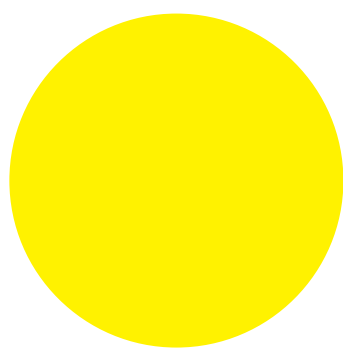


Muscat calls for
GCC's policy change
toward Tehran

Iran, US urged to go back to
negotiating table on nuclear issue

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Iran Daily

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> irandaily.ir

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| IranDailyWeb

Araghchi: Iran not to negotiate on enrichment, missile program

'Israel will face another defeat in any future conflict'

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Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (R) oversees remotely a ceremony in Ahvaz, southwestern Iran on November 1, 2025, where a dozen contracts are signed with local companies to save associated petroleum gas from flaring.
● president.ir

Contracts signed to launch largest flare gas recovery project in south

Not even a single day should be
lost in preserving national assets:

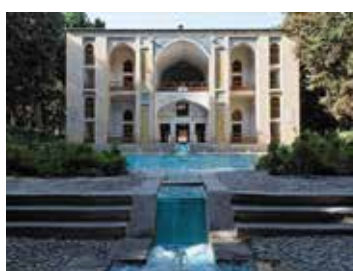
Pezeshkian

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Islamic Solidarity Games:
Iran braces for
'mini World Cup'
test in futsal

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Fin Garden
in Kashan
preserves
centuries of
history

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Diwali sparks fire,
light traditions
that connect
India, Iran

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Beyond Chabahar

Indian strategy needs deeper understanding of Iran



By Omid Babelian
India affairs expert

**O P I N I O N
E X C L U S I V E**

Along the flow of the waves where maritime routes have long forged enduring links between civilizations, the relationship between Iran and India remains one that goes far beyond ordinary interstate cooperation. For India, Iran is not solely a geographic point in West Asia; it is a link that can extend India's reach from the Indian Ocean to Central Asia, Russia, and parts of West Asia. Within this vision, Chabahar is not just a standalone project but a key component of India's maritime-centric strategic architecture—an architecture

that has grown increasingly prominent in New Delhi's strategic circles in recent years, redefining the role of sea routes, maritime networks, and key ports.

Yet, there is a visible gap between this potential and India's actual policy toward Iran—a gap born from an incomplete understanding and an often-reductive view of Iran's role and the complexities surrounding it. The experience following the US withdrawal of sanctions waivers for India's activities in Chabahar was telling: although New Delhi did not abandon the project, external pressure exposed just how vulnerable a structurally critical link in India's regional strategy could become. India's return to Chabahar, therefore, reflected less a full appreciation of Iran's strategic depth and more

an acknowledgment that excluding Iran from India's regional connectivity equation would create a serious void—one whose long-term costs would be considerable.

This gap in understanding also surfaces in Afghanistan, where India has embarked on a new policy track over the past two years. The reopening of India's embassy in Kabul was not simply symbolic; New Delhi has also pursued quiet, multilayered talks with the Taliban to prevent competitors from taking over the field. Still, it is clear that India's Afghan policy cannot be sustainable or effective without Iran. Iran not only controls the logistical and transit corridors linking India to Afghanistan but also possesses a historical familiarity and deep social networks within Afghanistan that no other actor can

replicate. Unless Indian foreign policy institutions factor this into their analyses, New Delhi's engagement with Kabul will remain incomplete and fraught with risk.

Under such circumstances, the importance of genuine understanding between the two nations becomes more critical than ever. Iran possesses three irreplaceable attributes: a deep civilizational heritage, a strategic maritime position, and the capacity to bridge multiple geopolitical spheres. Yet these elements can only play a meaningful role in India's policymaking when think tanks and intellectual elites from both countries collaborate to build shared perspectives and dispel misconceptions. Today, the fast-paced regional developments—from Chabahar and the Sea of Oman to Kabul and Dushan-

be—make sustained scholarly dialogue and joint analysis more essential than at any time before. Without such mechanisms, even the most promising initiatives risk being undermined by misinterpretation, bureaucratic inertia, or external pressure.

The Iran-India relationship is a legacy of the past, but its future depends on understanding and cognition. The waves may chart the course, but the depth of that course will be determined only by coherent engagement among the intellectuals, research institutions, and policymakers of both nations. In a world growing ever more complex, the continuity of this partnership will not rest on history alone, but on building a forward-looking and precise understanding—one that both Iran and India now need more than ever.