



## India-Iran Pact on Seafarers

**For Prelims:** India-Iran Pact on Seafarers, International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (1978), International Maritime Organization, Tehran Declaration, Iran's location, Caspian Sea.

**For Mains:** Significance of India-Iran Relations.

### Why in News?

India and Iran signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to smoothen movement of seafarers from both the countries as per the provisions of **International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) for Seafarers (1978)**.



### What is the International Convention on STCW for Seafarers?

- It sets **qualification standards for masters, officers and watch personnel** on seagoing merchant ships.
- STCW was adopted in 1978 by a conference at the **International Maritime Organization (IMO)** in London and entered into force in 1984. The Convention was **significantly amended in 1995**.
- The 1978 STCW Convention was the first to establish basic requirements on training, certification

and watchkeeping for seafarers on an international level.

- It prescribes **minimum standards relating to training, certification and watchkeeping** for seafarers which countries are obliged to meet or exceed.
- One especially important feature of the Convention is that it applies to ships of non-party States when visiting ports of States which are Parties to the Convention.

## How have been the India-Iran Relations?

- **India and Iran** share close civilizational ties since the times of the Persian Empire and Indian kingdoms.
- Iran is an important **nation in India's neighborhood and in fact, the two countries shared a border until India's partition** and independence in 1947.
- The "Tehran Declaration" signed during former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's visit to Iran affirmed the **shared vision of the two countries for an "equitable, pluralistic and co-operative international order"**.
- It recognized the then Iranian President Mohammad Khatami's vision of a "dialogue among civilisations" as a paradigm of international relations based on principles of tolerance, pluralism and respect for diversity.

## What is the Significance of India-Iran Relations?

- **Location and Connectivity:**
  - Iran is located at a strategic and **crucial geographical location** between the **Persian Gulf** and the **Caspian Sea**.
  - Iran is important to India as **it provides an alternate route of connectivity to Afghanistan and Central Asian** republics through **Chabahar Port** without passing the land route through Pakistan.
- **Cheaper Crude Oil:**
  - Since, Iran is one of the **largest deposits of crude oil and natural gas** in the world.
  - India may well consider restarting oil imports from Iran. If India changes course and resumes imports of Iranian oil, **it could potentially encourage some other countries to follow suit and open up additional oil** in the market, which could eventually bring prices of crude oil down.
- **Connectivity with Eurasia:**
  - The **International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)**, aims to connect India, Iran, Afghanistan, Russia, Central Asia, and **Europe through multi-modal transport, reducing the transit time of goods drastically**.
  - Although some part of it has been operationalized, again, due to sanctions on Iran, its full potential has not been realised. India and Iran could well play a major part in giving INSTC the required boost to reap the benefits of resultant trade.
- **Energy Security:**
  - The **Iran-Oman-India gas pipeline (IOI) too is an ambitious project** that has been stuck for a long time. Fortunately, Iran and Oman signed a deal to develop two gas pipelines and an **oil field along their maritime borders**.
  - If this comes through, there is potential for the pipeline being extended to India, which would help overcome the loss of the failed **Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) pipeline and facilitate the supply of natural gas to India**.

## Way Forward

- There is a need to look forward toward areas of convergence, where **both countries have a mutual understanding of each other's common interests** and further work together to achieve the same.
- India and Iran, therefore, **have a lot that can be achieved together**. The assertive diplomacy being practiced by India, emphasizing on standing by its neighbors and friends and focusing solely on fulfilling its national interests, is a refreshing change.
  - If India can extend the same vision toward its engagement with Iran, it could open a huge potential for cooperation between these two great nations and civilizations. Time is

therefore ripe for a reset.

## UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

### Prelims

**Q. What is the importance of developing Chabahar Port by India? (2017)**

- (a) India's trade with African countries will enormously increase.
- (b) India's relations with oil-producing Arab countries will be strengthened.
- (c) India will not depend on Pakistan for access to Afghanistan and Central Asia.
- (d) Pakistan will facilitate and protect the installation of a gas pipeline between Iraq and India.

**Ans: (c)**

### Mains

**Q. A number of outside powers have entrenched themselves in Central Asia, which is a zone of interest to India. Discuss the implications, in this context, of India's joining the Ashgabat Agreement, 2018. (2018)**

**Q. In what ways would the ongoing U.S-Iran Nuclear Pact Controversy affect the national interest of India? How should India respond to this situation? (2018)**

**Q. The question of India's Energy Security constitutes the most important part of India's economic progress. Analyse India's energy policy cooperation with West Asian countries. (2017)**

**Source: PIB**

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