



## BANDAR-E GAZ

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**BANDAR-e GAZ**, a port on the southern shore of the [Astarābād](#) bay in the southeastern Caspian Sea, a few kilometers from a group of nine hamlets known collectively as Gaz. In the mid-nineteenth century, this shoreline (called *Kenāra*, cf. Curzon, I, p. 185 and Rabino, p. 66; and *Kenār Gaz*, cf. O'Donovan, I, p. 297) was uninhabited, but the installation of Russians on the [Āšūrāda](#) islands after 1837 made it very important strategically. The site, at the mouth of a small stream, opposite the tip of the *Mīānqāla* peninsula and at the entrance of the bay, is doubly favored in that it is both sheltered from sea winds and easily accessible by sea. Russians built a trading post at the port in 1845 (Marvin, p. 331), but were prevented from establishing themselves further by the creation of a Persian post in 1867.

For about fifteen years, Bandar-e Gaz was the major port in the southeastern Caspian, a place from which muleteers could carry Russian merchandise to Astarābād, northeastern Iran, Khorasan, and even Herat. The town comprised wooden shanties, a few customs buildings, solidly built houses for Russian and British agents, and a large caravansary. Port installations were limited to a precarious wooden pier built on piles. In 1881, imports (cloth, tea, sugar, metal, and hardware) amounted to 287,640 pounds sterling; and exports (wool and skins, silk, cotton, boxwood, gallnuts and dried fruits), to 86,280 pounds sterling. Nearly all trade was in the hands of Armenian merchants. When the Trans-Caspian Railroad reached 'Ešqābād ([Ashkhabad](#)), in 1881, opening a much shorter route toward Mašhad, port traffic slackened considerably; a decade later, trade had fallen off to 51,900 pounds sterling of imports and



about 20,000 pounds sterling of exports (Curzon). The town stagnated until the 1930s, when it was superseded by the newly developed Bandar-e Šāh. In 1942, vessels with a draft of ten feet could use the approximately one-kilometer long jetty; and the port's capacity was about 35,000 tons a year. Estimated at about 4,000 inhabitants in 1940 (*Persia*, p. 513), the population was put at 6,100 in 1966.

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