe.

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Connecting Chabahar and Gwadar could position both countries as key players in global trade. With the development of free trade zones, the attraction of Chinese investment, and long-term planning, Iran and Pakistan have the potential to become central actors in the global commercial landscape. If both nations collaborate effectively on transit corridor development, their bilateral trade could reach \$12 billion by 2030.

Considering that the two countries host 23 diplomatic, consular, commercial, cultural, and media missions on each other's soil, Iran should make the most of this important presidential visit to Pakistan. Key areas of focus should include a range of economic, political, and security topics.

First, the visit should emphasize the expansion of economic and infrastructure cooperation. This includes investment in border infrastructure, the establishment of new border markets, and the modern-

ization of customs facilities. Second, transportation links must be strengthened, particularly the Zahedan-Quetta rail line, and joint projects such as the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline must be advanced. Removing banking and trade barriers and establishing multilateral monetary agreements should also be on the agenda.

Third, the two countries need to enhance security cooperation in response to cross-border threats. Joint security mechanisms and standing commissions should be established to address border-related issues such as terrorism and smuggling. Fourth, counterterrorism efforts must be deepened through operational coordination between Iranian and Pakistani security forces.

Fifth, tighter border control using smart customs systems should be pursued. Efforts should also be made to streamline visa issuance and crack down on smuggling operations. Finally, diplomatic and cultural relations ought to be strengthened by holding regular diplomatic meetings, expanding scientific and cultural cooperation, and initiating strategic dialogue.



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