

ENVOY EXCELLENCY

Go Beyond Excellence

*41st Anniversary of the National Day of the
Islamic Republic of Iran*

February 11, 2020



70th Year of Iran – India Relations


A Publication of the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, New Delhi, India




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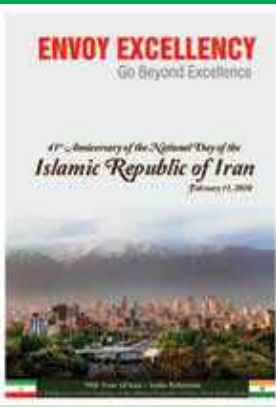
Honours Your Trust



The Supreme Leader H.E. Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Hosseini Khamenei, Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran



H.E. Dr. Hassan Rouhani, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran



ENVOY EXCELLENCY

Go Beyond Excellence

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With utmost pride here ENVOY EXCELLENCY presents this Special Collectable Edition on Iran, On the occasion of the 41st Anniversary of the National Day of the Islamic republic of Iran, February 11, 2020 and Celebrating 70th Year of Iran – India Relations in association with the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in New Delhi, India.

The history of Persian Empire dates back to the time of development of ancient Mesopotamia, the land demarcated by the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Persia was known to be one of the world's earliest empires and enjoyed one of the most ancient urban civilizations.

The Iran government has successfully developed the country's communication, transportation, manufacturing, and energy infrastructures (including its prospective nuclear power facilities) and has integrated it's communication and transportation systems with those of neighbouring states.

Iran's vast natural gas reserves constitute more than one-tenth of the world's total.

Persian (Farsi) is a member of the Indo-Iranian subfamily of the Indo-European languages, and the official language of the government and public instruction and is the mother tongue of more than half of the population.

India-Iran relations span millennia marked by meaningful interactions. The two countries shared a border till 1947 and share several common features in their language, culture and traditions. India-Iran commercial ties have traditionally been dominated by Indian import of Iranian crude oil. The Indian community in Iran comprises of around 4000 Indian nationals.

Iran with 24 UNESCO World Heritage Sites is one of the 10 countries with the most Cultural Heritage Sites in the UNESCO's World Heritage list.

We are deeply obliged to H.E. Dr. Ali Chegeni, Ambassador of Iran to India, for contributing an interview for the special collectable edition.

In addition, on the behalf of our entire team, let me convey sincere gratitude to all the contributors who helped making this special collectable edition successful.

Sincere wishes, and happy reading.

Prof. Manoj Sharma
(editor@envoyexcellency.com)

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In an Interview with Envoy Excellency
H.E. Dr. Ali Chegeni, Ambassador of Iran to India

“Iran and India as two great civilizations shares stronge social, political, and economic ties”



Iran will be observing its National Day in February 2020. Tell us about the special preparations that will go behind celebrating the historic day this time?

Iran's National Day is reminiscent of the Islamic Revolution called Enqelāb-e Eslāmi in Persian, popular uprising in Iran in 1978–79 that resulted in the toppling of the tyrannical monarchy on February 11, 1979, and led to the establishment of new political system based on Iranian aspirations for sovereignty, freedom and democracy within the framework of an Islamic republic.

On this occasion, annually Iranian people organizes the nationwide rally every February 11th to highlight the size of mass support for the revolution, which replaced the king Mohammad

Reza Pahlavi's government with an Islamic Republic under the leadership of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

This event is also known as Ten-Day Dawn to commemorate the period of protests following the February 1, 1979, return of Khomeini from exile.

How do you see the present diplomatic relations between India and Iran? What are the key challenges and opportunities for the relations between both countries?

We can list many political and strategic factors to underscore the importance of both countries for each other. In terms of strategic and political calculations, with respect to Asian century, Iran has placed India and other Asian states in its priority in the line of "Look East Policy".

On the economic profile, despite the fact that connectivity and energy will continue to be the basis of the relations, there are many opportunities in the non-oil sectors, direct investment or joint ventures targeting the big market of the region. Of course there would be some constraining factors too, but it is essential to overcome barriers such as regular bureaucracy and lack of understanding of each other's capacities.

India and Iran will complete 70 years of partnership in March 2020. What do you think are the reasons behind this unique bonhomie?

Historically, Iran and India as two great civilizations have shared social, political, and economic ties. The neighborhood continued until the partition in 1947 and until the British colonization of India, even the court language of India was Persian. Postcolonial political and cultural ties between the Iran and India always have been strong and cordial. For example, Iran's Culture House in New Delhi is the oldest one in India.

I do believe that the cultural-historical ties are the cornerstone for drawing a multi-dimensional and long-standing relation and apart from the foreign policy agenda, these ties have pushed the relationship ever forward. These civilizational ties provide a good ground and context to better comprehend the economic and strategic factors that shape the Indo-Iranian relationship.

How can the Iran embassy push to attain better cooperation and partnership between the two nations?

We are looking for some new drivers and motives in many areas such as connectivity, energy in particular the renewables, trade and investment, science and technology, industrial collaboration in various sectors such as car manufacturing, railway, mines and metals, as well as people to people contacts and academic collaboration. Already we have signed several MoUs in all the above areas during the visit of H.E. Honorable Prime Minister Modi to Tehran in 2016 and President Rouhani to New Delhi in 2018. The Embassy is trying to translate these good intentions into actions.

Bilateral programmes for the development of resources have helped the two countries immensely, what other sectors as per you need similar penetration?

There are many rooms for new areas of cooperation. These range



from deep sea exploration to building knowledge based economies based on science and technology, innovation, robotics and artificial intelligence, infrastructure, skill development, agriculture, shipbuilding, railways, and greater connectivity, especially tourism and people-to-people contacts.

Special focus will be given to cooperation on Chabahar Port as a strategic hub of transport in the region. This port enjoys special status and it is the gateway to Afghanistan, Central Asia, Caucasia, Russia and Europe which H.E. Narendra Modi Honorable Prime Minister of India coined it as "Golden Gate".

What are the key opportunity areas in the tourism sector between India and Iran?

Iran is a unique country in terms of its tourist attractions and abundant resources. The most important characteristics of the country are its diverse natural and ecotourism attractions, religious, ethical and cultural diversity, its national and Islamic architectural style, diverse climatic conditions and above all its people's hospitality. Iran also has been ranked first worldwide in terms of price competitiveness in the World Economic Forum's "Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2019" with a score of 6.7.

Beside these advantages, the people of India and Iran share significant cultural, linguistic and ethnic characteristics. Iran with a diverse landscape, geographical proximity and price competitiveness offers a most affordable tourist spot in world. Further, the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has predicted that India will account for 50 million outbound tourists by 2020. So the embassy is trying to present these capacities to Indian outbound tourists.

We have started offering e-visa (visa on arrival) for Indians. Besides this, we need more services directly connecting India to our tourist hubs like Mashhad, Isfahan and Shiraz.

How have the relations between India and Iran developed ever since H.E. Narendra Modi the Honorable Prime Minister of India?

In May 2016 H.E. Prime Minister Modi visited Iran which 12 memorandums of understanding (MOU) were signed that enhanced cooperation in a large range of areas, including policy dialogue between foreign ministries and engagement on matters as diverse as cultural relations, mining, and infrastructure. President Rouhani paid a visit to India in 2018 which was the continuation of a new phase of enhancing Iran's partnership with India and 14 MOUs were signed as well.

Describe the trade relations between India and Iran. What are the various investment opportunities for Iran in India and vice-versa?

Despite the unjust US unilateral sanctions, we need to move beyond buyer-seller relationship. In this line, we are setting up the road map for facilitating the trade, investment and more access to each other's market.

The Agreement on Avoidance of Double Taxation was signed to promote bilateral trade and investment. The Rupee Arrangement have been put in place for bilateral trade and talks on a preferential trade agreement (PTA) is also going on.

During President Rouhani's visit, it was decided that India will set up plants in sectors such as fertilizers, petrochemicals and metallurgy in Chabahar Free Trade Zone (FTZ) on terms mutually beneficial to the concerned parties. This will be a win-win investment as it will promote India's energy security while providing financial resources and employment opportunities to Iran.

India and Iran share a strong cultural bond. The world's largest Parsis community is in India. What do you think can be done to develop cultural tourism between the two countries?

Every foreign tourist who visits Iran is completely impressed by the beauty and charm of the Country and its friendly and warm people. This hospitality has a stronger tone for the Parsis. This is because all Iranians including Parsis, who are living in Yazd, Kerman and elsewhere would embrace their fellow Parsis brothers and sisters with open arms. The Embassy strongly supports the idea of Parsis or other communities travelling to Iran as tourists in the line of people to people contacts.

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Mr. Syed Ibne Hussain



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The Emblem of Iran

The Emblem of Iran, since the 1979 Iranian Revolution features the Arabic word Allah ("God"), and is a ligature for Kalimah: as well; rendered in stylized characters.



Flag of Iran

The flag of Iran also known as the Three-Coloured Flag is a tricolour comprising equal horizontal bands of green, white and red with the national emblem ("Allah") in red centred on the white band and the takbir written 11 times in the Kufic script in white, at the bottom of the green and the top of the red band.



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Iran at a Glance



Official Name: Islamic Republic of Iran

Head of State: President H.E. Dr. Hassan Rouhani

National Day: 11th of February (Islamic Revolution of Iran-1979)

Capital: Tehran

Area: 1,648,196 sq km

Land Boundaries: 4,137 km

Sea Boundaries: 2,700 km (Including the Caspian Sea)

River Boundaries: 1,918 km

Border Countries: Afghanistan, Azerbaijan (Nakhichevan), Armenia, Iraq, Pakistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan

Climate: Mostly arid and semi-arid, moderate along Caspian coast and mountainous temperate along west and north-west.

Natural Resources: Petroleum, natural gas, coal, chromium, copper, iron ore, lead, manganese, zinc, sulfur

Land use (1998)

Arable Land: 300,000 sq. Km	18.2%
Meadows and Pastures: 900,000 sq. Km	54.6%
Forest and Woodland: 120,000 sq. Km	7.3%
Other: 258,000 sq. Km	15.7%
Irrigated land: 70,000 sq. Km	4.2%

Agricultural Products: Wheat, rice, barley, potato, grains, sugar-beet, cotton, fresh & dried fruits, dates, pistachio, fruits, nuts, poultry, meat, dairy products, wool, caviar, flowers, saffron and medicinal plants.

Population: 81.109.272 million

Population Growth rate: 1.2%

Religions

Muslim: 99.56%

Zoroastrian, Christian & Jewish: 0.44%

Languages: Persian and Persian dialects, Azeri, Kurdish, Lori, Baloochi, Arabic

Literacy Total: 84.2%

Currency Rial (IRR)

GDP: 405 billion USD (2017)

GDP per capita: 5516 US\$

GDP growth rate: 4.3 %

Total Imports: 43.648 bn USD (2017)

Import Grow Rate: 5.16 % (2017)

Total Exports: 43.940 bn USD (2017)

Export Grow Rate: 3.54 % (2017)

Foreign Direct Investment: 3.050 million US \$

Industries: Oil and gas, steel, aluminum, copper, electric and electronic equipment, cement & other building materials, metallurgy, home appliances, iron, textile, rugs and carpets, tapestry, miniature, ceramic, food processing (particularly sugar refining & vegetable oil production), petrochemicals, and car manufacturing & assemblies

Electricity : Production: 329.7 bilion kwh

Transportation:

Railways Networks: 8.442 km - Rank 24 in the world

Road Networks: 198.866km - Rank 26 in the world

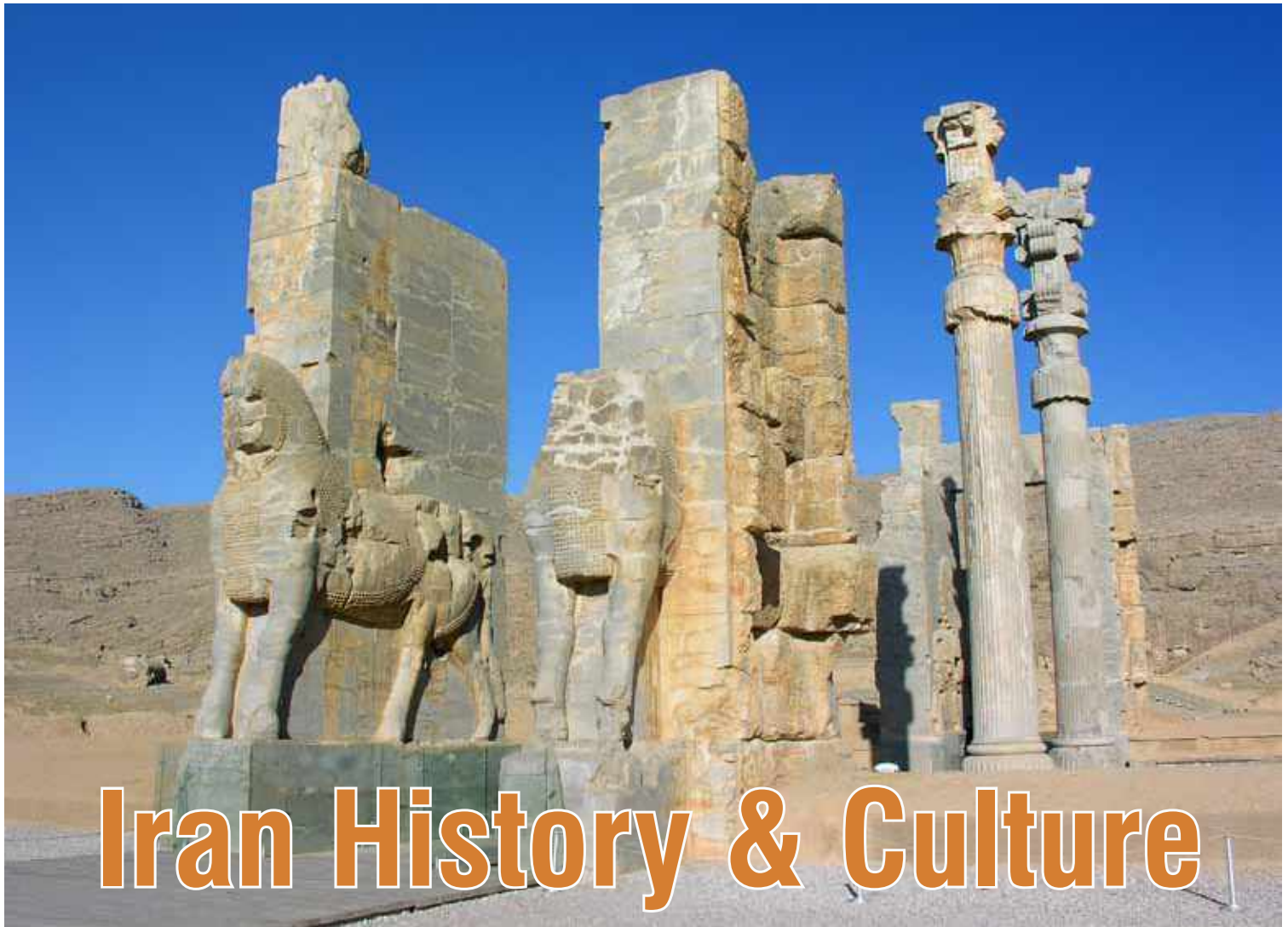
Ports: 11 commercial ports

Airports: 54

Inflation rate: 10.4 % (2017)

Economic Growth: 12.5 % (2017)

Unemployment Rate: 12.4 % (2017)



Iran History & Culture

History

The history of Persian Empire dates back to the time of development of ancient Mesopotamia, the land demarcated by the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Persia was known to be one of the world's earliest empires and enjoyed one of the most ancient urban civilizations.

The Elamite civilization is one of those ancient civilizations which attracted many archeologists' attention. Susa as the capital of the Elamite civilization was founded around 4000 BC alongside of Karoun River in southwestern Iran.

You can find a timeline of the Persian civilization and dynasties below.

- 4200 B.C.E. The ancient Susa Civilization emerged in today's Khoozestan (southwestern Iran). So far this has been reported as one of the oldest civilization recorded.
- 2000 B.C.E. The era of mass Arian migration (Indo-Aryan) to Persia began and gave Persia its historical name: Airyana, The land of the Aryans. Name Iran comes from the same term.
- 1737 B.C.E. Zoroaster, as the first prophet, introduced the concepts of monotheism.
- 559 B.C.E. Cyrus the Great gathered the Medes and Persian to establish the Achaemenid Empire of Persia.
- 515 B.C.E. Darius I moves the capital of Persia from Pasargadae to Persepolis.
- 322 B.C.E. Alexander the Great defeated Darius III and took, looted and burned Persepolis.
- 312 B.C.E. - 44 B.C.E. Selucid Dynasty was founded by Alexander's generals
- 163 B.C.E. - 224 C.E. Parthian Dynasty was established.
- 208 C.E. - 637 C.E. Sassanid Dynasty was established.
- 651 C.E. - 750 C.E. Persian culture and Islamic Empire conjoined to govern Iran.
- 819 C.E. - 999 C.E. Samanid Empire.
- 945 C.E. - 1055 C.E. Buyids Dynasty was established.
- 994 C.E. - 1030 C.E. Ghaznavid Dynasty (Turkic speaking) was established.
- 1045 C.E. - 1092 C.E. Seljuq Dynasty was established.
- 1077 C.E. - 1231 C.E. Khwarazmian dynasty ruled Iran.
- 1405 C.E. - 1517 C.E. Timurid Dynasty was established.
- 1502 C.E. - 1737 C.E. Safavid Dynasty ruled Iran.
- 1736 C.E. - 1795 C.E. Afsharian Dynasty established by Nader Shah.
- 1751 C.E. - 1794 C.E. Zand dynasty ruled Iran.
- 1795 C.E. - 1925 C.E. Qajar Dynasty ruled Iran.
- 1925 C.E. 1979 C.E. Pahlavi Dynasty ruled Iran.
- 1979 Islamic Revolution and Establishment of Islamic Republic.

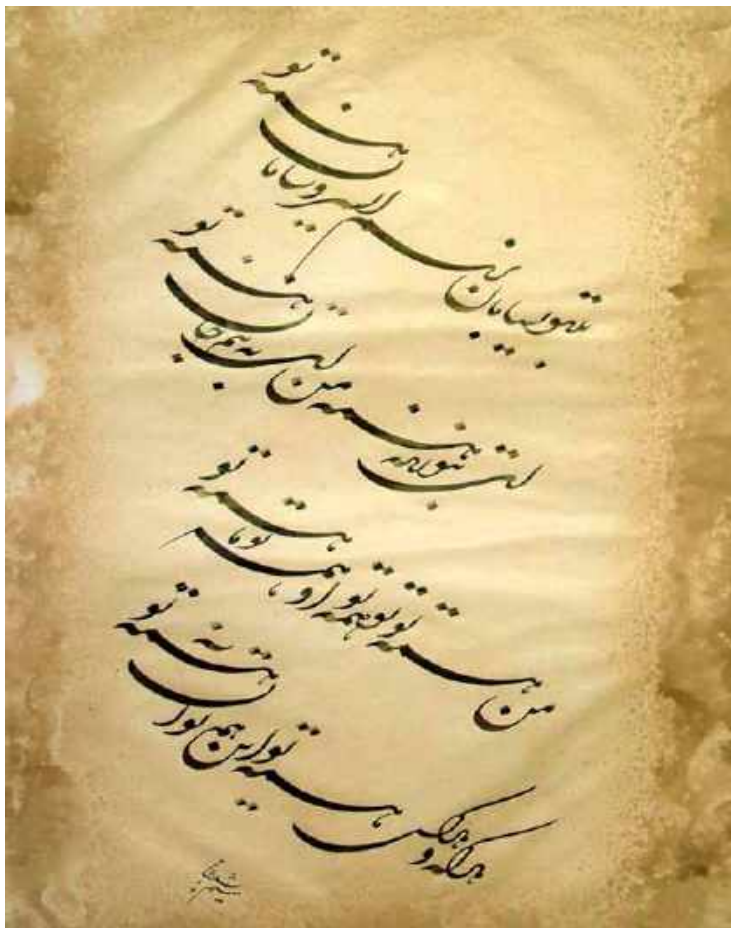
Iranian Culture

Iranian culture refers to the arts and other manifestations of intellectual achievement in Iran. The Persian form and stage of civilization defines Iranian's identity.

Language

The major language in Iran is Persian (Farsi). It is an Indo-European language which is widely spoken in Afghanistan and Tajikistan, as well.

The alphabet of Persian is very similar to Arabic. But they are not the same language. It is very much like the difference of English and French. Their alphabet is almost the same, but they are two different languages



Poetry

Persian poetry is one of the most beautiful poetry in the world. It is widely heard people of different languages appreciate the rhythm of the poetry and find it like music to their ears!

Ferdowsi, author of Shahnameh (Book of Kings), took 35 years to write his epic poem about the heroes of Ancient Persia. Shahnameh is easily compared to classic masterpieces like Dante's Divine Comedy, the plays of Shakespeare, the epics of Homer.

In the 13th and 14th centuries Saadi, Rumi and Hafez perfected the ghazal (a lyric poem with a fixed number of verses and a repeated rhyme). Rumi's Masnavi is considered one of the most beautiful Persian literary works.

Carpet

Persian carpets are the hand-woven rugs known for their artistic beauty and quality. Their economic and artistic influence in the Persian culture is famously known across the world. The cities of Ardabil, Tabriz, Kashan, and Isfahan are known to be the chief producers of Persian carpets.



A hand woven carpet is made of over one million knots and take over a year to make. A professional Persian carpet weaver can tie up to 12,000 knots a day. Well, you may know by now the price tag on a handwoven carpet is never overpriced.

If you visit Tehran, make sure you take a tour in Milad Tower and see "One Tourist One Knot" carpet. The carpet was woven by tourists and visitors who tied one knot each and completed the carpet with 2,233,000 knots.



Sculpture And Painting Artworks

Ceramics and clay figurines were the chief artworks of the prehistoric period and you can find detailed information about them in rich museums in Iran. Bronze and cast sculptures were widely found during excavations in the western Iran. The art of sculpture is still popular in Iran among contemporary artists. You might have heard about Parviz Tanavoli and his art works exhibited in British Museum, the Grey Art Gallery, and New York University.

Persian miniature is one of the main styles of painting in Iran. The fine and small paintings are mainly either book illustrations or designs to weave carpets. Miniature is mainly figurative scenes. The borders of the painting are decorated by non-figurative ornamental decoration.



It is a matter of pride and delight to be associated with this 'Special Collectable Edition on Iran' which is being released on the occasion of the 41st Anniversary of the National day of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the 11th of February 2020. Both the Countries enjoyed friendly ties for ages. It is therefore an occasion to celebrate, as we enter the 70th year of Iran-India diplomatic relations on the 11th of January 2020.

During this period, came a time when trade payments, which are the edifice of economic activity, were disrupted albeit for a brief period of about two years (2010&2011) on account of sanctions. Huge amounts were stuck with dues piling up as receivables, causing concerns to both the Countries. When many banks were shying away to provide a solution to this stale mate, a mid-sized Public Sector Bank - UCO Bank, in tune with its legacy of trust and service - ventured by offering to partner with Iranian Banks for a solution through a bilateral INR- payment mechanism; the first accord of which was signed in February 2012 in Tehran, Iran by both the Governments. UCO Bank was proud to be a part of the Government of India Delegation and played an active role in formalising the draft of the first accord along with all other stake holders. This provided a great reprieve to many Indian Exporters whose payments were stuck and also enabled payments towards crude oil imports to Iran. Thus UCO Bank modestly and silently played its part to avert supply side disruptions due to a payment bottleneck between the two Countries. As on date, UCO Bank has settled bilateral trade payments amounting to Rs: 3.2 trillion since inception. UCO Bank also has a Representative Office in Iran to facilitate ease of trade. UCO Bank is also actively involved as a Banker to IPGL, undertaking a major project for development of ChabaharPort.

UCO Bank, formerly United CommercialBank, was founded on 6th January 1943 by the great industrialist: Gansyamdas Birla, on the advice of the Great Mahatma Gandhi, in the back drop of the historic 'Quit India' movement in 1942. The Bank forayed into international business by opening branches abroad as early as 1952 in Singapore and in Hongkong apart from branches in other overseas destinations. On the 19th July 1969, the bank was nationalised and became a public sector bank owned by the Government of India. The Bank is one of the few Indian banks with International branches & having a network of correspondents across all time zones with a Pan-India Network of 3080 branches dispersed sufficiently across all states of India. The Bank is Basel-III compliant and the business exceeds INR 3 Trillion as on date. The Banking services at UCO Bank involve high levels of process automation, web based services, and API's making digital banking a unique experience. Blended with digitalisation is the human touch of a dedicated team of professionals to take care of the Banking needs of every customer.

Our compliments and assurances of our highest respect to Excellency Honorable Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran: Mr. Ali Chegeni and his wonderful team on this auspicious occasion. Compliments on the occasion are also due to our valued customers, the various Iranian Banks having relationship with us, the various Ministries and the Central Bank.

With Warm Regards

**A.K Goel.
MD & CEO
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The agriculture sector of Iran contributes roughly 10 per cent to its gross national product and employs a sixth of the labour force. About 9 per cent of Iran's land is arable, with the main food-producing areas located in the Caspian region and northwestern valleys. With time Iran has successfully introduced commercial farming in its agriculture practice thus replacing subsistence farming as the dominant mode of agricultural production.

Other important players contributing the economy of Iran are manufacturing — large-scale factory manufacturing that began in the 1920s has progressed into delivering various scientific and technological fields, including petrochemical, pharmaceutical, aerospace, defence, and heavy industry. Even in the face of economic sanctions, Iran is emerging as an industrialized country; handicrafts, automobile manufacturing, defence industry, construction and real estate, mines and metals, retail and distribution, healthcare and pharma, Communications, electronics and IT, tourism and travel among others.

Iran has an estimated Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of over US\$447.7 billion, catering to a population of 80.6 million



Mobarakeh in Isfahan is Iran's largest steel mill listed on the Tehran Stock Exchange.



Persian Achaemenid gold coin (circa 490 BC)

people. Iranian authorities have adopted a comprehensive strategy encompassing market-based reforms as reflected in the government's 20-year vision document and the sixth five-year development plan for the 2016-2021 period. The sixth five-year development plan is comprised of three pillars, namely, the development of a resilient economy, progress in science and technology, and the promotion of cultural excellence. On the economic front, the development plan envisages an annual economic growth rate of 8 per cent and reforms of state-owned enterprises, the financial and banking sector, and the allocation and management of oil revenues among the main priorities of the government during the five years.

The national constitution divides the economy into three sectors: public, which includes major industries, banks, insurance companies, utilities, communications, foreign trade, and mass transportation; cooperative, which includes production and distribution of goods and services; and private, which consists of all activities that supplement the first two sectors. The fiscal deficit in 2017/18 reduced to 1.8 percent as a pickup in oil income led to government revenues growth outpacing the increase in expenditures. In 2017/18, Revenues accounted for 17 percent of GDP. Overtures by reform-minded Iranian politicians to open their country to foreign investment has also lead to improving its economy.

Iran remains highly dependent on its one major industry, the extraction of petroleum and natural gas for export, and the government is making promising progress in providing opportunities for a younger, better-educated workforce, which has led to a growing sense of vision among lower and middle-class Iranians. The government has successfully developed the country's communication, transportation, manufacturing and energy infrastructures (including its prospective nuclear power facilities) and has integrated it's communication and transportation systems with those of neighbouring states.

Persian Language

Persian (Farsi) is a member of the Indo-Iranian sub-family of the Indo-European languages, and the official language of the government and public instruction and is the mother tongue of more than half of the population. It is used and understood by nearly all Iranians and millions of Persian-speakers in the neighboring countries such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Turkmenistan, and so on.

Historically, the Persian language has developed through three distinct stages: Old, Middle, and Modern. Old Persian, used exclusively for royal proclamations and announcements, is known chiefly from cuneiform inscriptions dating from the time of the Achaemenian Kings of ancient Persia (6th - 4th centuries BC). Old Persian was highly inflected, as was Avestan, which is regarded by some as a form of Old Persian and by others as separate tongue. Avestan was the language of the sacred texts of Zoroastrianism that are known as the Avesta (probably composed during 7th - 5th centuries BC).

Middle Persian, derived directly from Old Persian, and also known as Pahlavi, prevailed under the Sassanid rulers of Persia (3rd - 8th centuries AD). Grammatically, much simplification of inflection took place in Middle Persian, which was recorded both in an Aramaic alphabet and a script called Huzvareh. The official language of Zoroastrian Priesthood, it also had a noteworthy literature of Manichaean and Zoroastrian texts.

The Modern form of Persian evolved directly from the Middle Persian (900 AD onward) has not changed much since that date. The grammar of Modern Persian is comparatively simple. The inflection of nouns and verbs has been greatly reduced since the ancient stage of the language. A number of Arabic words were added to the vocabulary as a result Islam entering Persia by the Muslim Arabs in the 7th century AD. Modern Persian, written from right to left, is the medium of an old and great literature and is written in a modified version of the Arabic alphabet (it has four letters of its own in addition to those of the Arabic).

As part of the Indo-European family of languages, Persian is distinctly related to Latin, Greek, the Slavic and Teutonic languages and English. This relationship can be seen in such cognates as baradar (brother), madar (mother), and pedar (father). It is a relatively easy language for English-speaking people to learn compared with any other major languages of the Middle East.

Persian (locally called Farsi) is the most important of a group of several related languages that linguists classify as Indo-Iranian. Farsi speakers regard their language as extremely beautiful and they take great pleasure in listening to the verses of poets such as Ferdowsi, Hafez and Sa'di. The language is a living link with the past and has played an important role in binding the nation together.

English is the most widely spoken foreign language in Iran. Millions of Iranians have been studying Basic English at high school and through television.

Hotel and airline employees and others who deal with foreigners have usually learned enough English to cope with everyday problems. Tour guides are trained to specialize in one or more foreign languages, but not all of them have a firm grasp of English. To make yourself understood, you may have to speak very slowly, clearly and simply.



Persian poem, Agra Fort, India, 18th century



Persian poem, Takht-e Shah Jahan, Agra Fort, India

Indian Style of Persian Poetry

The early twentieth-century invention of *sabk* or style as a way to periodize the Persian language has been one of the most consequential and enduring trends of Persian literary history. The study of style has posited the simplistic notion that Persian literary production may be periodized into four self-contained and regionally-identified entities: the Khorasani, 'Iraqi (Iraqi), Hendi (Indian), and Bazgasht (Return) styles.

Nikhaar Jewels Private Limited, Bengaluru, Karnataka, India



Mr. Syed Ibne Hussain



Mr. Vinod Kumar Jain

Business integrity, superior product quality and extraordinary craftsmanship are the core operating principles at Nikhaar Jewels, Bengaluru, India. Together these three differentiating factors have successfully carved a niche stature for Nikhaar Jewels in the global jewellery retail and trade industry.

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Iran's National Day – A Day of Glory

The National Day in Iran is celebrated on the 11th of February each year to mark the Iranian revolution in 1979. It is also known as the Islamic Revolution or the 1979 Revolution. Islamic Revolution Day is a public holiday in Iran observed on the 22nd day of the Persian month of Bahman. The National Day of Iran was established to commemorate overthrowing a monarchical government led by Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. After the overthrow of Pahlavi's government, it was replaced by a temporary Islamic republic under the leadership of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. Two months after the victory of the Islamic Revolution in 1979, the new government held the Iranian Islamic Republic referendum on the 10th and 11th of Farvadin (30 and 31 March) proposing to change the Pahlavi dynasty into the Islamic Republic.

Iran's national day is celebrated as early as the first of February lasting until the 11th to commemorate the powerful street protests led by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini which toppled the Shah monarchy. The National Day is celebrated with public demonstrations on the advancement of military weapons and artilleries and public speeches from the country's head and other politicians.



-INVEST-



Welcome to Iran: An Investment Paradise for Investors

With 10 per cent of the world's oil reserves and 15 per cent of its gas reserves, the mixed and transition economy of Iran attracts a plethora of opportunities for investments from across the globe.

Coupled with the government of Iran, that has placed transparent and business-friendly laws make Iran sought after place for the businesses. Iran for long has been one of the best performing stock exchanges in the world, with a major part of the industries of Iran are involved in the Tehran Stock Exchange. With such supplements of natural resources at its behest, Iran is often referred to as the energy superpower of the world.

Iran's Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Act (FIPPA) and its executive by laws help the investors avoid the cumbersome process of starting the business in the country. The act protects the informs and protects the rights of the investors by facilitating smooth passage through legal obligations and requirements of the country. The administration also acts as a one destination shop devoted to entry and registration procedures for foreign investments once the investment permit is issued. Foreign Capital is guaranteed against nationalization and expropriation, and in such cases, the Foreign Investor is entitled to receive compensation. Should laws or government regulations lead to prohibition or cessation of approved financial agreements within the framework of this Act, then the government obliges to procure and pay the resulting damages. The purchase of goods and producer services of the foreign investment is guaranteed in cases where a state-run organ is the only buyer or supplier of a product or producer service at a subsidized price.

The government of Iran ensures rights, protections and facilities available to domestic and foreign investments in a non-discriminatory manner. The government provides for the issuance of visas for three years in Iran for foreign investors, managers, experts and their immediate family members and the possibility of visa renewals under fair conditions. All the foreign investors in Iran are subjected to choose an audit institute out of the audit institutes recognized by the Association of the Official Auditors of



Iran to substantiate their financial and annual reports. The foreign investors have an option to supply a portion of their capital from domestic and international sources as loans. Foreign capitals can enter the country as cash currency, machinery and pieces of equipment, raw materials, and other forms of intellectual property and they will be promoted and protected. Following the Iran governments declaring its intention to privatize most industries and to liberalise and decentralise the economy. By 2007, most industries, some 70 per cent of the economy, remained state-owned. The majority of heavy industries including steel, petrochemicals, copper, automobiles, and machine tools remained in the public sector, with most light industry privately owned.

Some of the major areas of foreign investments in Iran are production, industrial, agricultural, transportation, communications, and services fields as well as in fields related to water, power, and gas supply and energy fields.

Iran also provides for business favouring tax system with 80 per



cent of the incomes made by the producer and mineral units based in lesser developed zones exempted from tax for 4 years. Moreover, 100 per cent of the incomes made by the producer and mineral units based in lesser developed zones will be exempted from tax for 10 years. Tourist installations are exempt from annual tax for 50 per cent. 100 per cent of the income generated by the exporting industrial and agricultural, conversion industries goods and their completion is exempt from tax. 50 per cent of the incomes generated by exporting goods aimed at developing the non-oil exportations are exempt from tax. 100 per cent of the incomes generated by exporting transit goods are exempt from tax. Re-investments made by cooperative and private companies aimed at developing, restoring and completing industrial and mineral units will be exempt from tax for 50 per cent.

Without a doubt, Iran has a huge potential for investors entering the country with tailored made laws helping different business types. Iran is certainly a unique market in the Middle East. It is populous, rich in natural resources and apt to technological progress and international developments.

Some of the unique features make Iran a hotspot for the investors. Firstly, the country is strategically located at the heart of a cross-road connecting the Middle East, Asia and Europe, empowered by many inter- and trans-regional trade, customs, tax and investment arrangements. The domestic market with a population of over 65 million and quick access to neighbouring markets with approximately 300 million inhabitants is a dream purchase for any business house looking for a long haul in the country. Secondly, Iran offers a diverse pool of highly trained and efficient manpower at very competitive costs in a diversified economy with an extensive industrial base and service sector. Thirdly, the country is well connected via a sophisticated networking system including the area of telecommunication, roads, transportation, and railways connectivity across the country. This makes for the smooth passage for the business throughout the country. Lastly, the country offers political Stability that accounts for a government that is placed on a friendly relationship with other nations.

Iran is house to some of the world's varied and plentiful reserves

of natural resources ranging from oil and gas to metallic and non-metallic species reflecting the country's accessibility to readily available raw materials. The favourable weather characteristics with a four-season climatic endowment act as a privilege to agricultural activities throughout the country and throughout all seasons. The country is privileged with opportunity in sectors comprising of oil and gas, steel, aluminium, copper, electric and electronic equipment, cement & other building materials, metallurgy, home appliances, iron, textile, rugs and carpets, tapestry, miniature, ceramic, food processing (particularly sugar refining & vegetable oil production), petrochemicals, and car manufacturing & assemblies.

The agriculture sector of Iran contributes roughly 10 per cent to its gross national product and employs a sixth of the labour force. About 9 per cent of Iran's land is arable, with the main food-producing areas located in the Caspian region and northwestern valleys. With time Iran has successfully introduced commercial farming in its agriculture practice thus replacing subsistence farming as the dominant mode of agricultural production.

Other important players contributing the economy of Iran are manufacturing — large-scale factory manufacturing that began in the 1920s has progressed into delivering various scientific and technological fields, including petrochemical, pharmaceutical, aerospace, defence, and heavy industry. Even in the face of economic sanctions, Iran is emerging as an industrialized country; handicrafts, automobile manufacturing, defence industry, construction and real estate, mines and metals, retail and distribution, healthcare and pharma, Communications, electronics and IT, tourism and travel among others.

Investment opportunities in Mining

Investing in the mining sector has great potential for investors seeking outlets in Iran. The extraction and processing of petroleum is unquestionably Iran's single most important economic activity and the most valuable in terms of revenue, although natural gas production is increasingly important. The government-operated National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) produces petroleum for export and domestic use.



Iran's vast natural gas reserves constitute more than one-tenth of the world's total. In addition to the country's working gas fields in the Elburz Mountains and in Khorāsān, fields have been discovered and exploitation begun in the Persian Gulf near 'Asalūyeh, offshore in the Caspian region, and, most notably, offshore and onshore in areas of southern Iran—the South Pars field in the latter region is one of the richest in the world. Iran is under contract to supply natural gas to Russia, eastern Europe, Pakistan, Turkey, and India. This opens an opportunity for the investors in the area of machinery, labour or technical expertise.

The Iranian Mines & Mining Industries Development & Renovation has defined \$16 billion worth of mining projects by the Iranian year 1400 (March 2021-2) for domestic and foreign investors, announced the chairman of the organization. "More than \$3.5 billion worth of investments in mines and mining industries will be made by the end of the current Iranian year, March 19, 2020," Khodadad Gharibpour said on the sidelines of the Eighth International Investment Opportunities in Iran's Mines & Mining Industries Exhibition & Conference, also known as "MINEX 2019". The private sector has made an investment of 12 trillion rials (\$105.26 million) in mining industries in the current fiscal year and with the introduction of new opportunities, private sector investments are expected to increase considerably.

Manufacturing

Tehrān is the largest market for domestic agricultural and manufactured products, which are shipped to the nearest town and thence to Tehrān and the provincial capitals by air, truck, rail, camel, mule, and donkey. Since craft production is localized, each city has created a market for its products in the capital and other major cities. Major manufacturing industries, which have transformed large parts of Iran since 1954, are scattered throughout the country, and their products are distributed nationwide. Iran now produces a wide range of manufactured commodities, such as automobiles, electric appliances, telecommunications equipment, industrial machinery, paper, rubber products, steel, food products, wood and leather products, textiles, and pharmaceuticals.



Iran Khodro is the largest car manufacturer in the Middle-East. It has established joint-ventures with foreign partners on 4 continents.

Handicrafts

Iran has a long tradition of producing artisanal goods including Persian carpets, ceramics, copperware, brassware, glass, leather goods, textiles and wooden artefacts. The country's carpet-weaving tradition dates from pre-Islamic times and remains an important industry contributing substantial amounts to rural incomes. An estimated 1.2 million weavers in Iran produce carpets for domestic and international export markets. More than \$500 million worth of hand-woven carpets are exported each year. This calls for investment opportunity at various levels ranging from, artists, textile, and trade communications.

Construction and real estate

With the growing economy and more and more people shifting to the urban sector has created demand for affordable housing and real estate management for the investors. Until the early 1950s construction remained in the hands of small domestic companies. Increased income from oil and gas and easy credit triggered a building boom that attracted international construction firms to



the country. Construction is one of the most important sectors accounting for at least 20–50 per cent of total private investment in urban areas and was one of the prime investment targets for the business houses both domestically and international circuit.

Tourism

One of the major areas for the service industry in Iran is its tourism sector. Tourism attracts subsequent travellers the country to witness the marvel of the Middle East. With the most number of tourists coming from Asia, opens the door for the investors in the travel industry in India to invest in Iran's tourism sector. A strong religious connection between India and Iran also makes the two nations culturally bond with each other. The world's largest population of Zoroastrians are the Parsi community in India. During the Arab conquest of Persia, many Zoroastrians migrated to the western coast of India and as a result, the country has the largest population of Zoroastrians in the world. The scope of investment involves areas such as infrastructure, communications, industry standards and personnel training. Some of the most popular tourist destinations in Iran include Mazandaran, Isfahan, Mashhad and Shiraz. Several organized tours from Germany, France and other European countries also come to Iran annually to visit archaeological sites and monuments. According to UNESCO and the deputy head of research for Iran Travel and Tourism Organization (ITTO), Iran has also been rated among the "10 most touristic countries in the world". Domestic tourism in Iran is one of the largest in the world. Other important service industries include public services (including education), commerce, personal services and professional services.

The firm presence of Iran in the global politics well-planned investment environment makes for a welcoming abode for the foreign investors entering the country.

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Prime Minister of India, H.E. Mr. Narendra Modi with President of Iran, H.E. Dr. Hassan Rouhani (seated right), 2016.



India-Iran Relations

India-Iran relations span millennia marked by meaningful interactions. The two countries shared a border till 1947 and share several common features in their language, culture and traditions. Both South Asia and the Persian Gulf have strong commercial, energy, cultural and people-to-people links.

Political relations

India and Iran signed a friendship treaty on March 15, 1950. In addition to the Embassy in Tehran, India has two Consulates in Iran, one in Bandar Abbas and other in Zahedan. Before the Iranian Revolution of 1979, the Shah of Iran visited India twice (March 1956 and February 1978) and Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru visited Iran in 1963. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and Prime Minister Morarji Desai visited Iran in April 1974 and June 1977 respectively. After the Iranian Revolution, Prime Minister Narasimha Rao visited Iran in 1993 and President Rafsanjani paid a visit to India in 1995. Indian Vice President Shri K. R. Narayanan visited Iran in October 1996.

The trend was enhanced at the turn of the millennium with the visit of Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee to Tehran in April 2001 wherein the two countries signed the “Tehran Declaration” which set forth the areas of possible cooperation between the two countries. President Mohammad Khatami visited India from January 24-28, 2003 as the Chief Guest at the Republic Day parade. Both sides signed “The New Delhi Declaration” which set forth the vision of strategic partnership between India and Iran. Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh visited Iran to attend the 16th Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Summit held in Tehran from August 28-31, 2012. Prime Minister met Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and President Ahmadinejad.

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi paid a bilateral visit to Iran from May 22-23, 2016. 12 MoUs/Agreements were signed between India and Iran. A Trilateral agreement on Transit and Transport was signed between India, Iran and Afghanistan in the presence of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, President Rouhani and Afghan President Ashraf Ghani. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi also inaugurated the International Conference titled “India-Iran two great civilizations” in Vahdat Hall, Tehran and released a Persian Manuscript “Kalileh Wa Dimneh”. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi met the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei and President Rouhani. A Joint Statement titled “Civilizational Connect, Contemporary context” was released.

The two countries have in place several Bilateral Consultative Mechanisms at various levels which meet regularly. The 18th India-Iran JCM was held in New Delhi on December 28, 2015. It was co-chaired by former External Affairs Minister, late Smt Sushma Swaraj and Dr. Ali Tayyebnia, Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance of Iran. MoU on cooperation in trade, finance, energy, infrastructure and cultural issues was signed during the JCM.

Dr. Hassan Rouhani, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, paid his first State Visit to India at the invitation of Prime Minister of the Republic of India, Shri Narendra Modi, from February 15-17, 2018. During the visit, Dr. Rouhani was accompanied by a high-level delegation comprising Cabinet Ministers, senior officials and business leaders. Delegation level discussions were held between Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and President Dr. Rouhani. President Rouhani visited Hyderabad on February 15-16, 2018. Wide-ranging and constructive discussions on bilateral, regional and multilateral issues were held in a cordial atmosphere. 13 MoUs/



Vice President of India, H.E. Mohammad Hamid Ansari meeting with H.E. Dr. Hassan Rouhani, President of Iran in Tehran (4 August 2013)

Agreements were signed between India and Iran. President Dr. Rouhani and Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi agreed to further intensify and diversify the existing high-level engagement through frequent and wider range of bilateral exchanges at all levels. A Joint Statement titled “Towards prosperity through greater connectivity” was signed during the visit.

Foreign Minister Dr. Javad Zarif visited India on May 28, 2018 and held discussions with former External Affairs Minister, late Smt. Sushma Swaraj. Dr. Zarif visited India from January 7-9, 2019 and attended the Raisina Dialogue – 2019. During the visit, Dr. Zarif met External Affairs Minister Smt. Sushma Swaraj and Minister of Roads, Transport and Highways, Shri Nitin Gadkari, Dr. Zarif also visited India from May 13-14, 2019 during which he met former External Affairs Minister, late Smt. Sushma Swaraj and discussed issues of mutual interest.

The first tripartite meeting of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of India was held on September 11, 2018 at the Deputy Foreign Minister level in Kabul, Afghanistan. Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan Hekmat Khalil Karzai represented Afghanistan, whereas, the Indian and Iranian delegations were led by Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale and Deputy Foreign Minister Dr. Abbas Araghchi, respectively. The meeting focused on consolidating economic cooperation, including Chabahar, as well as enhancing cooperation on counter-terrorism, counter-narcotics, and continuing support to the peace and reconciliation process that is led and owned by Afghanistan.

During the visit of President Rouhani to India in February 2018, MoU on Cooperation in the field of Traditional Systems of Medicine and a MoU on Cooperation in the field of Health and Medicine was signed. Dr. Hassan Ghazizadeh Hashemi, Minister



of Health and Medical Education of Iran visited India in December 2018 and held discussions on bilateral cooperation with Shri J. P Nadda, Minister of Health and Family Welfare, Shri Suresh Prabhu, Minister of Commerce and Industry, and Shri Shripad Yesso Naik, Minister of AYUSH.

Foreign Offices of both countries also hold regular consultations on bilateral and regional issues. Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi visited India on July 16, 2018 for the 15th Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) and held discussions with Foreign Secretary Shri Vijay Gokhale. The 16th FOC was held in Tehran on 16 November 2019, led by Foreign Secretary Shri Vijay Gokhale on the Indian side and Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi on the Iranian side.

Commercial Relations

India-Iran commercial ties have traditionally been dominated by Indian import of Iranian crude oil. The India-Iran bilateral trade during the fiscal year 2018-19 was USD 17.03 billion. India imported USD 13.52 billion worth of goods mainly crude oil (around USD 12.11 billion worth of oil imports) and exported commodities worth USD 3.5 billion. Major Indian exports to Iran include rice, tea, iron and steel, organic chemicals, insecticides, soya-bean, mints, electrical machinery, drugs/pharmaceuticals, paper & paperboard etc. Major Indian imports from Iran include petroleum and its products, inorganic/organic chemicals, plastic and articles, edible fruit and nuts, glass and glassware, natural or cultured pearls, precious or semiprecious stones, etc.

Connectivity

During the visit of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to Tehran in May 2016, the contract on Chabahar was signed which, inter-alia, comprises investment of \$85 million for equipping the port. The contract also comprises of provision of credit line of approximately USD 150 million for the development of the 1st Phase of Shahid Beheshti port at Chabahar.

The Trilateral Transit Agreement (Chabahar Agreement) was signed by the three transport ministers of India, Iran and Afghanistan in the presence of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, President Dr. Rouhani and President Ashraf Ghani.

The 2nd Ministerial level trilateral meeting between Afghanistan, India and Iran to discuss the implementation of Trilateral Agreement on Establishment of International Transport and Transit Corridor was held at Chabahar, Iran on December 3, 2017. Minister of Roads and Urban Development of the Islamic Republic of Iran Dr. Abbas Ahmed Akhoundi, Minister of Commerce and Industries of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Humayoon Rasaw and the Minister of State for Shipping P Radhakrishnan



led the respective delegations. The three Ministers welcomed the inauguration of Phase-1 of the Chabahar Port by the President of Iran.

The 1st Coordination Council meeting of the Chabahar Agreement took place in Tehran on October 23, 2018. After detailed discussions on the full operationalization of the trilateral agreement for international transit and transport through Chabahar Port, all sides shared the view that full operationalization of the trilateral Chabahar initiative will promote connectivity and economic development of Afghanistan and the region.

The 1st meeting of the Follow-up Committee for implementation of the trilateral Chabahar Agreement between India, Afghanistan and Iran at the level of Joint Secretary/ Director General was held

on December 24, 2018 in the port city of Chabahar in Iran. On the occasion, India Ports Global Limited (IPGL) Company opened its office and took over operations at the Shahid Beheshti port at Chabahar.

Cultural Relations

An Indian Cultural Centre is currently functioning within the Embassy premises which was inaugurated by Shri Salman Khurshid, then External Affairs Minister during his visit to Iran for the NAM summit in May 3, 2013. During the visit of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to Tehran in May 2016, MoUs on India-Iran Cultural Exchange Programme, ICCR and ICRO, Iran, National Archives of India and the National Library and Archives Organisation of Iran were signed.

The Indian Cultural Centre was established in 2013 and renamed the Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre (SVCC) in 2018. The Embassy organizes music/cultural/literary programmes/ seminars on cultural/literary issues related to India and Iran on a regular basis. The 2018 International Day of Yoga was organized in the Indian Embassy School (Kendriya Vidyalaya) in Tehran. To commemorate the 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi (from October 2018 to October 2019), a series of events were organized.

Shri Vinay Sahasrabuddhe, President of Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) visited Iran from November 30-December 2, 2018 to inaugurate the seminar on 'Linguistic Links between Persian and Sanskrit languages.'

Indian community

The Indian community in Iran comprises of around 4000 Indian nationals. (This includes 80-100 families in Tehran and 13-15 families in Zahedan. There are approx. 2800 Indian nationals in Qom, Esfahan and Mashhad consisting of Indian students undergoing theological studies and their family members. There are also around 200 Indian nationals working in private companies in Iran). There is an Indian school in Tehran run by the Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS) under the aegis of Embassy of India and another Indian school in Zahedan.



Prime Minister of India, H.E. Mr. Narendra Modi met H.E. Dr. Mohammad Javad Zarif, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iran during Raisina Dialogue 2020 (January 15, 2020)



India – Iran Strong Bilateral Trade Relations

-Dr. Ajay Sahai, DG & CEO, Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO)

India and Iran have always been close allies through thick and thin, both before and after the Iranian revolution in 1979. In recent years, though, US sanctions have forced India to cut back on trade and buying Iranian Crude. Talking about the first eleven months of the last calendar year the bilateral trade between India and Iran has come down to USD 6.9 Bn as against USD 16.9 Bn during the corresponding period in 2018 which is a sharp drop of USD 10 Bn mainly due to lesser import of crude from Iran. The import from Iran from Jan-Nov 2019 was as low as USD 3.54 Bn as against USD 14.9 Bn a year before as India has stopped importing crude from May 2019.

On the export front, India has clocked about 37% growth as in many of the products we have seen very encouraging growth. Some of the sectors which did very well during this period included Essential oil which jumped from USD 40 Mn to USD 245 Mn; Sugar which moved from USD 1.5 Mn to USD 195 Mn; Tea, whose exports jumped from USD 70 Mn to USD 145 Mn; Animal feed from USD 64 Mn to USD 186 Mn; Organic chemicals from USD 140 Mn to USD 351 Mn; Miscellaneous chemicals from USD 70 Mn to USD 124 Mn; Paper and paper board from USD 55 Mn to USD 118 Mn, Man-made staple fibre from USD 76 Mn to USD 107 Mn;Plastics & its articles from USD 26 Mn to USD 75 Mn and Tanning and dyeing agents from USD 26 Mn to USD 55 Mn.

However, the decline in exports of rice from USD 830 Mn to USD 648 Mn and Pharmaceuticals from USD 59 Mn to USD 49 Mn is baffling. As exports of agriculture products and pharmaceuticals are not subject to any sanctions. India is the leader in exports of Generic drugs with pharmaceutical exports of USD 17 bn to the world including China. Iran should take advantage of the competitive edge India has in Pharma sector. The issues of payment for export of rice to Iran has now become a point of concern for the exporters in India as large sum of money is pending since long.

Iran's major exports to India are oil, fertilisers and chemicals, while it imports cereals, tea, coffee, basmati rice, spices and organic chemicals, among others. Iran holds huge export opportunities in sectors such as agriculture, chemicals, machinery, pharmaceuticals, paper, paper products, man-made fibre, filament yarn and essential



oils. Greater market access to Indian products, negotiations on the proposed Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA), besides a bilateral investment protection agreement and a double taxation avoidance agreement will also go a long way in boosting trade and investment between India and Iran. Further Chabahar port, a crucial link for regional trade in the region will not only cut the transportation costs and time for Indian goods by one third but is also likely to boost up trade among India, Afghanistan, Iran and the countries of central Asia and the Gulf region.

Recent escalation of tension between the US and Iran has brought exports of minerals, metals, construction equipment, manufacturing and textile under the US sanctions and therefore we have to put our hands and minds together to see what best can be done in such challenging circumstances while at the same time safeguarding our mutual interests. There is a need to evaluate the present rupee trade mechanism and how long we can continue bilateral trade under this mechanism, as there is looming uncertainty over how long the pool of money will last and whether it would be replenished. So, we need to look at alternative mechanism such as barter system, matching of investment/FDI with trade etc. Indian trading community is hopeful that the leaders for both the nations would come out with a workable solution and show us the way forward so that the trade does not suffer due to geo-political reasons.



Iran – India: Towards prosperity through greater connectivity

His Excellency Dr. Hassan Rouhani, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, paid his first State Visit to India at the invitation of Prime Minister of the Republic of India, Shri Narendra Modi, from 15-17 February 2018.

During the visit, Dr. Hassan Rouhani, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, was accompanied by a high-level delegation comprising Cabinet Ministers, senior officials, and business leaders. He was accorded a friendly and cordial ceremonial welcome in the forecourt of Rashtrapati Bhawan on 17 February. President, Shri Ram Nath Kovind hosted an official banquet dinner in honor of the visiting dignitary. Delegation level discussions were held between Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and President Dr. Hassan Rouhani. Prime Minister of India also hosted a Lunch in his honor. Hon'ble Vice President and External Affairs Minister of India called on the visiting dignitary. President Rouhani visited Hyderabad on 15-16 February 2018.

Wide-ranging and constructive discussions on bilateral, regional, and multilateral issues were held in a cordial atmosphere. In recalling the principles on development of bilateral relations articulated in the 'New Delhi Declaration' of 23 January 2003, the two sides expressed satisfaction at the progress made in bilateral

ties since Prime Minister Modi's visit to Iran in May 2016. They reiterated their collective resolve to intensify further and strengthen multifaceted bilateral cooperation. The two leaders noted that the mutually beneficial ties between the two countries were based upon the strong foundations of the two millennia-old cultural and civilizational connect. They shared the view that strengthened bilateral relations also contribute to regional cooperation, peace, prosperity, and stability.

Prime Minister Modi and President Rouhani witnessed the exchange of the following documents and jointly addressed the media:

- i. Agreement for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion concerning Taxes on Income
- ii. MoU on Exemption from Visa requirement for holders of Diplomatic Passports
- iii. Instrument of Ratification of Extradition Treaty
- iv. MoU on cooperation in the field of Traditional Systems of Medicine



Prime Minister, President of India and President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Dr. Hassan Rouhani at the Ceremonial Reception, at Rashtrapati Bhavan, in New Delhi on February 17, 2018.

- v. MoU on the establishment of an Expert Group on Trade Remedy Measures to promote cooperation in areas of mutual interest
- vi. MoU on cooperation in the field of Agriculture and Allied Sectors
- vii. MoU on cooperation in the field of Health and Medicine
- viii. MoU on Postal Cooperation
- ix. Lease Contract for Shahid Beheshti Port-Phase 1 of Chabahar during Interim Period between Port and Maritime Organization (PMO), Iran and India Ports Global Limited (IPGL)

Bilateral Exchanges

President Rouhani and Prime Minister Modi agreed to further intensify and diversify the existing high-level engagement through a frequent and more extensive range of bilateral exchanges at all levels. In this context, it was decided to convene within this year the meeting of the India-Iran Joint Commission and all its Working Groups, Foreign Office Consultations, dialogue between defense and National Security Council structures of the two countries, Policy Planning dialogue, and to promote Parliamentary exchanges.

Connectivity

The two sides recognized the unique role of Iran and India in promoting multi-modal connectivity within and across the region. The successful inauguration of the Phase-1 of Chabahar Port in early December 2017; the ratification of the Trilateral Agreement between India, Iran, and Afghanistan on Establishment of International Transport and Transit Corridor by all sides; and the successful shipment of wheat assistance from India to Afghanistan

through Chabahar Port have opened a new gateway to and from Afghanistan, Central Asia and beyond. Both sides reiterated their commitment to the early and full operationalization of Shahid Beheshti Port at Chabahar. The Iranian team welcomed the investment of the Indian side in setting up plants in sectors such as fertilizers, petrochemicals, and metallurgy in Chabahar FTZ on terms mutually beneficial to the concerned parties.

In this context, both leaders welcomed the lease contract for Shahid Beheshti port of Chabahar during the interim period between the port and Maritime Organization (PMO), Iran, and India Ports Global Limited (IPGL). They further directed that the Coordination Council should meet within the timelines stipulated in the Trilateral Agreement.

Intending to fully utilize the potential of the Chabahar Port and its connectivity to Afghanistan and Central Asia, India conveyed its readiness to support the development of Chabahar- Zahedan Rail line. IRCON, India, and CDTIC, Iran, who are engaged in discussions, were tasked to finalize the technical parameters and financing options for the project in a time-bound manner. Both leaders encouraged more considerable efforts for cooperation in the railway sector, including the supply of steel rails, turnouts, and locomotives.

Both sides reiterated their commitment to the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) and stressed the need for inclusion of Chabahar within its framework. It was noted that Iran would hold an early meeting of the INSTC Coordination Meeting in Tehran. India's accession to TIR Convention and Ashgabat Agreement was welcomed as additional steps at enhancing regional connectivity and linking local centers of economic growth.



Dr. Hassan Rouhani, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran inspects Guard of Honour during his ceremonial reception at Rashtrapati Bhawan (February 17, 2018)

The mutually beneficial ties between the two countries were based upon the strong foundations of the two millennia-old cultural and civilizational connect. They shared the view that strengthened bilateral relations also contribute to regional cooperation, peace, prosperity, and stability

The two leaders released a joint postage stamp depicting Deendayal Port, Kandla, and Shahid Beheshti Terminal, Chabahar, that reflected the enhanced prosperity through greater connectivity.

The Iranian side expressed its readiness to enhance the enabling environment to attract Indian private/public sector investments in Chabahar FTZ. In this context, Iran organized a business promotion event, with the participation of countries from the region and beyond, to showcase the economic opportunities offered by the Chabahar Port.

Energy Partnership

Noting the complementarity of interests and natural partnership in the energy sector, it was agreed to move beyond traditional buyer-seller relationship and develop it into a long term strategic partnership; India and Iran agreed to continue and increase the pace of negotiation for reaching appropriate results on energy cooperation, including Farzad B gas field.

Trade and Investment Cooperation

The two Leaders agreed on the deepening trade and investment cooperation between the two countries. In this context, they recognized the need to put in place an active banking channel for business transactions. It was noted that permission for the Iranian Pasargad bank to open a branch in India was under advance consideration. It was also agreed to set up a Joint Committee of officials to examine feasible options, including Rupee-Rial Arrangement, Asian Clearing Union mechanism, to establish functional payment channels.

The finalization of the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement was

welcomed as a step that would promote the business environment. The two sides agreed to undertake text-based negotiations on the Preferential Trade Agreement as well as the conclusion of the Bilateral Investment Treaty in a fixed time frame.

Noting the importance of the role of businessmen and industry in promoting economic and commercial cooperation, the two Leaders welcomed the opening of the Confederation of the Indian Industry (CII) regional office in Tehran last year and the agreements for mutual cooperation signed between various trade bodies on both sides. The Indian side conveyed that it looked forward to the Iran Chamber of Commerce & Industry, opening an office in India.

India fully supported the accession of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the World Trade Organization and the consensus-building efforts among WTO members to reactivate the accession process, consistent to make the Organization universal and inclusive.

Promotion of Friendly exchanges and people to people contacts

to facilitate friendly exchanges between the two countries, it was agreed that India would grant an e-visa facility for the Iranian nationals, and Iran would grant an e-visa facility to the Indian citizens. The signing of a visa waiver agreement for holders of diplomatic passports was also a step in this direction. Both sides reiterated the importance of addressing humanitarian issues concerning the nationals of the two countries. Iran's side will positively consider India's request to upgrade Consulates in Iran.

With a view to building on the strong foundations of civilization and cultural connect and promote better understanding of each



Prime Minister of India, H.E. Mr. Narendra Modi and H.E. Dr. Hassan Rouhani, President of Iran witness the exchange of agreements in New Delhi (February 17, 2018)



Prime Minister of India, H.E. Mr. Narendra Modi and the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Dr. Hassan Rouhani releasing the commemorative stamp celebrating India-Iran relations, at Hyderabad House, in New Delhi on February 17, 2018

other at various levels, it held the Festival of India in Iran in 2018/19; established a Chair of Indian studies in Tehran University; organized Indology courses for Iranian diplomats by the Foreign Service Institute of India; supported the Persian language courses in India; cooperated further in the areas of archaeology, museums, archives, and libraries.

Security and Defence Cooperation

The two leaders welcomed the growing interaction between their National Security Councils enhanced and institutionalized consultations between them and others concerned on terrorism, security, and related issues such as organized crime, money-laundering, drug trafficking, and cybercrime.

Both sides expressed interest in enhancing cooperation possibilities in the maritime domain. It was agreed to hold dialogue to look into measures for cooperation in the defense sphere, including port calls by naval ships, training and regular exchanges of defense delegations.

The two sides positively noted the progress achieved in the implementation of the bilateral agreement on the transfer of sentenced persons; the Extradition Treaty by both sides and understanding reached on the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty on Civil and Commercial Matters.

Other Areas

They also welcomed bilateral cooperation as per mutual interest and agreement in several different areas, including higher education, science, and technology, agriculture, labor and entrepreneurship, tourism, posts through regular interaction and institutional mechanisms, and directed relevant authorities to work out further details.

Regional and International Issues

The two leaders exchanged views on the regional and international situation. In light of strengthening multilateralism, President Rouhani acknowledges the aspiration of India to play a greater role in international fora. The two leaders reiterated the importance of strong United Nations and emphasized the need for early reform of the Security Council reflective of the current geopolitical realities. They reaffirmed their commitment to supporting the Intergovernmental Negotiations [IGN] for comprehensive reform of the Security Council. Both Leaders underscored the need for strengthening and reform of multilateral financial institutions and enhancing the voice and participation of developing countries in international economic decision-making.

Recognizing the challenges of terrorism and ideologies of violent extremism, the two Leaders reiterated their strong commitment to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and stressed that there could be no justification whatsoever for any act of terrorism. They expressed their conviction that the fight against terrorism should not only seek to disrupt and eliminate terrorists, terrorist organizations, and networks but should also identify and address conditions conducive to terrorism as well as extremist ideologies. They stressed that terrorism cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality, or ethnic group. They urged an immediate end to all support and sanctuaries enjoyed by terrorist groups and individuals and were of the view that States that aid, abet, and directly or indirectly support terrorism should be condemned. They called on the international community to end selective or partial approaches to combating terrorism and, in this regard, stressed the need to make every effort to reach an agreement on and conclude a comprehensive convention on international terrorism at the UNGA. Both sides endorsed UNGA consensual resolution in 2013 derived from the idea of Iran's President "World Against Violence and Extremism"(WAVE). They called for combating terrorist elements and complete eradication of their supportive movements, financial support cut to terrorist groups in particular.

The Indian side reaffirmed its support for full and effective implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which has been endorsed by the UN Security Council and is a crucial contribution to the non-proliferation framework and international peace, stability, and security.

Both sides stressed that the interests of peace and stability in the region are best served by a stable, united, prosperous, pluralistic, democratic, and independent Afghanistan while supporting the National Unity Government in the country. They stressed the significance of strengthening India-Iran-Afghanistan trilateral consultations and coordination, including by suitably supplementing their cooperation on Chabahar. In this context, they also called upon the countries of the region to come forward for enhancing regional connectivity and take steps to do away with the obstacles on land transit.

President Rouhani expressed deep appreciation and gratitude for the gracious hospitality extended to him and his delegation during their stay in India. He extended an invitation to the President and the Prime Minister of India to visit the Islamic Republic of Iran. The invitations were accepted, and it was agreed to work on the dates for a visit through diplomatic channels.

Official Visit of the Prime Minister of India, H.E. Mr. Narendra Modi to Iran (May 22-23, 2016)

At the invitation of the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Dr. Hassan Rouhani, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi paid an official visit to Iran on May 22-23, 2016.

During the visit, the Prime Minister called on the Supreme Leader of Iran and held talks on a wide range of subjects of mutual interest with President Dr. Rouhani.

India and Iran share longstanding civilizational ties. Iran is situated in India's extended neighborhood, and the two countries have a significant overlap in their economic and security space. The visit

of Prime Minister to Iran sought to build on these commonalities by focussing on specific cooperation in regional connectivity and infrastructure, developing energy partnerships, boosting bilateral trade, facilitating people-to-people interaction in various spheres, and promoting peace and stability in the region.

The visit of the Prime Minister provided a timely thrust to the ongoing efforts of the two countries and their business entities to expand bilateral cooperation and mutually benefit from new opportunities in the wake of the lifting of secondary sanctions against Iran earlier this year.



Prime Minister of India, H.E. Mr. Narendra Modi and H.E. Dr. Hassan Rouhani, President of Iran at the Joint Press Interaction in Tehran (May 23, 2016)



External Affairs Minister of India, H.E. Dr. S Jaishankar called on H.E. Hassan Rouhani, President of Iran in Tehran (December 23, 2019)

Visit of the External Affairs Minister of India, H.E. Dr. S Jaishankar to Iran

(December 22-23, 2019)



External Affairs Minister of India, H.E. Dr. S Jaishankar met with H.E. Mohammad Javad Zarif, Foreign Minister of Iran in Tehran (December 22, 2019)

External Affairs Minister of India visited Iran on 22-23 December 2019 for the 19th Joint Commission meeting, which was co-chaired by the Foreign Minister of Iran.



External Affairs Minister of India, H.E. Dr. S Jaishankar met with H.E. Mr. Ali Shamkhani, Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council of Iran in Tehran (December 23, 2019)



External Affairs Minister of India, H.E. Dr. S Jaishankar met with H.E. Mohammad Eslami, Minister of Roads and Urban Development of Iran in Tehran (December 23, 2019)



Prime Minister of India, H.E. Mr. Narendra Modi met H.E. Dr. Mohammad Javad Zarif, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iran during Raisina Dialogue 2020 (January 15, 2020)

Visit of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, **H.E. Dr. Mohammad Javad Zarif to India**

(14-17 January 2020)



H.E. Dr. S. Jaishankar, External Affairs Minister of India and H.E. Dr. Mohammad Javad Zarif, Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran, held a bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the Raisina Dialogue in New Delhi.

The leaders collectively recalled positive outcomes of Dr. S. Jaishankar, External Affairs Minister of India's, recent visit to Tehran for the 19th Joint Commission Meeting, mainly for strengthening bilateral trade and promoting connectivity initiative through Chabahar port. They also agreed to commemorate the 70th Anniversary of the bilateral Treaty of Friendship in 2020.

The Indian and Tehranian delegates also exchanged views on regional and global issues of mutual interest, including the recent developments in the West Asia region and the JCPOA. Dr. S. Jaishankar, External Affairs Minister of India, reiterated Indian interests in the region and support for efforts to maintain peace, security and stability in the area.

External Affairs Minister of India, H.E. Dr. S Jaishankar met with H.E. Mohammad Javad Zarif, Foreign Minister of Iran during Raisina Dialogue 2020 (January 16, 2020)

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Cousin Cultures: Celebrating India and Iran

-Dr. Shernaz Cama

Many threads weave together the Indo-Iranian identity. From the cold plateaus of Central Asia to the hot plains of India, is a region which was birth place to numerous races, creeds, languages and cultures.



Behistun area of Iran supports plant life and gardens with the use of traditional water systems.

Our part of the human family has been famously called "Cousin Cultures" by Prof. Lokesh Chandra. We share linguistic roots, history, myths and religions. We shared trade, along not just the Silk Route, but also through our sea ports. Silk, amber, silver and spices were all part of that wealth of a region jointly called "the East Indies". The land route crossed the centre of the then known world, taking Indian cultural expansion westward, while waves of Persian influence extended into India through Malwa and Mathura up to Patliputra, not just through conquest but through gentler means of marriage alliances and exchanges of tangible heritage.

Our shared tangible heritage is obvious. At Agra, Persian architecture of squinch and dome, decorated with Rajput chattris and the perforated grills of Indian temples, has created the Taj Mahal, the architectural emblem of the Indian subcontinent.



The Taj Mahal for Persian Princess Noor Jehan is the best example of Indo Iranian syncretic cultures.

A Punjabi architect of Persian origin Nadir al- A'sr Ustad Ahmad Lahori led the team which perfected the Indo- Islamic style of Mughal architecture. The artisans came from Turkey and Delhi, calligraphers from Shiraz, sculptors from Bukhara, jewel in-layers from South India, stone cutters from Baluchistan. Precious material included marble from Makrana, jade from China, amber from Burma, lapis from Badakshan and rare coral and Mother of Pearl from the Indian Ocean. Forty three types of gems from the high mountains of Central Asia to the depths of the Indian Ocean, created this, our Wonder of the World.

To move from the visible to the auditory, the chanting of Gathic Avestan is uncannily similar to Rig Vedic Sanskrit, while India became the second home of the Persian language.



Avestan Script of the Gathas or Songs of Prophet Zarathushtra.

Hindu spiritual themes combined with musical phrasing of Persian and Central Asian notations to create great Indo-Islamic music. In the Arts, the Tree of Life can be seen ranging from the grotto of Takt-i-Bustan, through Kashmir, to cross the Deccan into Sri Lanka, while symbols of the Cypress, the Chinar and countless others, decorate textiles, carpets, laquer and metal work. We even share a heritage of blue and white pottery.

Across this region, the *Pairideza* or gardens of Persia, became symbols of serenity and peace. At another level, the greatest of minds combined in mathematics to create syncretism in knowledge, while Avicenna's works on medicine, astronomy, mathematics, theology and logic were deeply interlinked with Indian thought. The Magi were the 'Medicine Men' of the East and their healing prayers are still valued.



Dastur Dr. Firoze Kotwal, High Priest of the Zoroastrians of India

The world today seems to have forgotten the great debt it owes to the lasting legacy of this working together, which created the first hospitals. The great hospital at Jundi Shahpur grew on Persian foundations, but Indian medical practices prevailed, to create a methodology of treatment. The high ethical standards we associate with the medical profession had been laid down as early as the Zoroastrian holy books, down to details even regulating fees.

If we look at literary links, a huge corpus emerges; the most important cultural linkage being perhaps the *Panchatantra*. Translated by the Persian physician Burzoya, these animal fables, metaphors on how to live a good life, have become the most widely travelled text in the world, moving eastward through China to Java and westward across the Middle East. In 1483, it became one of the earliest books after the Bible, to be printed in Europe at Gutenberg's Press.

These are all instances of tangible links. However, it is perhaps the shared intangible heritage of these ancient worlds that draw us together today. Our world is undergoing a crisis of confidence. We are two civilizations, which have absorbed the best from others, migrants or invaders, whose descendants then became part of a multicultural ethos. We have had the confidence to enfold differences, rather than letting them divide our values. I am proud to say that both India and Iran, in a very long history, have never persecuted the Jews. From the earliest times of Cyrus the Great, called in the **Old Testament**, 'The Lord's Anointed' (**Isaiah 45:1**) for the protection and help he offered to the Exilic Jews, to the present, diversity has not just been tolerated but encouraged.



Cyrus Cylinder- This replica is kept in the UN Building at New York to signify that it is the First Bill of Human Rights

The exotic magnificence of gems and jewels fades in value before the humane spirit of these peoples and their rich legacy of humane thought. The mosaic pattern of co-existence, not merger into a melting pot, is our example of shaping human history. Our cultures have produced, and continue to produce, objects of great tangible beauty and value, but there is also an acceptance of human mutability and therefore detachment. The Indian and Iranian artist works with patience; chiseling, carving, painting, weaving. Our people have planted great gardens and watched hot desert winds or heavy rains, wash away carefully nurtured carpets of flowers and lush fields. They have accepted that none can possess this life forever, politics comes and goes, but humankind must live with a dignity combined with acceptance.



The Jashan Ceremony of Blessings includes not just man but every aspect of Creation because everything that lives is sacred.

They believe in the truth of an Eternal Spirit or Essence and remind the world of humility and thanksgiving. In the face of global warming, this is a much needed reminder of the need to contribute to a common good; live in harmony with the cosmos and recognize that we are only a tiny part of a much larger existence.

From astronomy to oil, the world has taken from this region. It is time we remind ourselves that our civilizations have been at the centre of a vast caravanserai, watching humankind come and go. Perhaps this has taught us philosophical reflection about issues larger than ourselves. Can this be our contribution to the world today? It is perhaps best expressed in the poetry of India and Iran.

I quote first from Adi Sankaracharya's *Bhaja Govindam*:

*Punarapi jananam punarapi maranam,
Punarapi janani jatare sayanam,
Iha samsaare khalu dusthare,
Krupayaa pare pahi murare.
[Again and again one is born,
And again and again one dies,
Help me to cross, This limitless sea of Life,
Which seems un-crossable, my Lord]*

And reiterate it with a parallel from Sa'di's *Gulistan*, where these words were written on the arch of the Palace of Faridun.

“*Brother, this world is no man's part for Aye
Upon the World's Creator be thy stay.
Reliance sure is not on Earth to gain
Many like thee it hath raised up; and slain.
What care, when spirit forth from flesh does rise,
Whether on throne or dust the body dies.*”

Photo Credit/Copyright: Parzor

Dolme- Stuffed peppers or vine leaves.



A spice bowl in a shop at the Vakil Bazaar of Shiraz.



Iran Food & Cuisine

Iranian cuisine comprises the cooking traditions of Iran. The term Persian cuisine is also used due to the fact that Iran is also known as Persia, even though the ethnic Persians are only one of Iran's native ethnic groups that have contributed to the culinary culture.

Typical Iranian main dishes are combinations of rice with meat, vegetables, and nuts. Herbs are frequently used, along with fruits such as plums, pomegranates, quince, prunes, apricots, and raisins. Characteristic Iranian flavorings such as saffron, dried lime and other sources of sour flavoring, cinnamon, turmeric, and parsley are mixed and used in various dishes.

Outside Iran, Iranian cuisine is especially found in cities of the Iranian diaspora such as London, the San Francisco Bay Area, Toronto, Houston and especially Los Angeles & its environs and in Mumbai. There are several Irani restaurants like B. Merwan & Co., Sassanian Boulangerie, Jimmy Boy, Yazdani Bakery and Gulshan - E - Iran.



Shashlik- A popular form of shish kebab. In Iranian cuisine, shashlik is usually in form of large chunks.

Komaj- A sweet date bread with turmeric and cumin, similar to nan e gisu.



Lavash- Thin, flaky, and round or oval. It is the most common bread in Iran and the Caucasus.



Iranian style rice cooking.



Ferani- Sweet rice pudding flavored with rose water



Shirin polow- Rice with sweet carrots, raisins, and almonds.



Tadig of lavash bread.



Tujeh kabab- Grilled chunks of chicken one of the most common dishes in Iran.



Potato tadig



Qorme sabzi- Stew with herbs such as leek, cilantro, and dried fenugreek.

Iran as a Transit Country for the Region



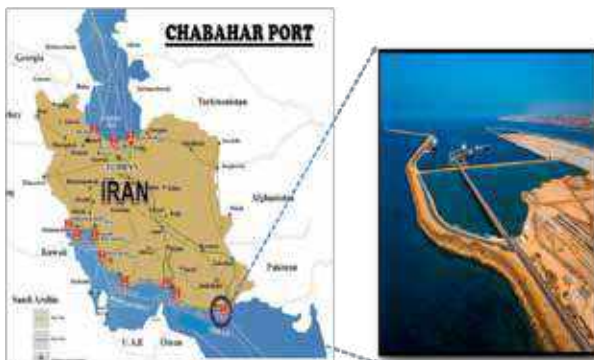
1. Chabahar port as a fully operational port which at present enjoys an 8.5 million ton capacity is critical to India and Eurasia strategy & connectivity initiatives.
2. Chabahar-Iranshar-Zahedan-Mashhad railway corridor as a most ideal route for regional integration (1827 –km from Milak to Turkaman border) is under consideration.
3. INSTC: INSTC plus Chabahar could be a game changer for boosting the trade and investment among countries of the region.

Iran as a Golden Gateway for Central Asia

- Iran is the major link for Central Asia to international markets.
- Iran also provides the cheapest and shortest access route to CIS countries for India and other emerging Asian markets.

Chabahar as a Golden Gate for India and Central Asia

- For Central Asia, Chabahar is the nearest sea port available.
- Shahid Beheshti terminal of Chabahar port is to reach 10 million tonnes capacity soon.
- Shahid Kalantari terminal in Chabahar is also handling about 2.1 million tonnes of cargo per year.
- Chabahar is viewed as a strategic arc of partnership and cooperation between Iran and India.
- At present all cargo transiting through Chabahar port is based on rules and regulations of TIR Convention.



Outcomes of Second Meeting of the Follow-up Committee for the Implementation of Chabahar Port Agreement in December 2019

- To hold more Chabahar Day events in India and Afghanistan to popularize the Port in 2020.
- To extend discounts to all incoming and outgoing cargo to all arrival and departure ports along with the determined routes in three countries of Afghanistan, India and Iran.
- To put in place suitable banking arrangement to facilitate trade and transit through the corridor.
- Welcoming addition of Mormugoa and New Mangalore ports from India as part of main routes for the said corridor.

Re-energising the INSTC: The Greater Connectivity

- INSTC is a multi-modal transportation route linking India Ocean and Persian Gulf to the Caspian Sea via Iran, and onward to northern Europe via St. Petersburg in Russia.
- The INSTC will provide more direct access to Central Asia, Russia and Europe. At the same time, it will allow Iran and Azerbaijan to become regional transit hubs.

Advantages of the INSTC project

- INCTC to be 40 percent shorter and 30 percent cheaper than the traditional route taken through the Suez Canal.
- It could help India, Iran, Central Asia and Russia to boost up their bilateral trade.
- Comprehensive partnership between Iran and India with Eurasian Economic Union.
- The creation of regional supply chains—or a “consumer-producer network” across Eurasia.



38° N, 46° E

Tabriz

Tabriz is the most populated city in northwestern Iran, one of the historical capitals of Iran and the present capital of East Azerbaijan province. It is the sixth most populous city in Iran. Located in the Quru River valley, in Iran's historic Azerbaijan region between long ridges of volcanic cones in the Sahand and Eynali mountains, Tabriz's elevation ranges between 1,350 and 1,600 metres (4,430 and 5,250 ft) above sea level. The valley opens up into a plain that gently slopes down to the eastern shores of Lake Urmia, 60 kilometres (37 miles) to the west. With cold winters and temperate summers, Tabriz is considered a summer resort. It was named World Carpet Weaving City by the World Crafts Council in October 2015 and Exemplary Tourist City of 2018 by the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation.



Panorama of Tabriz



Maqbaratoshoara



Mozaffariyeh, Grand Bazaar of Tabriz, Iran



Tabriz Municipality



El Gölü (Şah Gölü)



Iran – The Land of Glory & Beauties

Bisotun



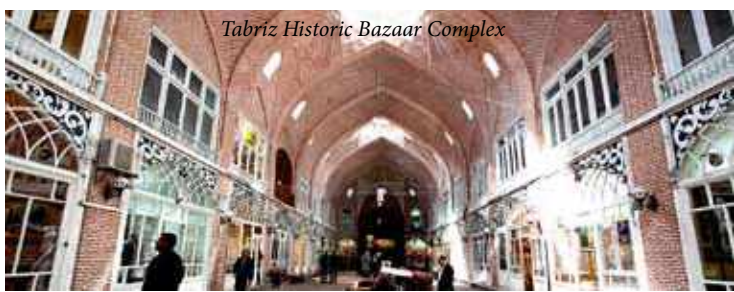
Cultural Landscape Of Maymand



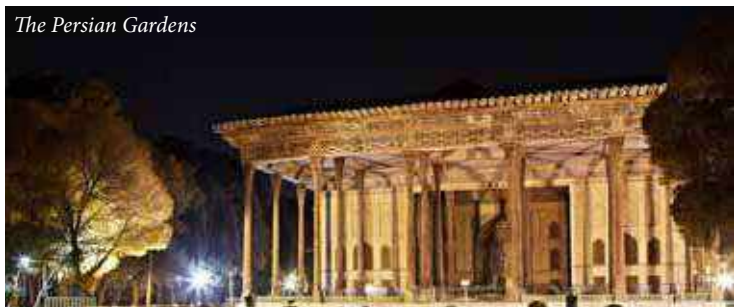
Tchogha Zanbil



Tabriz Historic Bazaar Complex



The Persian Gardens



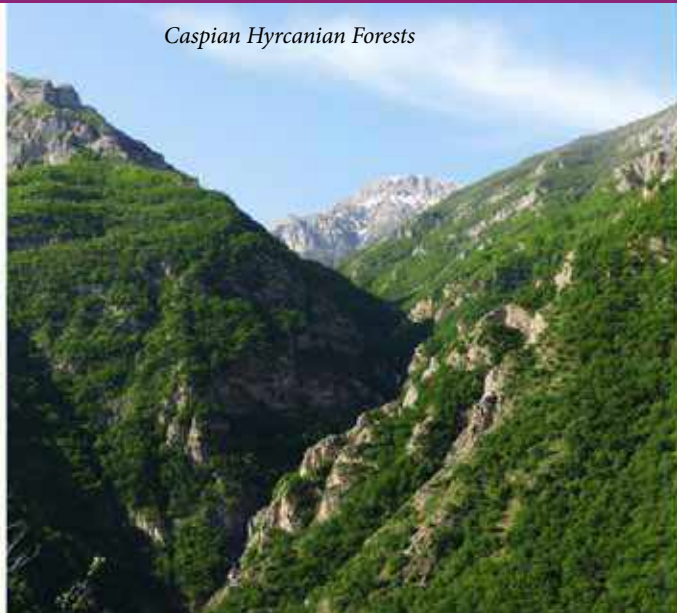
Golestan Palace



IRAN with 24 UNESCO World Heritage Sites is one of the 10 countries with the most Cultural Heritage Sites in the UNESCO's World Heritage list.

24 heritage sites in Iran have already been registered in the UNESCO's list of World Heritage: Armenian Monastic Ensembles of Iran, Bam and its Cultural Landscape, Bisotun, Cultural Landscape of Maymand,

Golestan Palace, Gonbad-e Qabus, Masjed-e Jame of Isfahan, Meidan-e Emam, Pasargadae , Persepolis , Shahr-i Sokhta, Sheikh Safi al-din Khanegah and Shrine Ensemble in Ardabil, Shushtar Historical Hydraulic System, Soltaniyeh Dome, Susa, Tabriz Historic Bazaar Complex, Takht-e Soleyman, Tchogha Zanbil, The Persian Qanat, Lut desert, The Persian Garden, Sassanid Archeological Landscape of Fars Region, Historic City of Yazd as well as Hyrcanian Forests.



Caspian Hyrcanian Forests



Historic City Of Yazd

Meidan Emam



Lut Desert



Masjed-E Jame Of Isfahan



Persepolis



Cultural Landscape Of Maymand



Sheikh Safi Al-Din Khanegah And Shrine Ensemble



Gonbad-E Qabus



Takht-E Soleyman



Shushtar Historical Hydraulic System



Soltaniyeh Dome



The Persian Qanat



Susa



Sassanid Archaeological Landscape Of Fars Region



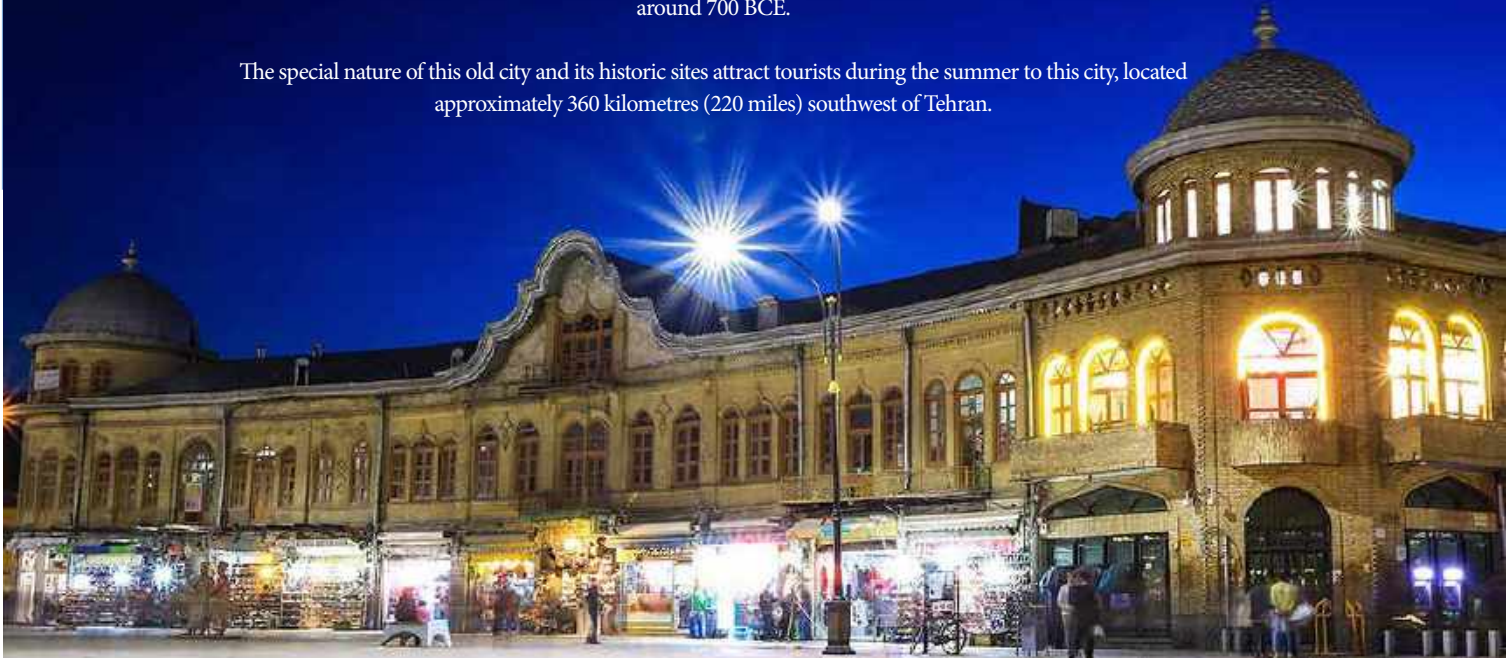
Shahr-I Sokhta (Burnt City)

34° N, 48° E

Hamadan

Hamadān is the capital city of Hamadan Province of Iran. At the 2006 census, its population was 473,149, in 127,812 families. Hamedan is believed to be among the oldest Iranian cities. It is possible that it was occupied by the Assyrians in 1100 BCE; the Ancient Greek historian, Herodotus, states that it was the capital of the Medes, around 700 BCE.

The special nature of this old city and its historic sites attract tourists during the summer to this city, located approximately 360 kilometres (220 miles) southwest of Tehran.



29° N, 52° E

Nasir al-Mulk Mosque





The Nasir al-Mulk Mosque also known as the Pink Mosque is a traditional mosque in Shiraz, Iran. It is located in Gawd-i Arabān quarter, near Shāh Chérāgh Mosque. It was built during Qajar dynasty rule of Iran.

Nasir al-Mulk Mosque is one of the oldest mosques in the Goud-e-Arabān district close to the famous Shah Cheragh Mosque in Shiraz. Mirza Hasan Ali, also known as Nasir-al-Mulk, was one of the Qajar dynasty's grandees who ordered the construction of this building.

Mohammad Hassan Memar was the architect of the 2212 square meter mosque. The construction and building of the infrastructure of the mosque lasted about 12 years (1914 to 1926).



32° N, 48° E

Tchogha Zanbil

Tchogha Zanbil historical region is an ancient city constructed by Elamite king in the 13th century BC. This city was consisted of different parts such as Ziggurat, concentric enclosed walls, entrance gateways, temples, houses, palaces, water disposal facilities and three inner, central and outer fences.

The holiest part of the city, Ziggurat (an Akkadian word used for multi-story temples in Elam and Mesopotamia), was an ancient worship place which is located on a hill along the Dez river bank.



32° N, 51° E

Vank Cathedral



The Holy Savior Cathedral also known the Church of the Saintly Sisters, is a cathedral located in the New Julfa district of Isfahan, Iran. It is commonly referred to as the Vank, which means "monastery" or "convent" in the Armenian language.

Vank cathedral or Amena Pergic, the largest and most beautiful cathedral in Isfahan's Julfa, one of the historical Armenian cathedrals, was established in the Shah Abbas II era in the lands

of Zereshk garden in 1605; it was extended continuously during 50 years and finally reached to the current form.

The plan of the cathedral is rectangular and its direction is eastern-western. The interior of cathedral presents a sample of Armenian architecture and its exterior facade has been designed by use of Iranian architecture and it is a professional combination of two architectural styles.



Interior view of the Holy Savior Cathedral.

26° N, 55° E



Qeshm Island

Qeshm
formerly also known
as Kishm, is an Iranian
island in the Strait of Hormuz,
separated from the mainland by
the Clarence Strait/Khuran in
the Persian Gulf (26°50'N
56°0'E). It is the largest
island in Iran.



29° N, 52° E

Persepolis

Persepolis was the ceremonial capital of the Achaemenid Empire (ca. 550–330 BC). It is situated 60 km northeast of the city of Shiraz in Fars Province, Iran. The earliest remains of Persepolis date back to 515 BC. It exemplifies the Achaemenid style of architecture. UNESCO declared the ruins of Persepolis a World Heritage Site in 1979.

Takht-e Jamshid (Persepolis, Parse, Parse Polis), is a huge complex including palaces, gates, kings mausoleums, reliefs, and glorious stairways constructed on the west hillside of Rahmat mountain; it was started to establish in 512 BC and completed after 150 years.

Being developed during the dynasty of Darius I, Xerxes and Artaxerxes I, this ancient city was considered a majestic and ceremonial capital for Achaemenian, which had been constructed on a stone terrace higher than the Marvdasht flatlands.



29° N, 52° E

Eram Garden

Eram Garden is a historic Persian garden in Shiraz, Iran. It belonged to the leaders of Qashqai tribe before being confiscated by the central government. The garden, and the building within it, are located at the northern shore of the Khoshk River in the Fars province.



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