



INSIGHTSIAS
SIMPLIFYING IAS EXAM PREPARATION

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INSIGHTS INTO EDITORIAL



Editorial

ANALYSIS

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The missing links in IMEC Corridor as shown by the Gaza war

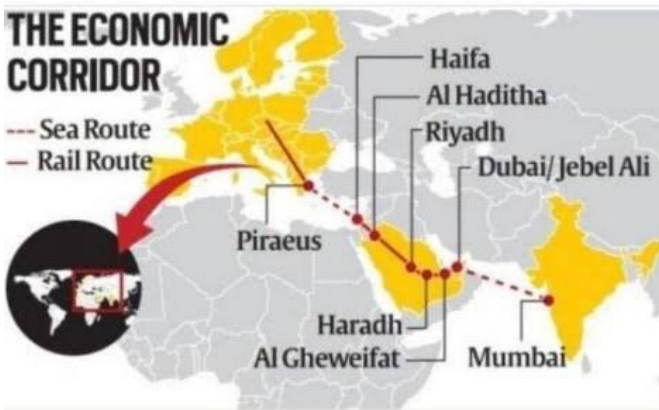
- **Prelims:** Current events of international importance, India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC), Arabian gulf, mapping of west asia and Europe etc
- **Mains GS Paper II:** Bilateral, regional and global grouping and agreements involving India or affecting India's interests.

routes, enabling goods and services to move between India, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Israel and the EU. IMEC is India's moment.

- **It will be the cornerstone of economic progress** across the region by supercharging regional trade, and connecting Asia with Europe.

ARTICLE HIGHLIGHTS

- **India and Iran** signed a **10-year** long-term **bilateral contract** for the operation of **Chabahar Port**.
 - It was inked between the **Indian Ports Global Limited** and the **Port and Maritime Organisation of Iran**.



INSIGHTS ON THE ISSUE

Context

India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC):

- **The India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)** is an infrastructure development project that aims to create connectivity through rail and shipping networks, energy cables, and data links.
- **The IMEC will be a route in the historic sense of the word** (with the geopolitical and economic significance that entails)
- **It will provide transport connectivity** to accelerate the development and integration of Asia, the Arabian Gulf, and Europe as a new locus of global power.
- **It envisions a reliable, cost-effective** railway and ship-to-rail transit network
 - **To supplement maritime and road**

Participating Countries	India, Saudi Arabia, UAE, France, Germany, Italy, USA, EU	
Objectives	IMEC seeks to boost trade, clean energy, and economic growth while providing an alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)	
Part of	It is part of the Partnership for Rail and Shipping Corridors Global Infrastructure Investment (PGII) and focuses on enhancing global trade and cooperation through critical infrastructure development.	
Corridor Components	Railway lines (make trade between India and Europe 40% faster).	
	Electricity cable and a clean hydrogen pipeline to foster clean energy trade.	
	High-speed data cable to link innovative digital ecosystems in the world and create business opportunities	
Corridor Segments	Eastern Corridor connecting India to the Arabian Gulf , Northern Corridor connecting Arabian Gulf to Europe	

Benefits for India	Enhancing food security, regional supply chains, trade accessibility, environmental considerations, economic cohesion, job creation, and reduces greenhouse gas emissions.
	Reliable cross-border ship-to-rail transit network connecting India, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Israel, and Europe.
	It offers India a crucial role in global commerce, digital communication , and energy networks vis-à-vis China's BRI
	Geographical Advantage: It firmly positions India along the trade route spanning South East Asia to the Gulf, West Asia, and Europe.

Aim:

- **Stimulate economic development** through enhanced connectivity and economic integration between Asia, the Arabian Gulf and Europe.
- **Secure regional supply chains**, increase trade accessibility and improve trade facilitation across regions.
- **The IMEC will help overcome** the obstacles and also cut down on the time, distance and costs of transit of goods from India to Europe significantly.
 - **It is estimated that the time and cost of transporting goods** to Europe from India will be reduced by **40% and 30%, respectively.**

The IMEC corridors:

- **East corridor** connecting India to the Arabian Gulf
- **Northern corridor** connecting the Arabian Gulf

to Europe.

- **Railway network** that aims to be a reliable and cost-effective cross-border ship-to-rail transit network for goods and services to transit.
- **The corridor envisages along the railway route**, the laying of cable for electricity and digital connectivity and a pipeline for clean hydrogen export.
- **The Indian ports of Kandla, Mumbai and Mundra** will be connected by sea links to **Fujairah, Jebel Ali and Abu Dhabi in the UAE** in the east
 - **Followed by the rail-road link through Saudi Arabia and Jordan** and onwards to **Europe** in the **west** by the **port of Haifa in Israel**
 - **Ports in Marseille in France, Messina in Italy and Piraeus in Greece.**

Loopholes in IMEC:

- **The Gaza war has proven that the IMEC** has serious missing links in its current form.
 - **The Houthis in Yemen** have blocked the ships of Israel and its western allies from access to the Red Sea.
- **Israel and its western allies** have been forced to take the longer route across the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa, increasing shipping time as well as insurance costs.
- **Iran has threatened to close the Strait of Hormuz** in the north through which most crude oil and natural gas is shipped to other parts of the world, including India.
- **Eilat and Haifa ports** have suffered heavy losses due to disruption in trade through the Red Sea and targeting of these critical ports by Hamas and its allies.

Way Forward

- **Oman ports open up into the Arabian Sea**, well away from direct influence of an Iranian threat.
 - **It offers the closest and direct link** to ports in India.
 - **Traditionally merchants in Oman and India** have traded for centuries through small boats called '**dhow**s' and Oman is considered India's gateway to West Asia.

- **Oman is an acceptable partner politically** in the region as it has good relations with all stakeholders, including Israel.
- **Towards the West, instead of the ports of Israel**, there has to be an alternate spur of the IMEC traversing through **Egypt** and ending at any of its major ports in the Mediterranean Sea
 - **This will provide a safe and direct sea route** to ports in Europe.
 - **Egypt is a major player in West Asia** and its inclusion will only help balance out the regional dynamics too.
 - **Like Oman, Egypt has good relations** within the region and with Europe, Israel and the U.S.
- **With the inclusion of Oman to the east and Egypt to the west**, the IMEC can be made safe from disruptions from future conflicts
 - **It can be considered vital to plug** the critical missing links in the current structure of the IMEC.
- **The IMEC is a futuristic and path-breaking initiative:** Building upon the wave of reconciliation within West Asia triggered by the Abraham Accords
 - **This could be an ideal foil** not only to China's BRI
 - **A useful tool to better integrate the region** and insulate it from threats posed to connectivity due to conflict.
- **The missing links, highlighted by the Gaza war**, can add a layer of insurance to this ambitious project.
- **IMEC has incredible potential to integrate India, West Asia, and Europe** on a collective path to growth at an unprecedented scale.

QUESTION FOR PRACTICE

Q. The long sustained image of India as a leader of the oppressed and marginalized nations has disappeared on account of its new found role in the emerging global order.' Elaborate(UPSC 2019)

(200 WORDS, 10 MARKS)