

# Chabahar Port

## [UPSC Notes]

### What is Chabahar Port Project?

Chabahar Port Project is one of the focussed projects of India. India, in May 2016, signed an \$85 million Chabahar Agreement to establish the International Transport and Transit Corridor. Construction of the Chabahar Port and the construction of a rail line from Chabahar port to Zahedan are the major highlights of the project.

- Indian Railways Construction Ltd. (IRCON) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Iranian Rail Ministry to provide all services, superstructure work and financing.
- As of June 2021, India delivered two cranes for Chabahar Port Project to equip and operationalise the port.

### Chabahar Port Project: Important Aspects

Through the Chabahar Port Project, the cargo would be brought to the Bandar Abbas port and Chabahar port and free Kabul from its dependence on Pakistan. The Chabahar Port will give India access to Afghanistan and beyond to Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Russia and Europe via 7,200-km-long multi-modal North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC).

- One of the key projects of keen interest to India and Iran was linking Chabahar Port to the Zaranj-Delaram Highway in Afghanistan.
- The Zaranj-Delaram Highway in Afghanistan is a 215 km long highway that was already built through assistance provided by India.
- India views the Chabahar Port as an opportunity to strengthen its regional and global power position. The Chabahar Port Project provides an option of alternate supply route of goods, thus reducing the weightage of Pakistan, which was the only option available till some time back.
- The Chabahar Port Project will strengthen Indo-Iranian ties, which could balance out growing Chinese-Pakistani cooperation.

As per the latest news, the US sanctions on Iran have no bearing on India's Chabahar Port Project, and the port is functioning well. The Biden Government in the US has given separate exceptions for the strategic Chabahar port project.



## Location of Chabahar Port

The Chabahar Port is located on the Makran coast of Sistan and Baluchistan Province, next to the Gulf of Oman. The Port is at the mouth of the Strait of Hormuz. The Chabahar Port is the only Iranian port with direct access to the Indian Ocean. Being close to Afghanistan and the Central Asian countries of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and others, the Chabahar Port has been termed the Golden Gate to these landlocked countries.



## Significance of the Chabahar Port Project to India

In December 2018, India took over the operations of the Chabahar Port, which was operated by India Ports Global Private Limited (IPGPL). India began building a railway line between Chabahar port and Zahedan as part of the North-South Transport Corridor. The Chabahar Port is of great importance to India as The Trilateral Transit Agreement signed by India, Iran and Afghanistan allow for Indian goods to reach Afghanistan through Iran.

The Chabahar Port Project links ports on the western coast of India to the Chabahar port and covers the road and rail links between Chabahar and the Afghan border. India's first shipment of wheat to Afghanistan was sent through Chabahar Port.

The significance of the Chabahar Port Project can be studied as under:

- The Chabahar Port Project will boost diplomatic, military, and trade ties with Iran.
- It will provide better connectivity to Afghanistan and will be the gateway to the International North-South Transport Corridor.
- India could carry out humanitarian operations if the case arises.
- The port is of strategic importance to the Indian Navy and defence establishment. It will also help India counter the Chinese presence in the Arabian Sea by helping Pakistan develop the Gwadar port.
- With Chabahar port being developed and operated by India, Iran also became a military ally to India.
- there will be a significant boost in the import of iron ore, sugar and rice to India. The import cost of oil to India will also see a considerable decline.