



The entrance to the Keshavarzi Bank Training Centre in Babolsar



Hassan Zakeri Jazeh, owner of Samnejad Gostaran

Sound investments

A massive training campus in Northern Iran is serving as a case study for Audac's all-encompassing range of loudspeakers. **Simon Luckhurst** finds out how

KESHAVARZI BANK IS ONE OF THE OLDEST AND LARGEST

financial institutions in Iran, founded back in 1933 to service the agriculture industry as a specialist farming and industrial bank. Fast forward more than 80 years and Keshavarzi Bank, also known locally as the Agriculture Bank, has grown to encompass close to 2,000 branches and over 16,000 employees – financing almost 70% of the Iranian agricultural sector. To support its never-ending growth, the bank has recently finished construction of a large-scale training campus for its managers and staff in Babolsar that borders the coastline of the Caspian Sea and spans more than 17 hectares in total. With a concert hall, amphitheatre, training rooms, restaurants and a mosque all housed within the campus and presenting their own distinct A/V requirements, Samnejad Gostaran was brought in to design and implement A/V solutions for the entire complex.

Owned by Hassan Zakeri Jazeh, Samnejad Gostaran was successful in securing the project thanks to its 35 years' experience designing and implementing solutions for more than 400 amphitheatres, conference halls, concerts and recording studios throughout the country, as well as previously working with the bank on several smaller projects.

'I have had cooperation with this organisation for about 20 years and during this time I have successfully equipped six large halls as well as a sports complex,' recalls Mr Zakeri. 'The continuous satisfaction and high quality of our completed projects has led them to continue their cooperation with us.'

However, Samnejad Gostaran was still required to submit a detailed tender for the project before work commenced. 'I attended the site with procurement managers from the bank to discuss the needs and requirements at length,' he shares. 'Analysing the project in detail and considering their requests, I prepared action plans and pre-invoices and gave them the estimated price.'

'A briefing meeting was then held with the decision makers and in that session I presented the step-by-step process for accomplishing the project. The most important factor was time,



L-R hangs of Audac FX3015 tops and FX1.18 subs in the concert hall

as they wanted someone who could complete the project in just 50 days,' he adds. 'We are one of the only companies with the necessary staff and equipment in stock, and considering the reputation we had earned due to our performance and commitments on previous projects, we secured the tender.'

With less than two months to install hundreds of loudspeakers, it was all hands on deck for Mr Zakeri's 26-strong team. And with Samnejad Gostaran being the exclusive distributor for Audac in Iran, the Belgian manufacturer's cabinets unsurprisingly featured heavily on the spec sheet – the variety on offer being what most attracted Mr Zakeri to partner with the brand originally. 'Since Audac has a complete collection of speakers that can meet any kind of need and be used for various cases, they are ideal for a project such as this,' he confirms. 'They are also very high quality. Since partnering with Audac five years ago, we have completed about 35 successful projects with these products.'

Highlighting the immense scale of the project, 12 hectares of the 17-hectare site encompass buildings outfitted with solutions by Samnejad Gostaran, the biggest of which is a 1,500-seat

auditorium used as both a concert hall for pop and traditional music, as well as for hosting the bank's largest training conferences.

In addition to new acoustic treatment of the walls and ceiling, the concert hall is now home to a main speaker system featuring L-R hangs of three FX3015 3-way cabinets flown beneath FX1.18 subwoofers, with a further four Baso15 subs lining the stage front. Additional audience coverage comes from distributed PX115, PX110 and LX503 speakers, while power is from SMQ350, SMQ500, SMQ750 and CAP424 quad-channel as well as SMA500 and SMA750 dual-channel amps installed in a rack at the FOH position. RX115s provide fold back on stage while inputs to the 40-channel Midas Pro1 console come from a selection of 40 beyerdynamic mics. An additional Allen & Heath 32-channel ML4000 console handles the monitor mix. For visual presentations, a 16,000-lumen Panasonic K16 projector is aimed at the stage, while on the exterior of the building 12 WX502/0 speakers and four SP202 sound projectors provide close coverage around the building's outdoor area.

'With a 10m-high ceiling, the concert hall provided significant challenges when it came to installing the acoustic and MDF substructures,' says Mr Zakeri, 'We also had to undertake



The team installed acoustic panelling in the concert hall

extensive ground excavation of the speaker's cable piping. Considering the time limitations we were working to, this was a considerable challenge.'

For the 160-seat amphitheatre, a smaller system of Audac Axir and Kydo column speakers mounted to the surrounding walls is powered from SMQ350 and DPA154 amplifiers located in an adjoining control room. The manufacturer's SX412 subwoofers have been deployed in the corner of the room next to the translation booths for low-end reinforcement, while an M2 audio matrix provides zoned control. A beyerdynamic SIS122 simultaneous translation system for 160 people facilitates multilingual discussions. Outside the amphitheatre is a lobby area capable of seating 250 guests if extra space is required. Here, additional audio coverage is from wall-mounted LX523s distributed around the space.

A 100-seat VIP hall for international conferences is now home to eight Ateo6 cabinets mounted to the perimeter walls, as is the complex' Islamic prayer area. In addition to the Ateo6s, the mosque also sports a Sennheiser XSW65GB wireless microphone system allowing the pastors unrestricted movement when issuing their sermons. For smaller, more tailored discussions and seminars, the complex houses 10 classrooms that have each been equipped with LX523 active cabinets and Panasonic VX42 projectors for presentations and multimedia



The 160-seat amphitheatre



Horn speakers outside

playback. Two 500-capacity restaurants have also been outfitted with WX802 cabinets throughout.

Tying the massive site together, a combination of Audac HS208T horn and WX302, WX502, WX503 and WX802 outdoor wall-mounted speakers have been deployed across 12 zones in the outdoor areas, all administrative offices and the 350m coastline for music playback and paging functionality that can be controlled from WX5066 wall panels installed at three locations.

With the mammoth installation completed on time, Mr Zakeri can now relax and enjoy the fruits of his team's labour. 'I am very happy about this project as I love to carry out complicated and challenging work,' he shares. 'Furthermore, the client is totally satisfied. They are also now very familiar with my personality and the way I handle the projects, and whenever they have future projects in these fields, they will come to me first.'

'I will also provide the proper after-sales service for the bank,' Mr Zakeri adds. 'Keeping the client happy and satisfied is much more important than just obtaining financial gains.'

The city of Babolsar is somewhat of a hotspot of training centres for large corporations in Iran, and Mr Zakeri hopes that his company's successful work with Keshavarzi Bank will spearhead future work. 'Carrying out this project has also motivated ministries, banks and other organisations to have the

same package implemented in their own areas. I have already secured another future project as a direct result of our good work at the Babolsar Training Centre.'

Mr Zakeri believes the experience he has gained over more than three decades in the industry puts him in a unique position when it comes to projects of this scale and complexity in Iran. All of these attributes are paying dividends for Samnejad Gostaran at a time when Iran's business sector is booming from the relaxation of sanctions.

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Mr Zakeri demonstrating the M2 digital audio matrix in the amphitheatre control room

