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## **TURKEY, IRAN, PAKISTAN RAIL LINK TO CHINA'S BELT AND ROAD**

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04.01.2021

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Nikkei Asia (29 December 2020)

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The governments of Turkey, Iran and Pakistan will revive a transnational rail service linking Istanbul, Tehran and Islamabad in 2021. The ITI transnational railroad is expected to enhance connectivity with China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) by providing a rail connection between China and Turkey, Nikkei Asia has learned.

The roots of this grand project can be found in the ITI Container Train Service launched in 2009 under the umbrella of the Economic Cooperation Organization. ECO is a 10-member political and economic intergovernmental organization founded in 1985 by Iran, Pakistan and Turkey.

The container service only got as far as test runs, however, and was never fully operational. Even so, the three countries always planned to follow up the initial freight trains with passenger services.

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