
Shehbaz Sharif and Vladimir Putin meet in Astana, discuss expansion of Pakistan-Russia ties

Published on July 3, 2024

Document Date: Wed, Aug 20 2025 01:09:36 pm

Category: ,English,International -

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif met Russian President Vladimir Putin on

Wednesday, emphasizing the need to expand bilateral trade between Pakistan and Russia. In his televised remarks, Shehbaz noted that current trade stands at around \$1 billion, suggesting it could be significantly increased by resolving financial and banking issues.

Attending the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Council of Heads of State and SCO Plus summits, Shehbaz expressed pleasure in meeting Putin, recalling their previous interaction in Samarkand. He congratulated President Putin on his re-election and expressed confidence in Russia's continued progress under his leadership.

Shehbaz highlighted the positive trajectory of Pakistan-Russia relations in recent years and

expressed readiness to strengthen bilateral ties, benefiting from Putin's experience and leadership. He thanked the Russian government for a recent oil shipment to Pakistan and expressed a desire for continued cooperation in this area.

He noted that Pakistan-Russia ties are not influenced by geopolitical factors, citing a history of business relations, including barter trade from the 1950s to 1970s when Pakistan imported machinery from Russia and exported leather and other commodities.

President Putin echoed Shehbaz's sentiments, recalling their discussions in Samarkand on improving bilateral relations. He noted that Pakistan and Russia enjoy cordial relations bolstered by trade linkages and expressed readiness to enhance cooperation in energy, agriculture, and food security with Pakistan.