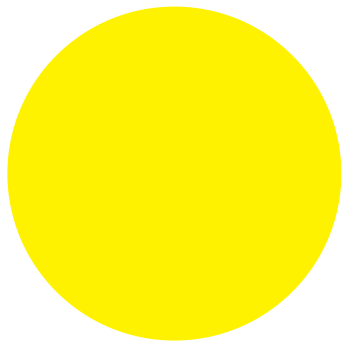


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A protester faces off with riot police in France's capital Paris, during demonstrations by high school students for better conditions at their schools on October 17, 2026.



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Iran-Pakistan border disruption unlikely to trigger short-term transit crisis

By **Delaram Ahmadi**
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INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

Reports emerged on Saturday that commercial activity at a crossing between Iran and Pakistan had been suspended. Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baghaei subsequently confirmed that border traffic and exchanges between the two countries had been temporarily halted, citing "technical issues and the need to take precautionary measures." He said the problem would be resolved as soon as possible following consultations between Iranian and Pakistani officials. The disruption comes as Pakistan's land bor-



ders have taken on greater importance for the transit of Iranian goods following the US naval blockade. However, Amin Rezaeinejad, an expert on Pakistan affairs, told Iran Daily that the border closure would not trigger a crisis in Iran's goods transit in the short term, although a prolonged disruption could create serious problems in the long run.

IRAN DAILY: What impact could a temporary suspension of cross-border exchanges have on Iran's foreign trade and transit capacity?

REZAEINEJAD: Iran continues to move goods through its other borders. Pakistani officials have also indicated that the closure will probably be limited to Saturday and Sunday. So the situation may not develop into the kind of crisis we anticipate. It would be premature to as-

sume that Iran's borders with Pakistan are being completely sealed off and that trade between the two countries could be entirely restricted. Even if that happens, Iran can still temporarily maintain its transit routes to China through its northern borders, via Afghanistan and the Wakhan Corridor. However, this route cannot replace the Pakistani border because goods are unloaded at the port of Karachi and transported from there toward Iran. The Wakhan Corridor does not currently have the capacity to handle such volumes. This would leave Iran relying on its northern borders with neighboring countries, as well as its western borders with Iraq and, to some extent, Turkey in the northwest. If the closure persists, Iran will lose part of its transit capacity. However, a goods transit crisis is unlikely to occur in the short term. The situation could become

more serious over the longer term. Iran has several border crossings with Pakistan, all of which are regularly active. If these crossings are closed, the disruption could eventually become a source of crisis, particularly given the restrictions on air and maritime routes—in effect. But in the short term, I do not expect any major consequences.

Given the US Treasury Department's recent warnings about foreign financial institutions doing business with sanctioned Iranian entities, to what extent is it possible that the suspension of commercial activity at Iran-Pakistan border crossings has been influenced by political and economic pressure from Washington, beyond the stated technical reasons?

One important factor in Pakistan's relationship with the United States is the country's

substantial debt exposure to Washington through its obligations to the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. This debt is roughly three times Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves. We will have to wait to determine whether the closure is genuinely due to technical issues. Officials have indicated that the border will probably reopen on Monday. If it remains closed beyond that point, we may be able to conclude that the United States is putting pressure on Pakistan, given the scale of its debt. In that case, the stated technical reasons may well be a pretext, and Pakistan may have closed the crossings because of the economic pressure it faces as a result of its debt obligations. In practice, this would mean that Pakistan was aligning itself with Washington's policy of imposing a land blockade on Iran.

To what extent does Islamabad have the capacity and political will to resolve the problem swiftly and prevent further disruptions to cross-border traffic? What steps could help ensure that external pressure does not undermine trade relations between the two countries?

Pakistan is heavily influenced by the United States, and that cannot be overlooked. Despite the substantial investments China has made in the country, Pakistan's trade balance still tilts toward the United States and Western countries more broadly. This is a factor that cannot be ignored. As a result, Pakistan is heavily dependent on the United States economically, including through the World Bank, the IMF and the international monetary order established by Washington. Pakistan remains deeply tied to this system.