Iran steps up technology cooperation with Qatar, Russia and Brazil

Initial understanding reached with Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan on digital corridor

Economy Desk

Iran is seeking to deepen cooperation with Qatar, Russia and Brazil in telecommunications, digital technologies, artificial intelligence and cybersecurity, while also reaching an initial understanding with Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan on establishing a regional digital corridor linking Central Asia to the Persian Gulf, the Communications Ministry reported.

On the sidelines of the 2026 Plenipotentiary Conference of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in Doha, Communications and Information Technology Minister Sattar Hashemi met his Qatari counterpart, Mohammed bin Ali bin Mohammed Al Mannai, to discuss ways to expand bilateral cooperation in information and communications technology, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity and smart government.

The two ministers also emphasized the need to develop an implementation framework to follow up on the proposed areas of cooperation.

Hashemi thanked Qatar for hosting the conference and stressed the importance of preserving the ITU's technical and non-political character. He also expressed Iran's support for Qatar's candidacy for membership in the ITU Council and called on the Qatari delegation to support Iran's proposed documents and resolutions at the conference, the ministry said.

In a separate meeting with Grigory Borisenko, Russia's deputy minister of digital development, communications and mass media, the two sides focused on specialized cooperation and preparations for the sixth meeting of their joint working group, planned for the first quarter of 2027.

Iran proposed holding a specialized forum involving technology companies from both countries, exploring the establishment of a joint technology park and expanding cooperation in cybersecurity. Russia welcomed the proposals, the ministry said.

Hashemi also met Carlos Manuel Baigori, head of Brazil's telecommunications regulator, to discuss cooperation in telecommunications infrastructure, fiber-optic networks, data centers, artificial intelligence and cybersecurity.

Their talks also covered academic and university cooperation, exchanges of expertise, joint research, space technology and satellite applications, as well as stronger links between the two countries' private sectors and technology companies. Hashemi invited Baigori to visit Tehran and the Communications and IT Research Institute. Brazil welcomed the prospect of expanding bilateral cooperation, the ministry said.

Iran also reached an initial understanding with Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan on establishing a digital corridor connecting Central Asia to the Persian Gulf and neighboring countries.

The understanding was reached at a meeting between Hashemi, Turkmenistan Communications Minister Haji Murad Khudaigulyev and Doszhan Musaliyev, Kazakhstan's deputy minister of artificial intelligence and digital development.

The three countries are expected to discuss the details in further negotiations and finalize an agreement in the near future, the ministry said. The proposed corridor is intended to develop regional communications routes, increase connectivity capacity, strengthen telecommunications infrastructure and improve the resilience of digital services. It is also expected to facilitate data exchanges between Central Asia, the Persian Gulf and neighboring countries.

The ITU Plenipotentiary Conference, the union's highest decision-making and policy-setting body, is being held in Doha, Qatar, from Nov. 9 to 27, 2026. Convened every four years, the conference brings together representatives of member states to set the organization's future strategies and priorities.



Iranian Communications and Information Technology Minister Sattar Hashemi (L) shakes hands with his Qatari counterpart, Mohammed bin Ali bin Mohammed Al Mannai, on the sidelines of the 2026 Plenipotentiary Conference of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in Doha, Qatar, on November 11, 2026.
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Kazakhstan plans joint terminal with Iran at Shahid Rajaei Port

Economy Desk

Kazakhstan plans to establish a joint terminal with Iran at Shahid Rajaei Port in the southern province of Hormozgan, with agreements already signed to advance the project, Duisebay Dauirbek, head of Kazakhstan's consulate in Bandar Abbas, said on Wednesday.

Dauirbek said Kazakhstan attaches particular importance to Hormozgan's ports and that the country's private sector is ready to participate in port investment projects and expand maritime cooperation with Iran, IRNA reported.

Speaking at a news conference marking Kazakhstan's Independence Day (December 16), Dauirbek said a delegation from Kazakhstan's Trade Development Fund, accompanied by businesspeople and investors, had recently visited Shahid Rajaei Port to assess its capacities, facilities and infrastructure.

Agreements have been signed to establish the joint terminal, which is intended to facilitate port operations and provide a platform for traders and investors from both countries, he said.

Kazakhstan signed a $25 million agreement in June to develop a logistics hub at Iran's Shahid Rajaei Port. Iranian officials have said the facility will support the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC).

Dauirbek said visits by high-level Kazakh economic delegations to Shahid Rajaei Port reflected the two countries' determination to expand trade, increase investment and make greater use of the transit route's potential. He said Iran and Kazakhstan were seeking to raise their annual bilateral trade to $3 billion. Dauirbek also pointed to investment opportunities in Kazakhstan, saying about 500 Iranian companies were currently operating in the country. He said cooperation could be expanded in industry, mining, agriculture, energy and infrastructure. Iranian companies could also participate in construction and engineering projects in Kazakhstan, supply building materials and establish manufacturing facilities there, he said.

Kazakhstan's efforts to diversify its economy and attract foreign investment were creating new opportunities for Iranian businesses, Dauirbek said. Participation in investment projects could also help Iranian companies gain access to markets in Central Asia and the Eurasian Economic Union. He also highlighted opportunities to expand agricultural trade between the two countries. Kazakhstan exports wheat, barley and other agricultural products to Iran, while Iranian exports of dates, citrus fruits, rice and other agricultural goods to Kazakhstan could be increased, he said. Other potential areas of cooperation include establishing farms for growing Iranian rice in Kazakhstan, developing industrial greenhouses and expanding fish farming, Dauirbek added.

The consul also called for closer academic and educational ties between the two countries. He said the consulate was pursuing cooperation between a university in Aktau and the University of Hormozgan. A draft memorandum of understanding is being prepared, and a joint committee has been established with the participation of the Iranian university, he said.

On tourism, Dauirbek said a memorandum of understanding to expand cooperation between Kazakhstan and Hormozgan Province had been prepared and was expected to be signed during a planned visit to Kazakhstan by a political and economic delegation from the province.

The agreement also includes a proposal for Bandar Abbas and Aktau to become sister cities, he said.

Dauirbek also welcomed joint ventures with Iranian companies in energy, petrochemicals, mining, processing industries, digital technologies, pharmaceuticals and medical equipment manufacturing.

He said the opportunities offered by Kazakhstan extended beyond exports, allowing Iranian companies to undertake manufacturing projects and establish long-term investment partnerships, while gaining access to Central Asian markets and the Eurasian Economic Union, which has a population of about 186 million.

NIGC says gas supply remains stable after fire at South Pars platform

Economy Desk

Iran's domestic gas supply remains stable, with no disruption reported for consumers following a fire at a gas platform in the South Pars field, the head of the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) said on Wednesday, adding that the platform's lost output had been offset by production from other platforms.

Saeed Tavakoli said coordination between the oil and gas sectors, along with technical and engineering measures, had helped maintain the stability of the country's gas network after Tuesday night's fire at a platform in Phase 14 of the South Pars gas field, IRNA reported.

He said coordinated management across the oil and gas sectors had played an important role in keeping the network stable.

"During the seasonal transition to colder weather, actual gas consumption sometimes exceeds forecasts slightly," Tavakoli said.

Gas consumption in Tehran province reached a record 95 million cubic meters on Wednesday morning, while household and commercial users across the country consumed nearly 450 million cubic meters, he said.

Tavakoli urged the public to join the "20 Degrees" campaign, which encourages households to set indoor temperatures at 20 degrees Celsius, to help ensure stable gas supplies through the fall and winter.



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According to the NIGC, Iran was facing a daily gas shortfall of about 300 million cubic meters before the 40-day US-Israeli war began in late February. Attacks on four South Pars gas refineries in March initially knocked out about 230 million cubic meters of daily gas production capacity. About 100 million cubic meters of that lost capacity has since been restored, leaving 130 million cubic meters of daily production capacity still offline and adding to the country's existing supply constraints. This has underscored the importance of efforts to curb consumption.

Iran holds about 34 trillion cubic meters of proven natural gas reserves, the world's second-largest after Russia, accounting for about 17% of global proven reserves. Despite its vast reserves, a significant portion of the country's gas potential remains undeveloped because of sanctions-related constraints and insufficient investment.

The fire at the South Pars Phase 14 platform was brought under control through the timely response of operational and safety teams. Evacuation operations began immediately alongside firefighting efforts, according to the report.

Separately, Sepahdar Abbaszadeh, operations and support deputy at Pars Oil and Gas Company, said the fire at the SPD14D platform had been fully extinguished and 17 workers had been rescued despite adverse weather conditions.

He added that the platform's daily gas output of 14 million cubic meters had been made up through production from other platforms in the field.

Abbaszadeh described SPD14D as a relatively new platform that had recently entered production.

He said reports on maintenance and work carried out there over the previous two weeks had been reviewed at a crisis management committee meeting.

According to the reports, no process-related or operational problems had been identified at the platform, and no major or critical maintenance work had been carried out there during that period, he said.

Lack of Israeli ...

The partition of the "Sick Man of Europe," however, did not happen without a prelude. Britain

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fired the first shot at the heart of the Ottoman Empire by separating Egypt from it in 1882.

The second shot was fired in 1916, when Charles François Georges-Picot, the French foreign minister, and Sir Mark Sykes, the British foreign minister, signed the Sykes-Picot Agreement to divide the Ottoman Empire. The agreement reshaped the geography of the Middle East. Following the Ottoman Empire's defeat, it served in 1918 as the principal framework for an understanding between the two colonial powers on administering Ottoman territories in the region.

Palestine, however, was among the territories that took a different path. Unlike Lebanon, Syria, Saudi Arabia and others, it did not become a state and remained under British Mandate rule until 1948.

Following this agreement, Arab territories were diverted from their natural course and took on a new shape through colonial border-making. More than a century after the Sykes-Picot Agreement, it remains deeply embedded in the Arab collective consciousness.

Some regard the agreement as the root cause of all the Middle East's crises. This partition marked the beginning of a crisis across a vast region. Setting aside the European territories of the Ottoman Empire and the problems associated with them, it can be argued that the Arab Middle East entered an era of crisis through artificial border-making, a crisis that has continued in various forms to this day.

Against this backdrop, Hinnebusch argues that the Middle East was incorporated into the global division of labor as an exporter of commodities, particularly oil. In Wallerstein's terms, it became part of the "periphery," in contrast to the "core" represented by Western powers.

The proliferation of weak and insecure states, the arbitrary drawing of borders and the erosion of allegiance to the state, among other factors, led to the emergence of subnational identities. Where the concept of the "nation-state" itself was fraught with question marks, subnational groups assumed some of its functions. In other words, tasks that fell within the state's responsibilities were carried out by one or more subnational groups.

Added to these factors were the establishment of Israel in May 1948 and external colonial interventions in the region's affairs. Together, they created significant disparities between the imposed material order and nationalist and revisionist norms.

The result was a vicious cycle of violence and conflict, both within these systems and, at times, spilling over into the regional order. This gave rise to anti-hegemonic ideological approaches and pan-Arab movements. In Hinnebusch's words, where revisionist states failed, subnational movements emerged to fill the "state-nation" gap. The emergence of Hezbollah, Hamas and many similar groups can be examined within this framework.

Could Trump's plan pave the way for reviving the process of establishing an independent Palestinian state, or might it push the issue further to the margins of regional calculations?

The overall picture emerging from foreign reports is that there is no difference between Netanyahu's coalition and Eisenkot's camp on major domestic policy issues, including Gaza and the establishment of a Palestinian state.

Perhaps the only figure who stands out in this regard is Yair Golan, leader of Israel's Democrats party, who is willing to cooperate with the Palestinians.

At least so far, appearances suggest that the idea of a "Palestinian state" does not figure in the thinking of the others. I believe that even if Trump's pressure leads to some kind of breakthrough on Gaza, everything will return to square one once his term in office ends.