

Israeli Insider Reveals Motivation Behind Last Month's Strike in Iran



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Iran International

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An Iranian woman walks past an anti-Israel banner with a picture of Iranian missiles on a street in Tehran, Iran April 19, 2024.

Israel's retaliatory attack against Iran's sophisticated radar system in Isfahan in April carried a strong message that the Islamic Republic's defense capabilities could not m...

Israel's military might, a top Israeli insider and ex-military official told Iran International.

“[We were] sending a message, saying we can completely destroy their air defense on this site, and we can freely attack whenever we want,” said Brigadier General (ret.) Amir Avivi, the founder and chairman of the Israeli Defense and Security Forum (IDSF). His organization is a powerful political and cultural force in Israel – which is made up of more than 30,000 former IDF soldiers and officers.

Avivi, a close friend and Caesarea neighbor of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, is regularly consulted by key government ministers.





Brigadier General (ret.) Amir Avivi, the founder and chairman of the Israeli Defense and Security Forum (IDSF)

This is the first time an Israeli insider so closely connected to the government details the country's attacks on the Russian-made S-300 air defense system near Iran's Natanz nuclear enrichment facility, and explains the motivations behind the strikes.

On April 19, in the early hours of the morning, Israel's arm reached far into Iranian territory into the province of Isfahan, just a few days after the Tehran launched more than 300 drone and missile attacks on Israel.

It seemed years of a shadow war between the two nations had ended - and what appeared to be the impossible - a direct conflict between the two nations - suddenly became a reality.

Iranian officials sought to downplay the attack - with Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian claiming in an interview with NBC news in April that what happened "was not a strike."


On May 5, weeks after the retaliation, a member of Israel's security cabinet and Minister of Transportation, Miri Regev, officially confirmed the strike on an Iranian air base in Isfahan on Israeli TV Channel 14. That marked the first time the attack had ever been even publicly acknowledged by Israel.

Israel's response, for many, seemed rather limited, but according to Brigadier General Avivi, it was anything but.

Avivi said in an interview with Iran International in Tel Aviv that the attack destroyed the defense system in Isfahan in a "minute" - which he argues tells the Islamic Republic of Iran "you are nothing."


"In any moment we want to deal with you, in 10 minutes we are going to destroy all your air defense, and then we are going to attack you and that's it," Avivi said.




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Analysis of satellite imagery obtained by Iran International confirms media reports that a central part of the S-300 air defense system at an Iranian air base in Isfahan was hit by a presumed Israeli attack early Friday.

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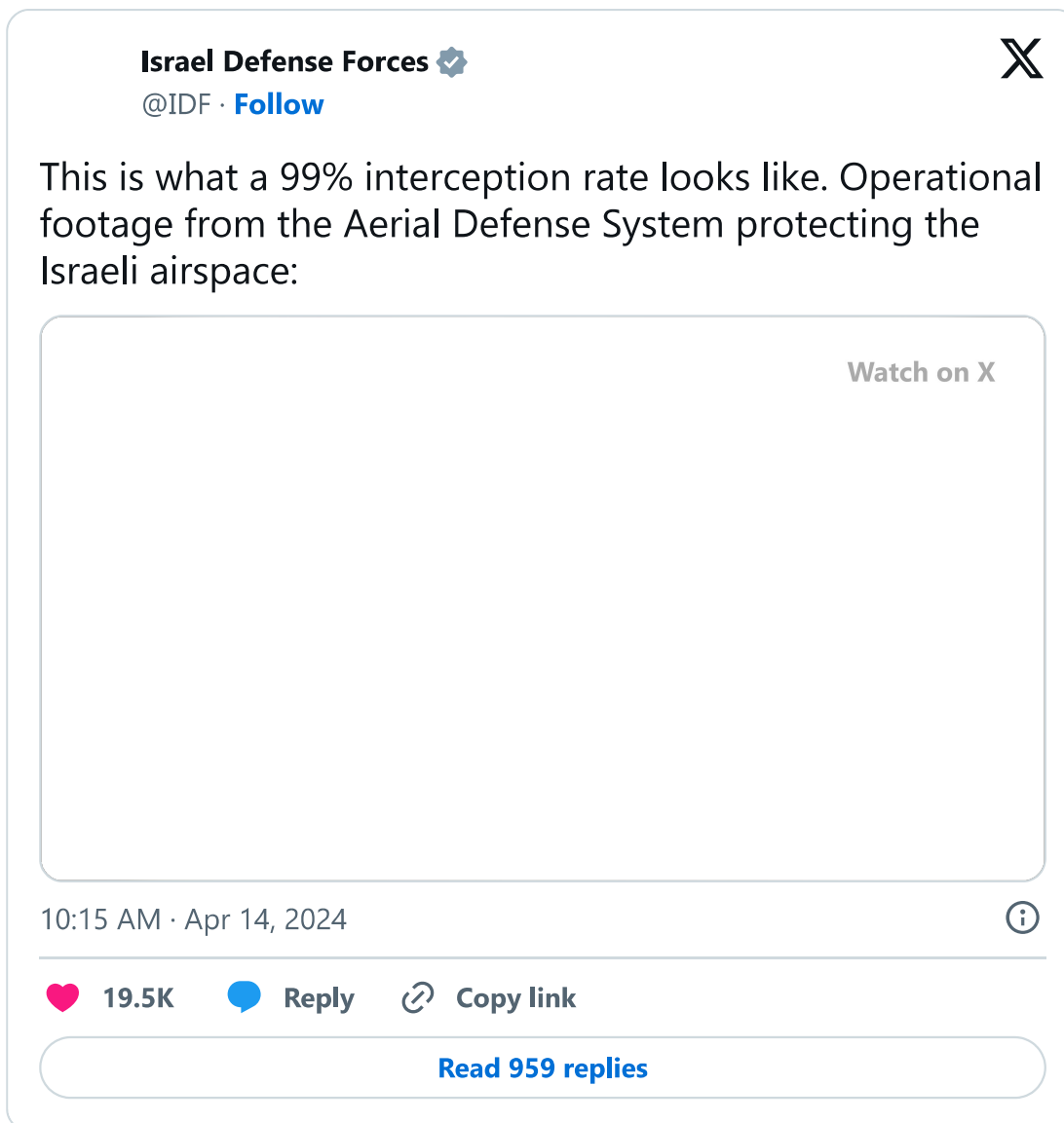
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During his service, Avivi held a number of senior roles in the Israeli Defense Force (IDF). He was the deputy division commander of the Gaza Strip, Deputy Comptroller of the Security Forces, Director of the Office of the Chief of Staff, Commander of the Sagi Division, Commander of Battalion 605 and Commander of the School of Combat.

He said he realized two years ago that Iran was “on the way to war.” He wrote a 300-page Israeli national security assessment - sending it to the Israeli government, Mossad and military, claiming “there will be war in the coming years.”





What's next for Iran and Israel?

Avivi said Israel was currently prioritizing the war against Hamas and bringing the hostages home with the nation fighting on 7 fronts. Iran, Avivi said, was an issue that he believes Israel will deal with - but later.

“We can deal with this. What can they do? Shoot another 400 missiles?”

As a General - Avivi has for years been discussing what an attack from Iran would look like. Now that it's happened, he said Israel was more likely to go in later and attack Iranian nuclear sites.

He suggested that Netanyahu's government would likely go to war with Iran in November if there is a change in US administration after the election.

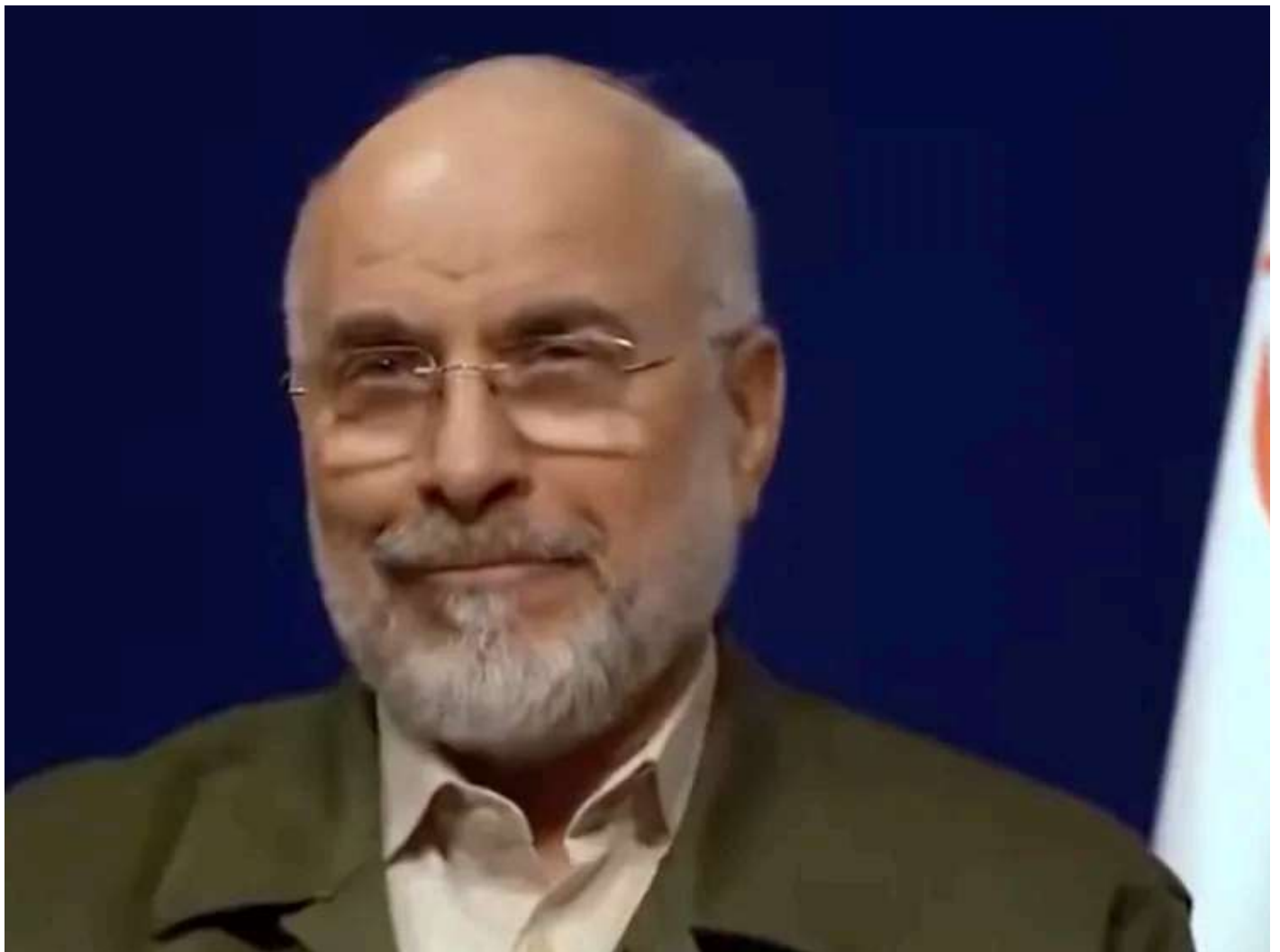
“Our top priority is winning in Gaza. The dealing with Iran will happen in a month or two w^e we deal with Hezbollah. If we have to go to a full-scale war with Hezbollah, then it would be

worthwhile attacking Iran. But this is a difficult decision to make when America is not on board. I think Netanyahu is thinking maybe it's worthwhile to wait till November, maybe there will be a change in administration. Maybe with the next administration we will attack Iran together and not alone," says Avivi.

While Iran and Israel continue to engage in proxy fighting and a potential direct war looms - Avivi said Israel has not yet shown even 1 percent of its capabilities.

He said April's attack in Iran showed two things: "One, we can deal with your capabilities. Two, you cannot deal with ours."

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UN Demands Iran Revoke Death Sentence for Mahmoud Mehrabi

May 14, 2024, 01:51 GMT+1 • Iran International Newsroom



United Nations experts on Monday called for Iran to rescind the death penalty imposed on Mahmoud Mehrabi, an anti-corruption activist.

Mehrabi, arrested last year, [was charged with](#) “corruption on earth”—a vague term that Iran employs to describe various offenses, including blasphemy and actions against Islamic m all stemming from his online activism focused on justice and corruption.

The UN team of experts, led by Javaid Rehman, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran, said that "the expression of critical views online and offline cannot meet the threshold under international law for the imposition of the death penalty." They added that the accusations against Mehrabi do not constitute "the most serious crimes."

In September, the situation escalated as Mehrabi was slapped with additional charges including "propaganda against the state", "inciting disobedience among police and military forces", "inciting to war", "crimes against national security", and "insulting Iran's founding and current supreme leaders". Subsequently, Iran's Revolutionary Court sentenced him to death.

The UN's experts said "the arrest, detention and sentencing to death of Mr. Mehrabi sends a chilling message to all those who wish to express themselves freely in Iran."

The team urged Iranian authorities to amend the constitution and the penal code to abolish the death penalty and commute all existing death sentences.

Rights group [Amnesty International](#) reported earlier this year that 853 people were executed in Iran in 2023, a record number in the last eight years. The execution wave continues with dissidents and their families being targeted across the country.

Khamenei's Choice of Anti-Israel Book at Book Fair Stirs Controversy

May 13, 2024, 23:46 GMT+1



During his routine visit to the Tehran International Book Fair, Iran's supreme leader selected *The Fall Of Tel Aviv*, a novel that depicts the fall of the Jewish state and Iran's archenemy.

Ali Khamenei's selection of the book by Lebanon's Somayah Ali Hashem comes amidst renewed military tensions between Israel and Iran which peaked with Iran's first ever direct attack on Israel last month.

Speaking to Iran International, Masoud Mafan, manager of Baran Publishing in Sweden, described [Khamenei's](#) book selection as "beating the drum of war."



On April 13, in what was reported as a response to an Israeli strike on its consulate in Damascus, [Iran carried out](#) its first direct assault on Israel, firing over 350 cruise missiles, ballistic missiles, and drones. Most of these were intercepted by Israeli defenses and a US-led coalition. [In retaliation](#), Israel targeted and destroyed a crucial part of the S-300 air defense system at the Isfahan base.

This year's Tehran book fair has also been marked by its inclusion of the Yemeni Houthis as special guests. The Iran-backed militia, known for its recent attacks against Israeli and commercial targets in the Red Sea, was invited following the absence of Indian publishers, who were unable to attend due to travel restrictions imposed by the government.

The Tehran International Book Fair, a cultural event since its inception in 1987 under then-minister Mohammad Khatami, initially attracted 196 foreign and 200 domestic publishers.

Notable initial participants included major international publishers like Oxford, Penguin, and UNESCO but amid Iran's ongoing policy of hostage diplomacy, human rights abuses and visa issues of the sanctioned nation, less and less participants now attend.

US Slams Iranian Statements About Opting for Nuclear Weapons

May 13, 2024, 21:46 GMT+1 • **Iran International Newsroom**



The US will not allow Iran to build a nuclear bomb, the State Department said on Monday, one day after a senior Iranian official said Tehran would have no option but to change its nuclear doctrine in the face of Israel's threats.

“[President] Biden and [US Secretary of State Antony] Blinken will not allow Iran to have a nuclear weapon,” State Department deputy spokesperson Vedant Patel said in a press briefing.

He made the remarks in reaction to Sunday comments by Kamal Kharrazi, a senior advisor to Iran's ruler Ali Khamenei, that the Islamic Republic would be left with no option but to alter its nuclear doctrine if Israel threatened its nuclear facilities or its existence.



"We continue to assess, though, that Iran is not taking any key activities that would be necessary to produce a testable nuclear device," Patel told Iran International correspondent Samira Gharaei.

Kharazi said on Sunday that Iran does "not possess nuclear weapons, and there is a fatwa from the leader regarding this matter. But what should you do if the enemy threatens you? You will inevitably have to make changes to your doctrine."

Asked if these comments were a concern for the United States, Patel said, "We don't believe that the Supreme Leader has yet made a decision to resume the (nuclear) weaponization program that we judge Iran suspended or stopped at the end of 2003."

When asked about the Biden administration's strategy toward a "nuclear threshold state" like Iran in the absence of ongoing negotiations, Patel told Iran International, "We have ways of communicating with Iran when it's in our interest, I'm not going to comment on that."

In a Monday press conference in Tehran, Iran's foreign ministry spokesman suggested that Kharrazi's remarks were not the official position of the Islamic Republic, and that Tehran's nuclear doctrine has not changed.

"Iran's official position on Weapons of Mass Destruction has been repeatedly declared by high-ranking Iranian officials, and there has been no change in Iran's nuclear doctrine," Nasser Kanaani told reporters in a briefing held on the sidelines of Tehran International Book Fair, citing a fatwa by Ali Khamenei on the prohibition of the production and use of nuclear weapons as the basis for Iran's position.

However, the fatwa Iranian officials refer to is not an irrevocable principle. Islamic fatwas can change or be reversed at a moment's notice, [experts have pointed out.](#) Also, the alleged Khamenei fatwa is not actually a religious order, it is part of a statement he submitted to an international conference more than a decade ago.

Khamenei may invoke the principle of expediency to overrule his "anti-Nuclear" fatwa. The principle of expediency, as decreed by the founder of the Islamic Republic Ayatollah Khomeini in January 1988, stipulates that the Supreme Leader may even violate the fundamental tenets of the Islamic faith in order to preserve "the Islamic Regime" as the [preservation of the Islamic Regime supersedes all else.](#)



Kharrazi on Sunday also raised the issue of Israel's alleged nuclear arsenal and called for the Jewish state's nuclear disarmament. "If Israel threatens other countries, they cannot remain silent," he retorted.

Last week, Kharrazi had stated, "If they dare to strike Iran's nuclear facilities, our level of deterrence will change. We have experienced deterrence at the conventional level so far. If they intend to strike Iran's nuclear capabilities, naturally, it could lead to a change in Iran's nuclear doctrine."

In recent weeks, Iran has evoked the option of using the nuclear option as a deterrent against the possibility of an Israeli strike against its atomic facilities, amid a new reality in the Middle East after the October 7 Hamas attack.

On Friday, Iranian lawmaker Ahmad Bakhshayesh Ardestani claimed Iran might already possess a nuclear weapon.

He [conveyed to the Rouydad 24 website](#) his belief that Iran's decision to risk attacking Israel in April stemmed from its possession of nuclear weapons.

Ali-Akbar Salehi, who was foreign minister more than a decade ago and is still a key foreign policy voice in the Iranian government, also said last month that Iran has everything it needed to build a nuclear bomb, as tensions rose with Israel amid the Gaza war.

[In a televised interview in April](#), Salehi, was asked if Iran has achieved the capability of developing a nuclear bomb. Avoiding a direct answer he stated, "We have [crossed] all the thresholds of nuclear science and technology."

Salehi's statement was preceded by a declaration from a Revolutionary Guard general. In the midst of tensions between the Islamic Republic and Israel, Ahmad Haghtalab, the IRGC commander of the Guard for the Protection and Security of Nuclear Facilities, announced on April 19 that if Israel intends to "use the threat of attacking our nuclear facilities as a tool to pressure Iran, a revision of the nuclear doctrine and policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran and a shift from previously stated considerations is conceivable and likely."

Since early 2021, when the Biden administration opted for negotiations to restore the Obama-era JCPOA agreement, Iran has vastly expanded its uranium enrichment efforts and is now believed to have amassed enough fissile material for 3-5 nuclear warheads.



Iran Reports over 2,000 Work-Related Deaths in a Year, up 11%

May 13, 2024, 21:24 GMT+1



In Iran, there have been more than 2,000 work-related deaths recorded in the last year, more than five per day, up by over 11 percent.

According to Ali Ziyai, head of the crime scene investigation unit at the Iranian Legal Medicine Organization, a total of 2,115 workers lost their lives, while an additional 27,000 sustained injuries as a result of work-related accidents during the last Iranian calendar year, spanning from March 2023 to March 2024.

Criticizing the Ministry of Labor for "statistical cover-up" on Monday state-affiliated ILNA news agency highlighted that this figure translates to an average of [5.79 worker fatalities per day](#) throughout the year.

Ziyai told INLA that work-related fatalities "have increased by 11.3% compared to the previous year", adding that falling from heights consistently constitutes the largest portion of work accident fatalities.

He said, "Last year, 983 individuals lost their lives in workplace accidents due to falls from a height, comprising 46% of the total casualties."

However, the numbers are likely far higher than reported by government affiliated sources. On International Labor Day last month, the HRANA Human Rights Organization [reported](#) that at least 9,879 workers lost their lives or sustained injuries over the past year in Iran from 1 May 2023 to 27 April.

According to HRANA, a minimum of 1,680 workers died due to work-related accidents. Out of these fatalities, 10 official sources documented 1,514 deaths, while independent organizations reported the remaining 166 fatalities.



India Signs 10-Year Agreement to Operate Iran's Chabahar Port

May 13, 2024, 21:03 GMT+1 • Dalga Khatinoglu



India and Iran have inked a deal allowing India Ports Global (IPGL) company to develop and control the management of an Iranian port for 10 years.

According to the deal, signed on Monday, IPGL is allowed to manage the transit operation of Indian goods to Afghanistan and Central Asia at the port in Chabahar, on Iran's southeastern coast along the Gulf of Oman.

Sarbananda Sonowal, India's Minister of Ports and Shipping, visited Iran today to participate in the ceremony and discuss boosting relations.

Since 2016, IPGL has invested \$85 million in Chabahar to develop the Iranian port, aiming to create a rival to the Chinese-funded Pakistani Gwadar and Karachi ports – and to expand trade with Central Asia and Afghanistan.


The Indian company was supposed to have invested \$250 million in Chabahar by now, but the investment has been delayed due to financial obstacles and Iran's procrastination in developing the Chabahar-Zahedan railway.

This railway is crucial for connecting the port to the national railway network and facilitating the transit of Indian goods to target markets.

Under the new agreement, the investment value is expected to reach \$370 million. This project obtained a US sanctions waiver in 2018.

"As and when a long-term arrangement is concluded, it will clear the pathway for bigger investments to be made in the port," Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar told reporters in Mumbai.

The Strategic Significance of Chabahar Port

Indian trade with Central Asia and Afghanistan remained unchanged at \$2 billion during last year due to its dependence on Chinese and Pakistani territory to connect the target market 

For comparison, Indian trade rival China had \$90 billion trade turnover with Central Asian states, including Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan in 2023 – which increased by 27% year-on-year, China Customs statistics indicate.

China also had \$1.33 billion trade with Afghanistan last year, 40% more than India's.

According to the International Monetary Fund, Central Asian states had \$143 billion export and \$95 billion import with foreign countries.

The Indian Commerce Ministry's statistics show the mentioned states share only 0.5% of India's total foreign trade.

India, Iran and Russia also signed a transit agreement in 2000, but neither India nor Russia transits good through Iranian territory due to its poor logistic infrastructures.

In terms of the logistics performance index (LPI), the [World Bank](#) has ranked Iran among the poorest countries.

Last year, the Islamic Republic ranked 123 of the 139 countries compared, marking the lowest score among all neighbors, except Afghanistan. Even Iraq outperformed Iran in terms of LPI, ranking 115 globally.

Given the current circumstances, while the transit of Indian goods through Iran to Russia seems unlikely, the Chabahar port holds significant potential for fostering trade between India and Central Asia or Afghanistan in the years ahead.

Last year, more than 4.2 million tons of goods were loaded or unloaded at Chabahar, sharing 2.2% of Iran's total foreign trade volume. However, only 15,000 tons of goods were transit cargoes, corresponding to 0.1% of Iran's total foreign cargo transits in 2023.

Therefore, almost all of the loaded or unloaded cargoes at Chabahar was related to Iran and India's own trade.

India increased exports to Iran by 14% year-on-year to \$1.66 billion in 2023, while its imports from Iran experienced a 45% growth to \$672 million. Before US sanctions, India imported \$11.1 billion and exported \$2.65 billion goods to Iran in 2017.



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