

Israel's role in border terror incidents clear: *Former envoy*

Terrorism 'ominous gift' foreign powers passed on to Pakistan



Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif (front-L) walks alongside Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian, who headed a high-ranking delegation during his trip to Pakistan, in Islamabad on August 3, 2025.

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INTERVIEW

With Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian's two-day visit to Pakistan, marked by the signing of 12 cooperation documents and meetings with top officials, a major step was taken toward stepping up Tehran-Islamabad

relations.

This official trip, carried out at the invitation of the Pakistani government and accompanied by a high-ranking delegation of Iranian officials and senior experts, saw both sides reach agreements in tourism, agriculture, judicial and legal cooperation, industry, science and technology, transportation and transit, cultural heritage, and economic and commercial cooperation.

Pezeshkian's visit to Pakistan was, in fact, in response to Islamabad's strong backing of Tehran during the imposed 12-day war and its condemnation of the Zionist regime's aggression against Iran. During the Zionist regime's assault on Iran, Pakistan's parliament stated it would step up to the plate to defend Iran's territorial integrity and support its government and people if necessary.

Moreover, Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, during Pezeshkian's recent visit, laid out his country's clear support for Iran's rights, especially against the Zionist regime's aggression and Iran's peaceful nuclear program. He stressed that under the UN Charter, Iran has the full right to go down the path of peaceful nuclear use, and Pakistan stands behind this legitimate right.

Masoud Pezeshkian, while emphasizing the importance of ramping up trade exchanges between the two countries to \$10 billion, called for the swift implementation of economic agreements reached.

Regarding the outcomes and achievements of the president's visit to Pakistan, Iran Daily spoke with Mashallah Shakeri, former Iranian ambassador to Pakistan and expert on Pakistani affairs. The text of the interview follows:

IRAN DAILY: How do you assess the Iranian president's recent visit to Pakistan and its significance?

SHAKERI: In my view, this trip was a very timely and crucial move in expanding relations with our neighbors. It's important because Pakistan is one of our powerful neighbors, home to 250 million Muslims. Pakistan holds significant power factors on the international stage. Last month, as the rotating president of the UN Security Council, Pakistan, alongside China and Russia, laid the groundwork for a UN resolution condemning the Zionist regime and US attacks on our country. At every level — intellectuals, academics, leaders, and the public — Pakistan rose as one voice to support us and the Resistance movement. You could say it showed the best support of Iran among neighbors and other countries during the war. Therefore, Mr. Pezeshkian's visit can be seen as a gesture of gratitude to this good neighbor as well as a move to cement ties between the two nations through the signing of 12 agreements exchanged between officials. This visit effectively opened up a new chapter in bilateral relations, paving the way for further development and strengthening of the ties between Iran and Pakistan as friendly neighbors.

Although there have been historical border tensions linked to terrorist group activities, as you mentioned, Pakistan showed the highest support for Iran during the imposed 12-day conflict among all countries. What do you think explains this?

Pakistan shares an identity bond with us that simply cannot be torn apart. The path of Islamic civilization ran through

Iran to Pakistan. Our relations are not recent but deeply rooted and longstanding. Although border incidents have occasionally stirred the pot and caused some friction, they have not negatively affected the overall good relationship.

In truth, the relations carry the weight of centuries of history. Iran is essentially the cradle of Islamic civilization, and Pakistan recognizes Persian as the mother tongue of Urdu. In other words, our cultural and ideological common ground with Pakistan is very strong and well-established. So, the occasional minor border clashes, although painful, should be seen in context as Pakistan's border with Afghanistan faces similar issues; Such problems are not unique to us.

Terrorism in Pakistan is a dark legacy foisted on the country by foreign powers, combined with some past political missteps that allowed terrorism to take root, causing attacks like those we see. However, within the state, society, intellectuals, and media, Pakistan looks at Iran positively — as a strong, historic, glorious, and respectable neighbor. We have always stood by and appreciated Pakistan's supportive stance toward Iran across various levels.

You pointed out the deep cultural, religious, and ideological ties between the two countries. Why then have diplomatic and cooperative relations not kept pace with this depth across different fields?

Yes, there are many untapped potentials for cooperation that remain underutilized. As you said, the two countries boast profound and deep-rooted cultural ties and people-to-people connections, but in areas like economic cooperation, scientific



Mashallah Shakeri

and technological exchange, and road and transport networks, we have yet to capitalize on the existing capacities. I believe unlocking these potentials requires ramping up diplomatic visits and leveraging the private sectors' capabilities, alongside formal agreements between Tehran and Islamabad. Some groundwork has been laid, but it needs to speed up.

Currently, our trade exceeds \$3 billion, which means Pakistan is already a good economic partner. But we must keep in mind that Pakistan's political landscape is sometimes influenced by outside powers and

cross-border governments that, through threats or incentives, try to sway decision-making. Another factor is Pakistan's frequent political changes and instability, which occasionally lead to shifts in policy and hamper consistent government stances. These factors cause breaks and disruptions in Pakistan's approach.

Therefore, addressing bilateral relations requires considering these realities. Yet, the most crucial factor remains the shared neighborhood and border — an unchanging, rock-solid element in relations. Geography doesn't change, so neighbors remain neighbors forever, and we must keep doubling down on advancing neighborly policy and building up our connections and links.

Given the positive relations between Iran and Pakistan,

can't they step up their cooperation in the military field and even carry out joint military exercises?

Absolutely, why not? This recent visit of Brigadier General Aziz Nasirzadeh, Iran's minister of defense, as part of the president's delegation, and his meeting with Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Pakistan's defense minister, clearly point to a genuine will between the two countries in this area. Moreover, last year, the late Major General Mohammad Bagheri, chief of staff of the Armed Forces, led a high-ranking military delegation to Islamabad, and Pakistani military commanders visited Iran alongside Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif over the past two or three months. Although sometimes the military cooperation flies under the radar in the media, signs



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (front-L) pays tribute to Muhammad Iqbal, the Pakistani poet who wrote extensively in both Urdu and Persian, in Lahore, Pakistan, on August 2, 2025.

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