

Iran

Geography

Location: Middle East, bordering the Gulf of Oman and the Persian Gulf, between Iraq and Pakistan

Area:

total area: 1.648 million sq km

land area: 1.636 million sq km

Land boundaries: total 5,440 km, Afghanistan 936 km, Armenia 35 km, Azerbaijan (north) 432 km, Azerbaijan (northwest) 179 km, Iraq 1,458 km, Pakistan 909 km, Turkey 499 km, Turkmenistan 992 km

Coastline: 2,440 km

note: Iran also borders the Caspian Sea (740 km)

Maritime claims:

contiguous zone: 24 nm

continental shelf: natural prolongation
exclusive economic zone: bilateral agreements, or median lines in
the Persian Gulf
territorial sea: 12 nm

Climate: mostly arid or semiarid, subtropical along Caspian coast

Terrain: rugged, mountainous rim; high, central basin with deserts,
mountains; small, discontinuous plains along both coasts

Natural resources: petroleum, natural gas, coal, chromium, copper,
iron ore, lead, manganese, zinc, sulfur

Land use:

arable land: 8%

permanent crops: 0%

meadows and pastures: 27%

forest and woodland: 11%

other: 54%

Irrigated land: 57,500 sq km (1989 est.)

Environment:

current issues: air pollution, especially in urban areas, from vehicle
emissions, refinery operations, and industrial effluents;

deforestation; overgrazing; desertification; oil pollution in the Persian Gulf; inadequate supplies of potable water
natural hazards: periodic droughts, floods; duststorms, sandstorms; earthquakes along the Western border
international agreements: party to - Endangered Species, Hazardous Wastes, Nuclear Test Ban, Ozone Layer Protection, Wetlands; signed, but not ratified - Biodiversity, Climate Change, Desertification, Environmental Modification, Law of the Sea, Marine Life Conservation

People

Population: 64,625,455 (July 1995 est.)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 45% (female 14,113,933; male 14,995,015)

15-64 years: 51% (female 16,237,810; male 16,803,943)

65 years and over: 4% (female 1,197,869; male 1,276,885) (July 1995 est.)

Population growth rate: 2.29% (1995 est.)

Birth rate: 34.85 births/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Death rate: 6.85 deaths/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Net migration rate: -5.11 migrant(s)/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Infant mortality rate: 54.6 deaths/1,000 live births (1995 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 66.97 years

male: 65.77 years

female: 68.22 years (1995 est.)

Total fertility rate: 4.93 children born/woman (1995 est.)

Nationality:

noun: Iranian(s)

adjective: Iranian

Ethnic divisions: Persian 51%, Azerbaijani 24%, Gilaki and Mazandarani 8%, Kurd 7%, Arab 3%, Lur 2%, Baloch 2%, Turkmen 2%, other 1%

Religions: Shi'a Muslim 95%, Sunni Muslim 4%, Zoroastrian, Jewish, Christian, and Baha'i 1%

Languages: Persian and Persian dialects 58%, Turkic and Turkic dialects 26%, Kurdish 9%, Luri 2%, Baloch 1%, Arabic 1%, Turkish 1%, other 2%

Literacy: age 15 and over can read and write (1991)
total population: 66%
male: 74%
female: 56%

Government

Names:

conventional long form: Islamic Republic of Iran

conventional short form: Iran

local long form: Jomhuri-ye Eslami-ye Iran

local short form: Iran

Capital: Tehran

Independence: 1 April 1979 (Islamic Republic of Iran proclaimed)

National holiday: Islamic Republic Day, 1 April (1979)

Constitution: 2-3 December 1979; revised 1989 to expand powers of the presidency and eliminate the prime ministership

Suffrage: 15 years of age; universal

Flag: three equal horizontal bands of green (top), white, and red; the national emblem (a stylized representation of the word Allah) in red is centered in the white band; Allah Akbar (God is Great) in white Arabic script is repeated 11 times along the bottom edge of the green band and 11 times along the top edge of the red band

Economy

Overview: Iran's economy is a mixture of central planning, state ownership of oil and other large enterprises, village agriculture, and small-scale private trading and service ventures.

Industries: petroleum, petrochemicals, textiles, cement and other building materials, food processing (particularly sugar refining and vegetable oil production), metal fabricating, armaments and military equipment

Agriculture: accounts for about 20% of GDP; principal products - wheat, rice, other grains, sugar beets, fruits, nuts, cotton, dairy products, wool, caviar; not self-sufficient in food

Illicit drugs: illicit producer of opium poppy for the domestic and international drug trade; produced 35-70 metric tons in 1993; net opiate importer but also a key transshipment point for Southwest Asian heroin to Europe

Transportation

Railroads:
total: 4,850 km;

Highways:
total: 140,200 km

Inland waterways: 904 km

Pipelines: crude oil 5,900 km; petroleum products 3,900 km; natural gas 4,550 km

Ports: Abadan (largely destroyed in fighting during 1980-88 war), Ahvaz, Bandar Beheshti, Bandar-e 'Abbas, Bandar-e Anzali, Bandar-e Bushehr, Bandar-e Khomeyni, Bandar-e Mah Shahr, Bandar-e Torkeman, Jazireh-ye Khark, Jazireh-ye Lavan, Jazireh-ye Sirri, Khorramshahr (limited operation since November 1992), Now Shahr

Airports:
total: 261

Defence Forces

Branches: Islamic Republic of Iran Ground Forces, Navy, Air and Air Defense Force, Revolutionary Guards (includes Basij militia with its ground, air, and naval forces), Law Enforcement Forces