

## INDIA-IRAN RELATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF MIDDLE EAST GEOPOLITICAL CRISIS

Rano Tuychiyeva Almamatovna,

Doctor of Philosophy in Political Sciences, Institute for the Study of Youth  
Problems and Training of Prospective Personnel, Tashkent, Uzbekistan,

Email: rano-tuichiyeva@mail.ru,

tel.: +998974046454

### Abstract:

This article covers India-Iran relations, mutual strategic and economic importance of the two countries, existing bilateral problems, conditions and prospects for their solution.

**Keywords:** Tehran Declaration, Location of Iran, Caspian Sea, Persian Gulf, Iran Nuclear Agreement, Houthis, West Asia, Afghanistan, North-South International Corridor.

### Introduction

India and Iran have deep cultural and historical connections. But relations between the two nations have atrophied in recent times. The strategic importance of Iran for India is that, firstly, Iran is located in a strategic and important geographical area between the Persian Gulf and the Caspian Sea. Second, Iran provides India with an alternative route to Afghanistan and Central Asian republics without being granted land access through Pakistan. Also, Iran is one of the countries rich in oil and natural gas fields.

The importance of India for Iran is reflected in the country's strategic location, the country's second largest population, large economy, and large demographic dividends. Accordingly, India will help Iran sell its oil to a large market close to its geographical location, giving Iran access to the No. 5 economy for trade and investment. This situation will greatly help Iran's struggling economy.

US sanctions on Iran have been a big factor, leading to India largely curtailing its engagements with the country. But recent developments – visa-free travel for Indians, and Iran's entry into BRICS - seem to provide reason for cautious optimism.

### Main part

However, there are a number of problems in India-Iran relations, which are reflected in the following. First of all, the suspension of oil imports from Iran after May 2019 due to US sanctions after the cancellation of the Iran nuclear deal has seriously affected India's energy security. India's close relations with Israel and Iran's relations with China, including the signing of a 25-year strategic partnership agreement, have had a negative impact on bilateral relations. In Yemen, Iran-backed Houthis launched drone attacks on India's close allies, Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Also, Iran's sharp statement that the Indian government abrogated Article 370 of the Indian Constitution showed serious interference in the Kashmir issue, and India did not like this situation.

Optimistic conditions for finding a suitable solution to these existing problems in bilateral relations and restoring relations are suggested by experts as follows. The Taliban government has



been largely isolated since taking over Kabul in August 2021. Iran was one of the few countries that did not withdraw its embassy from Kabul and continued to keep communication channels open with the Taliban. India is now ready to open its embassy in Kabul and has recently started talks with the Taliban. Therefore, India and Iran have the potential to establish a common and effective policy of cooperation with Afghanistan in the future. Also, a rebalancing is taking place in the West Asian region, which creates great opportunities for strengthening India-Iranian ties. For a long time, India's growing ties with the Gulf states, particularly Saudi Arabia and the UAE, have been seen as a "zero-sum game" against their rivalry with Iran. Recently, the UAE and Qatar have had good talks with Iran. The Iranian president visited Qatar and Oman this year. Syria and Iraq are gradually becoming stronger and more positive towards Iran. The Ibrahim agreements signed with Israel give hope that the countries of the region will perceive Israel as a potential partner rather than an enemy. All these changes work in India's favor as it has close and good relations with the Gulf States, Iran and Israel. This gives India a huge opportunity to develop and expand cooperation with Iran without fear of losing its other friends in the region.

In line with the new Iranian regime's "Asia-focused" foreign policy, Iran's foreign minister visited India, marking Iran's first ministerial-level visit to restore ties with India since the new government took control in 2021.

If we consider how to solve the difficulties and problems faced by both sides, they can be interpreted as follows:

- India and Iran have had close civilizational ties since the days of the Persian Empire and the Indian kingdoms.
- Iran is an important regional neighbor to India and in fact the two countries shared a border until India's partition and independence in 1947.
- The "Tehran Declaration" signed during former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's visit to Iran affirmed the common vision of the two countries for an "equal, pluralistic and cooperative international order".
- It recognized the views of the then president of Iran, Mohammad Khatami, on the "dialogue between civilizations" as a paradigm of international relations based on the principles of tolerance, pluralism and respect for diversity.

Indeed, at some point India may emerge as the perfect interlocutor in the region as it has the trust and confidence of all stakeholders.

The benefits of restructuring India-Iran relations are that potential enhancement in bilateral relations can open doors to fully exploit the potential of cooperation between India and Iran. This ultimately leads to regional and global benefits. India may consider resuming oil imports from Iran, if India reverses course and resumes imports of Iranian oil, it may prompt some other countries to follow suit and open up additional oil in the market which could ultimately increase oil prices. In addition, the "North-South" international transport corridor is a huge project that started at the beginning of this century, connecting India, Iran, Afghanistan, Russia, Central Asia and Europe through multimodal transport, which will increase the volume of cargo transportation dramatically reduces the transit time of goods. From the point of view of energy security, the Iran-Oman-India gas pipeline is also a huge project that has been stuck for a long time. Only during the recent visit of the President of Oman to Iran, an agreement was signed on the development of two gas pipelines and an oil field along the sea borders. If this happens, there is a possibility of



extending the pipeline to India, which will help prevent the loss of the Iran-Pakistan-India pipeline and facilitate the supply of natural gas to India.

Iran asks India to "Use All Its Capacities" to end Israel's assault on Gaza. Israel-Hamas War: Since Israel declared a war on Hamas after the terror group unleashed mayhem in southern Israel on October 7, PM Modi has had regular telephone conversations with world leaders. New Delhi:

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi during a call with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday, urged India to use "all its capacities" to end the Israeli actions in Gaza amid the ongoing conflict. According to the Iranian readout of the call between the two leaders, Raisi recalled India's struggles against Western colonialism and the country's position as one of the founders of the Non-Aligned Movement in the world

"Today, India is expected to use all its capacities to end the Zionist crimes against the oppressed people of Gaza," the statement read.

The Iranian President further stated that Tehran supports any global joint effort for an immediate ceasefire, lifting the blockade and providing aid to the oppressed people of Gaza.

"The continuation of the killing of the Palestinian people has infuriated of all the free nations of the world and this killing will have extra-regional consequences," he stated.

He further said that the killing of oppressed and innocent women and children, attacks on hospitals, schools, mosques, churches and residential areas are "condemned and unacceptable" from the point of view of any human being,

"Palestinian resistance groups have a legitimate right to confront the occupation of the usurping Zionist regime and all countries must support the Palestinian people's struggle for freedom from oppression," the Iranian readout quoted Raisi as saying.

He added, "How come that the struggle of European countries against Nazi Germany is an admirable and heroic act, but the resistance of the Palestinian people against the child-killing and criminal Zionist regime is condemned?!"

Meanwhile, in another part of this conversation, Raisi described the Tehran's view of relations with India as 'strategic' and emphasised the necessity of planning for the development of cooperation and compensating the delays in this field.

Emphasising the importance of the North-South Corridor and its benefits for all countries in the region, President Raisi emphasised that India is expected to make "serious investments" to strengthen sustainable economic cooperation, including in Chabahar Port.

During the conversation, Prime Minister Modi, stressed the importance of preventing escalation, ensuring the continued provision of humanitarian aid, and early restoration of peace and stability in the region.

The two leaders also welcomed the progress in India and Iran's progress in bilateral cooperation, including on the Chabahar port.

Since Israel declared a war on Hamas after the terror group unleashed mayhem in southern Israel on October 7, PM Modi has had regular telephone conversations with world leaders.

Earlier, on Friday, PM Modi spoke with the UAE President, Mohammed Bin Zayed, sharing his concerns over the escalating situation and loss of civilian lives amid the Israel-Hamas war. Both leaders agreed on "the need for early resolution of the security and humanitarian situation" in the region after Hamas launched an attack on Israel on October 7.



Earlier, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar spoke with his Iranian counterpart Amirabdollahian to discuss the raging Israel-Hamas war.

The two leaders underscored the importance of preventing further escalation in the region and providing crucial humanitarian support. They also agreed to maintain communication to address the evolving situation in West Asia.

### Conclusion

In turn, in order to implement these conditions, it is necessary for the two countries to seek areas of rapprochement in which they mutually understand each other's common interests and work together to achieve them. India is pursuing a hard-line diplomacy that focuses only on its own national interests, with an emphasis on standing by its neighbors and friends. If India can extend the same vision to cooperation with Iran, it can open up a huge potential for cooperation between these two great nations and civilizations. By improving ties, both India and Iran can tap into their untapped potential and further enhance regional economy and security.

### References

1. "India-Iran Economic Relations", FICCI Publication, available at, [http://www.ficci.com/international/75186/Project\\_docs/India-Iran-Economic--Relations.pdf](http://www.ficci.com/international/75186/Project_docs/India-Iran-Economic--Relations.pdf)
2. India-Iran Relations, Embassy of India, Tehran, available at, [http://www.indianembassy-tehran.ir/india-iran\\_relations.php](http://www.indianembassy-tehran.ir/india-iran_relations.php)
3. Uma Purushothaman, "American Shadow over India-Iran Relations", Strategic Analysis, Volume 36, Issue 6, November 2012, pp. 899-910.
4. Siddharth Ramana, "The Pakistan Factor in the India-Iran Relationship", Strategic Analysis, Volume 36, Issue 6, November 2012, pp. 837-847.
5. Fallahi, E. (2021, April 4). Iran-China strategic partnership: a roadmap for mutual prosperity. Tehran Times. <https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/459437/Iran-China-strategic-partnership-a-roadmap-for-mutual-prosperity>
6. Figueroa, W. (2022, January 20). China and Iran Since the 25-Year Agreement: The Limits of Cooperation. The Diplomat. <https://thediplomat.com/2022/01/china-and-iran-since-the-25-year-agreement-the-limits-of-cooperation/>
7. Gokhale, V. (2021, March). The Road from Galwan: The Future of India-China Relations. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. [https://carnegieendowment.org/files/Gokhale\\_Galwan.pdf](https://carnegieendowment.org/files/Gokhale_Galwan.pdf)
8. Goulard, S. (2021, March 31). Iran China signed a 25-year agreement: a BRI milestone. OBOReuropa. <https://www.oboreurope.com/en/iran-china-agreement/>
9. Haidar, S. (2020, July 14). Iran drops India from Chabahar rail project, cites funding delay. The Hindu. <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/iran-drops-india-from-chabahar-rail-project-cites-funding-delay/article32072428.ece>

