

Operationalisation of Chabahar port

Click [here](#) to know more on the issue

\n\n

Why in news?

\n\n

The first meeting of the follow-up committee for implementation of the trilateral Chabahar agreement between India, Afghanistan and Iran was held recently.

\n\n

What is the background?

\n\n

\n

- In May 2016, India, Iran and Afghanistan inked a pact which entailed establishment of Transit and Transport Corridor among the three countries.

\n

- The corridor aims at using Chabahar Port as one of the regional hubs for sea transportation in Iran, besides multi-modal transport of goods and passengers across the three nations.

\n

- Chabahar port is easily accessible from India's western coast and is increasingly seen as a counter to Pakistan's Gwadar Port.

\n

- The Port is also considered as a gateway to golden opportunities for trade by India, Iran and Afghanistan with central Asian countries.

\n

\n\n

What are the outcomes of the meet?

\n\n

\n

- India Ports Global Limited company opened its office and took over operations at the Shaheed Behesti port at Chabahar.

\n

- This is seen as a concrete step towards India's role in Chabahar Port expansion.
\n
- Positive and constructive discussions were held between the three sides on full operationalization of the Trilateral Transit Agreement for international transit & transport through the Chabahar Port.
\n
- They agreed on the routes for the trade and transit corridors between the three countries.
\n
- The three sides agreed to finalise at the earliest the Protocol to harmonize transit, roads, customs, and consular matters.
\n
- It was agreed to allow cargo movement at Chabahar using TIR Convention provisions.
\n
- The TIR Carnets is a multilateral treaty to simplify and harmonise the administrative formalities of international road transport.
\n
- Also, a study would be initiated for determining measures to make the route attractive, decrease logistic costs and pave the way for smooth operationalization of the Chabahar Agreement.
\n

\n\n

What are the advantages?

\n\n

- The operationalisation of Chabahar port is a milestone in India's regional connectivity and trade game plan.
\n
- Chabahar port opens up a permanent alternative route for trade with Afghanistan and Central Asia, given the hurdles in the direct route through Pakistan.
\n
- It facilitates India's role in Afghanistan's development through infrastructure and education projects.
\n
- It gives a big boost to India's bilateral ties with Iran, which is a major oil supplier and potential trade market for India.
\n

\n\n

What are the concerns?

\n\n

\n

- **Sanction waiver** - The Chabahar port has received a temporary waiver from the U.S. sanctions on Iran.

\n

- But these concessions could be withdrawn any time, given the constant upheaval in the U.S. administration.

\n

- **Security** - The possibility of the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan will add to security concerns for Afghanistan and impact on the Chabahar route as well.

\n

- **Pakistan Factor** - The reconciliation process with the Afghan Taliban is likely to see the regional powers and the countries like U.S. and Russia engaging Pakistan more.

\n

- This could give Pakistan a space to play spoiler in Chabahar, which sees it a rival water port to the Gwadar port in Pakistan.

\n

- **Trade diversion** - The Afghanistan government is also hedging its bets on trade via Chabahar.

\n

- In recent months, Afghanistan has opened special cargo corridors with China, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Europe, Russia, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia.

\n

- This shows that more trade was diverted through these countries than with its traditional partners such as Pakistan and India.

\n

- With Chabahar, India has done well to keep a place in the intricate connectivity network of the region.

\n

- However, it will require a sustained and nuanced diplomacy to stay ahead in this game.

\n

\n\n

\n\n

Source: The Hindu

\n



SHANKAR
IAS PARLIAMENT
Information is Empowering