

**for increasing exports and foreign currency revenue?**

In the handwoven carpet industry, the potential exists within the nation for us to return to that same Golden Era; that is to say, once again to be the foremost exporting nation and the holder of the largest share of the global market. Admittedly, a return to the Golden Era, contingent upon the removal of export restrictions, might require 5 years for us to recapture markets. This matter is conditional upon the abolition of cumbersome export regulations, such as the foreign currency repatriation obligations, and upon our enjoying the same economic liberties as during those years, so that we may restore carpet exports to their apogee.

**Has our prolonged absence from global markets caused a change in consumer tastes, or****have other nations appropriated Iranian designs under their own names?**

Both. At present, certain nations exploit Iranian designs and the Iranian brand in the market for their own benefit and release products into the market under Iranian names and designs. Unfortunately, such instances do exist. On the other hand, our absence from the market has permitted novel designs to enter and tastes to shift; that is to say, the market's palate is being altered. Of course, I must emphasize that the authentic designs of the Persian carpet always possess their own clientele in every nation and that the artistry inherent in our authentic carpet design has no substitute in the market. Furthermore, our nation is also exceptionally strong in the domain of carpet design, and we possess exceedingly talented and renowned designers who are capable of

entering the market with novel, popular designs and models and attracting customers toward our products.

**Kindly elaborate upon the target markets for the exportation of Persian handwoven carpets.**

At present, one of our most favorable markets is China. Additionally, in Europe, Germany constitutes one of our major export markets. The Arab nations of the Persian Gulf region were also among our principal markets; however, with the conflict, the market of those nations for our carpets has been disrupted. But, if conditions for exportation are facilitated, we have no difficulty regarding clientele; and there exists very robust demand globally for the Persian carpet because the Persian carpet has always enjoyed renown globally and has possessed its own fans.



The details of a Persian carpet from up close.

● IRAN DAILY

The Persian handwoven carpet possesses such fame and credibility that it is regarded as "Iran's second flag".

The Persian carpet is a product that is immortal. As time progresses, it becomes better, more valuable, and more expensive. During past years, however, its price within our nation's market has lagged behind; and, relative to domestic price increases, the carpet product has remained inexpensive. It would be appropriate for the price of carpets to be significantly higher than these figures, and for the continued activity within this industry to possess economic viability for weavers and stakeholders.



## Light and shadow

# Istanbul's flying Persian carpets and echoes of Iran war



Various carpets are displayed at a store in Istanbul, Turkey.

● TÜRKİYETODAY

"Many of these lands were once part of the Ottoman or Seljuk empires," Oter says. "Their threads still carry those echoes."

**Echoes of the first knots**

He pauses by ancient designs. "The Pazyryk carpet dates to 400 BCE, frozen in Siberia for millennia. Over 360,000 knots per square meter. Imagine that patience. Turkish carpets emerged centuries later in Konya, yet our work carried that same devotion." Even painters like Jean-Leon Gerome traveled from France to Istanbul, recording carpets in markets and interiors. "The Carpet Merchant is full of them, our patterns captured on canvas for Europe to see."

**Where hands remember**

Oter lifts another Hereke rug. Silk threads brushed at 45-degree angles create patterns impossible for machines. "A machine can never match the handmade," he says. "If it burns, gets wet, or rots, it can be repaired. Machine-made lasts ten years, maybe. Handmade can last generations. It is like gold." He adds, "machine-made carpets are thicker than handmade ones, but thinner is better, and needs more looms, knots." Prices reflect time. A six-square-meter silk Hereke may take a year to produce, labor alone reaching \$12,000, with a final price of \$60,000. Machine-made versions sell for a fraction. "It is the same with fake Hereke that China produces," he adds. "Looks the same, but silk, feel, and life are lost."

**Travelers in a suspended world**

Foreign visitors once filled his store — Americans first, then the Swiss, the French, and then Arabs from the Persian Gulf.



A large Iranian carpet, hung on the wall, reveals its intricate patterns and rich colors.

● TÜRKİYETODAY

"Now, they hesitate. Airports are closed. Wars cast shadows on imagination. People come to look, not to buy. They want safety, not luxury."

He gestures to a Persian silk carpet. "This one, four by six meters, took four people two years to finish. It could cost \$75,000, but who will wait now?"

Like *The Kite Runner*, these carpets carry memory, culture, and longing for distant homes.

Oter sips his tea again. "Handmade carpets are alive. They breathe with the hands that crafted them. They carry nomadic stories, Ottoman palaces, and Seljuk empires."

Market remains sensitive to global instability, but across Istanbul, carpets continue to move across borders and generations, carrying not just patterns but time itself.

Knotted carefully, waiting to be unfolded, they are witnesses, storytellers, and keepers of a culture older than empires.

The article first appeared on *Türkiyetoday*.



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By Nour Dajani

Social media presenter and content writer

## PERSPECTIVE

The Grand Bazaar hums like a living river, its currents of color and sound weaving through vaulted stone.

Voices echo, merchants call out, hands glide across wool and silk. Quick, then slow. Carpets lift and unfurl. Persian rugs drape like banners, patterns spilling with flowers, vines, and geometry older than the market itself. Deep reds. Indigo blues. Soft golds. Bargaining becomes theater. A glance. A pause.

"In places like this," says Aykut Oter, owner of an Istanbul carpet store, holding a folded rug, "people chase something cheaper, but they miss the point." A short drive away, at his showroom in Swissotel The Bosphorus, the noise of the bazaar gives way to stillness.

Turkish Hereke and Persian rugs wait patiently, meant to travel continents and carry culture and beauty, yet wars keep them grounded. They roll softly, climb walls, and flutter to the floor, dreaming of distant homes.

"Turkey is not part of the current war between Iran, Israel, and the US," Oter says, "yet we feel it. Hotel reservations are canceled. Cargo stops. Tourists come less. Carpets are not food

or drink. They are a luxury."

**When threads whisper centuries**

Oter sits in the quiet glow of his showroom that he opened in 2012 after years of trade, steam rising from a cup of Turkish tea. Carpets wait like patient storytellers. He folds his hands over a Hereke rug, silk threads catching the light.

"Look at this," he says softly, "each knot is a heartbeat. Thousands of them can live on a single carpet. It takes patience, centuries of tradition, and hands that know the rhythm of generations." "In villages, women still weave at home. In the past, families traveled with tents and sheep, carrying carpets from town to town, selling them in mosques and marketplaces. Each carpet carried a life, a season, a story." He gestures toward smaller pieces crafted in Balikesir and Usak, villages where nomadic rhythms still echo.

**The flying carpets from light to shadow**

Oter unfolds a Hereke carpet. Its threads shimmer like sunlight on a lake, patterns blooming like secret gardens; floral, geometric, alive with memory.

"The most important thing in a carpet is the knot," he says, lifting the finely woven piece. "Each one is tied by hand. A single centimeter can hold a hundred knots, and greater density

creates finer detail and thinner structure."

Some carpets shift in color as they move, subtle tones appearing and fading as light brushes the surface. This comes from a finishing technique where fibers are brushed at an angle, giving depth and life to the design. Silk adds another layer of wonder.

In Bursa, silkworms spin cocoons that are carefully unwound into fine threads, dyed, and woven into intricate patterns. "If you take off your shoes," Oter says, "you will feel how comfortable it is."

**Whispers of Persia across the loom**

Across the room, a Persian carpet dominates the wall, its colors pulsing with history.

"Carpets are a tradition in Turkey," Oter says, tracing the patterns. "Iranian carpets are famous, but Turkish carpets came first." He continues with a tone of pride, "During the Seljuk Empire, cities such as Isfahan and Tabriz became centers where techniques evolved and spread, shaped by movement, trade, and time."

Shipping is difficult now. Conflict in the area close to ports, which raises costs.

"Turkish, Iranian, Afghan, Indian. Around 20 countries near Turkey make carpets."

For Oter, each carpet carries geography as much as design.