



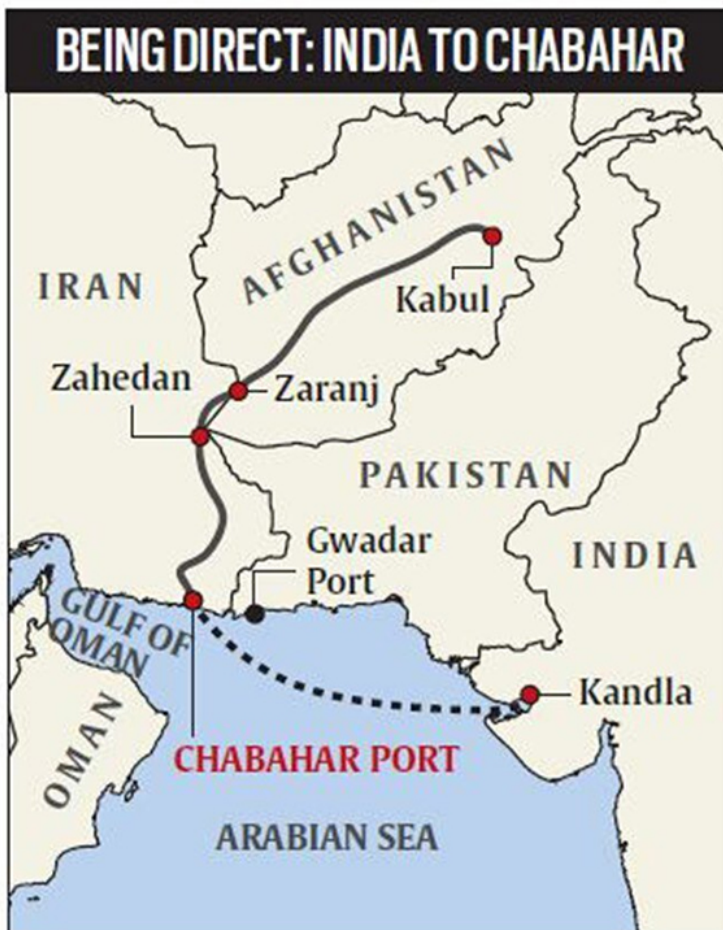
External Affairs Minister's Visit to Iran

Why in News

India's External Affairs Minister (EAM) visited Iran to attend the **swearing-in ceremony of new Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi**. This marks a landmark event attempting to **reset the [ties with Iran](#)** that have been under strain in recent times.

- This is EAM's **second visit in a month** and it comes amid a sharp escalation of the **[fighting in Afghanistan](#)** between the Taliban and the Afghan security forces.

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Key Points

- **Importance of Iran for India:**
 - **Geo-strategic Outreach:** India views Iran as key to **access land-locked Afghanistan and Central Asia through [Chabahar Port](#)**.

- Iran's geographical position is paramount to India's geopolitical outreach, especially to [Central Asia](#), a rich reservoir of natural resources.
- Similarly, Iran is vital for [India's access to Afghanistan](#) in which India has immense strategic and security interests.
- Further, India has been developing the **Chabahar port in a bid to bypass the impediments placed by Pakistan** in the way of its attempts to trade with Afghanistan.
- **Energy Security:** Iran, **one of the richest countries in hydrocarbons** and India, a rapidly growing economy with a deep thirst for energy - make them natural partners.
- **Significance of the Visit:**
 - **Reasons for Tussle in India-Iran Relationship:**
 - [India cancelling oil imports from Iran](#) due to US sanctions.
 - **Slow progress** in Chabahar port.
 - Tussle over [Farzad-B Gas Field](#).
 - **Iranian comments on Kashmir** over the past few years.
 - **Security Concerns Emanating From Afghanistan:** Visit comes amidst **rapid developments in Afghanistan**, with the [US completing the pull-out of troops](#) and the Taliban increasing its attacks on Afghan cities.
 - The rapid advance of Taliban concerns both India and Iran.
 - Given this context, and common interests, it is necessary for India and Iran to cooperate more closely, particularly on Afghanistan.
- **Associated Challenges:**
 - **India's Exclusion in Afgan Peace Process:** Another "Troika plus" meeting, the U.S.-Russia-China-Pakistan grouping on Afghanistan peace process, is going to be held in Doha.
 - However, India and Iran, which are two regional powers, are being left out.
 - **Persisting Sanctions on Iran:** Despite campaign promises to reverse the Donald Trump policy on Iran, US President Joe Biden's administration is yet to withdraw most of the additional sanctions placed in 2017-2018.

Way Forward

- India has proposed to include the **Chabahar port** in the framework of the [International North South Transport Corridor](#).
 - In this context, the formation of **India-Uzbekistan-Iran-Afghanistan Quadrilateral Working Group** on the joint use of Chabahar port is a welcome development.
- India needs to **balance its ties** with **Iran on one side** and the **US along with its allies like Saudi Arabia and Israel, on the other**.

[Source: TH](#)