



India not making Promised Investments in Chabahar Port: Iran

Iran has criticized India for not fulfilling its promise of making investments in the expansion of the strategically located Chabahar port.

- It further said that India might also stand to lose 'special privileges' if it cuts import of Iranian oil and instead tries to source oil from countries like Saudi Arabia, Russia, Iraq, the US, and others to offset cuts in Iranian oil.
- Iran is India's third-largest oil supplier after Iraq and Saudi Arabia.
- The US recently told India and other countries to cut oil imports from Iran to "zero" by November 4 or face sanctions.

Background

- In May 2016, India, Iran, and Afghanistan had inked a pact which entailed the establishment of Transit and Transport Corridor among the three countries using Chabahar port in Iran as one of the regional hubs for sea transportation.
- It was also to be used for multi-modal transport of goods and passengers across the three nations.
- The Chabahar port is being considered a gateway to golden opportunities for trade by India, Iran, and Afghanistan with Central Asian countries in the wake of Pakistan denying transit access to New Delhi.

Where is Chabahar Port?

- Chabahar port is located on the Gulf of Oman and is only 72 km away from the Gwadar port in Pakistan which is being developed by China.
- The port serves as the only oceanic port of Iran and consists of two separate ports named Shahid Beheshti and Shahid Kalantari.

Significance of the Chabahar Port for India

- India's ambition to reach Afghanistan since Pakistan has blocked land transit and access through its territory fuelled the need for developing the strategic project of Chabahar.
- The development will provide India an alternative and reliable access into Afghanistan and a more direct sea-road access route into the central Asian region.
- China is aggressively pursuing its own Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) under the One Belt One Road (OBOR) project. The port can act as a counter to Pakistan's Gwadar Port, which is being developed with Chinese investment.
- The location of Chabahar port at the Arabian Sea would enable India to counter any challenges posed by developments in the Persian Gulf and Strait of Hormuz.
- In future, the Chabahar project and the International North South Transport Corridor (INSTC) will complement each other by optimizing Indian connectivity with Russia and Eurasia.

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