

Topics

- MC13
- ICC
- Giz Galasi Dam
- IMEC
- Essay topic



By saurabh Pandey



Target Mains -2024/25 -essay topic

Q “ “There is neither this world nor the world beyond nor happiness for the one who doubts.””

"संदेह करने वाले के लिए न तो यह दुनिया है, न ही परे की दुनिया और न ही खुशी।"

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"Critical Minerals can shape India's Diplomacy in Africa". Discuss.

India-Africa relations have similar in political and social struggle. we have collaborated with International forum like Bandung Conference (1955), Non-Aligned Movement (1961) and Group of 77.

Africa Minerals can shape India's diplomacy in Africa through in. investment in technology, Renewable Energy and help to access to achieve Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs).

Africa critical Minerals are Copper, Cobalt, Uranium, Platinum, Gold, Chromium etc.



Several ways for India's diplomacy.

Economic factors

- India believes Africa is next growth pole.
- Africa population nearly equal to India i.e. 1.3 Billion.

- Africa GDP ratio \$ 3 trillion with India export to more than Africa.
- India more export to Africa ~~so~~.
- In 2022, India reached positive trade balance with Africa.

Investment

- IT, telecom sector, Education, health, Automobiles by India.
- ITEC (Indian Technical Economic Cooperation) 2014 and till now date continue by India in Africa.
- aim to training African youth in defence, civil servants and Skill development.

Security and Energy

- India reliable on critical minerals.
- to strengthen the India's energy security.
- Reduce dependence on Fossil fuel, focus on Renewable Energy (Solar, Wind etc).

Education

- 1st IIT campus to set up outside India will be Zanzibar (Tanzania).

Strategic Alliances

- Critical Minerals helps India to counterbalance influence of china in Africa by providing humanitarian aid.

Long time, India deepen relation with Africa by Economic, Cultural, Historical phone to enhanced outcomes.



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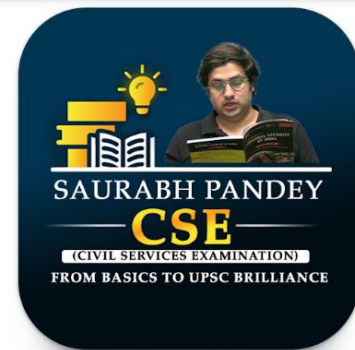
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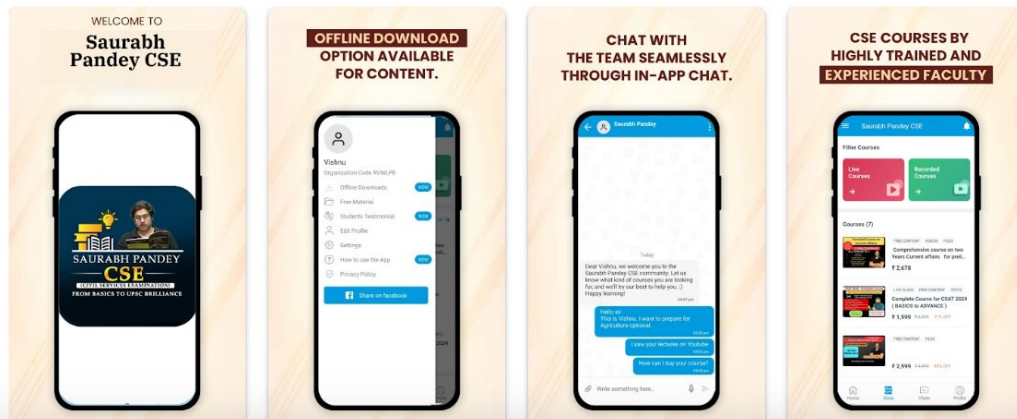
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At WTO, India still opposes 'plurilateral pact' on investment

Amiti Sen
NEW DELHI

India is under pressure at the WTO to give its consent for inclusion of the proposed China-led investment facilitation for development (IFD) pact in the formal WTO framework as a plurilateral agreement (endorsed by some of the members), but it is refusing to give in, sources said.

At this week's meeting of the WTO's General Council – the highest-level decision-making body in the WTO – New Delhi continued to oppose the move stating investment is not an issue for discussion at the WTO, sources said.

"India has maintained its position on the issue, as outlined at the WTO 13th Ministerial Conference (MC13) in Abu Dhabi earlier this year, against incorporating investment facilitation and other plurilaterals in the WTO framework. It said that investment is not an issue for discussion at the WTO," a trade official tracking the matter told *businessline*.

Joint declaration

At the WTO MC13, a joint ministerial declaration was issued by Trade Ministers from 123 WTO member-countries, including the EU, finalising the IFD pact, and they wanted it to be formally brought into the WTO as a plurilateral



agreement.

As a plurilateral pact, it would have been binding on only its signatories and not on non-members which include India, South Africa, the U.S. and some others.

"India and South Africa, played a key role in blocking the move as they pointed out there was no exclusive consensus to add the proposed IFD as a plurilateral agreement between the member countries already on board. They stressed that given the lack of exclusive consensus, this was not a matter for the MC13 agenda and should be discussed at the General Council," another source pointed out.

India stayed out of the IFD as it was concerned that some of its provisions would put the onus on the government to consult investors on policy matters which could encroach on its policy space, a government source had earlier explained.

(The writer is with *The Hindu businessline*)

MC13

- **The WTO's 13th Ministerial Conference (MC13) took place from 26 February to 2 March 2024 in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.**
- **Ministers from across the world attended to review the functioning of the multilateral trading system and to take action on the future work of the WTO.**
- **The Conference was chaired by H.E. Dr Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi, UAE's Minister of State for Foreign Trade**

I. Accessions

On the first day of MC13, ministers endorsed the accession to the WTO of two least-developed countries—Comoros and Timor-Leste.

II. WTO reform

At MC13, ministers endorsed progress on the WTO reform process, which covers the organization's deliberative, negotiating and dispute settlement functions

III. E-commerce

Since 1998, Members have regularly extended a so-called e-commerce moratorium, which commits Members not to impose customs duties on e-commerce. At MC13, ministers decided to renew the e-commerce moratorium until MC14 or 31 March 2026, whichever is earlier

Special and differential treatment

Ministers adopted a decision to improve the use of special and differential treatment (S&DT) provisions, in particular those in the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade and the Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures. The decision enhances training opportunities and endorses steps to make the S&DT provisions more effective and operational

Plurilateral agreements and initiatives

at MC13, Members failed to reach consensus on agriculture and food security as well as further disciplines fisheries subsidies

Plurilateral initiatives (covering less than the full Membership) are, therefore, becoming more prominent.

Domestic regulation of services

- **One commercially particularly relevant outcome is the agreement reached at MC13 on the entry into force, and integration into the WTO architecture, of new disciplines on domestic regulation of services. These disciplines are designed to facilitate trade in services by streamlining and simplifying regulatory procedures.**

Investment facilitation

- **Another important plurilateral initiative concerns Investment Facilitation for Development (IFD). At MC13, the parties to the IFD initiative welcomed an agreement that includes commitments to facilitate foreign direct investment.**

Sustainability-related initiatives

Members have also come together in different groupings to work on a series of sustainability-related initiatives. At MC13, they reported their progress

Fisheries subsidies

- In June 2022, at MC12, Members concluded an Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies (AFS). The AFS prohibits the granting or maintaining of subsidies to entities involved in (1) illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing or (2) the fishing of overfished stocks. It is the first WTO agreement with a mostly sustainability-related objective (preserving the world's fisheries stocks).
- At MC13, ministers welcomed the progress over the past 20 months towards the AFS's entry into force.

Present Development

- **India is under pressure at the WTO to give its consent for inclusion of the proposed China-led investment facilitation for development (IFD) pact in the formal WTO framework as a plurilateral agreement.**
- **At the WTO MC13, a joint ministerial declaration was issued by Trade Ministers from 123 WTO member countries, including the EU, □finalising the IFD pact, and they wanted it to be formally brought into the WTO as a plurilateral agreement.**

- **As a plurilateral pact, it would have been binding on only its signatories and not on non-members which include India, South Africa, the U.S. and some others.**
- **“India and South Africa, played a key role in blocking the move as they pointed out there was no exclusive consensus to add the proposed IFD as a plurilateral agreement between the member countries already on board.**

India stayed out of the IFD as it was concerned that some of its provisions would put the onus on the government to consult investors on policy matters which could encroach on its policy space.

What is plurilateral Agreement ??

- **A plurilateral agreement is a multi-national legal or trade agreement between countries.**
- **In economic jargon, it is an agreement between more than two countries, but not a great many, which would be multilateral agreement**

MADRID

EU's Borrell urges Israel 'not to intimidate', 'threaten' ICC judges



REUTERS

EU foreign affairs chief Josep Borrell on Friday urged Israel “not to intimidate” or “threaten” the judges of the International Criminal Court (ICC), whose prosecutor has requested arrest warrants for Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defence Minister Yoav Gallant on suspicions of war crimes. AFP

INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

ICC is an international tribunal which has jurisdiction to prosecute individuals for the international crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

- **ICC is based in The Hague, the Netherlands.**
- **The ICC began functioning on 1 July 2002, the date when the Rome Statute entered into force.**

- **The Rome Statute is a multilateral treaty which serves as the ICC's foundational and governing document.**
- **Currently, there are 124 states which are party to the Rome Statute.**
- **India has not signed the Rome Statute**

- **The International Court of Justice has no jurisdiction to try individuals accused of war crimes or crimes against humanity. However, the ICC tries individual people for genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and crimes of aggression.**
- **All UN member states are automatically members of the ICJ, whereas nations must individually become members of ICC by ratifying Rome Statute.**
- **ICJ is an organ of UN, whereas ICC is independent of UN.**

Iran denies foul play in chopper crash that claimed Raisi's life

Agence France-Presse

TEHRAN

Iran's Army has so far found no evidence of criminal activity in a helicopter crash that killed the country's President Ebrahim Raisi and seven others, state media reported.

The 63-year-old died on Sunday after his helicopter went down in the country's mountainous northwest while returning from a dam inauguration on the border with Azerbaijan.

"No bullet holes or similar impacts were observed on the helicopter wreckage," said a preliminary report by the general staff of the armed forces published by the official *IRNA* news agency late on Thursday.

"The helicopter caught fire after hitting an elevated area," it said, adding that "no suspicious con-



Ebrahim Raisi

tent was observed during the communications between the watch tower and the flight crew".

Raisi's helicopter had been flying on a "pre-planned route and did not leave the designated flight path" before the crash.

The Army said "more time is needed" to investigate the crash and that it would announce more details later.

Raisi was laid to rest in his hometown of Mashhad on Thursday..

Giz Galasi Dam

- Giz Galasi Dam is an **embankment dam** on the **Aras River** straddling the **international border** between **Azerbaijan** and **Iran**.
- It is located in **Jabrayil District**, Azerbaijan, and **Khoda Afarin County**, East Azerbaijan Province, Iran, 12 km (7.5 mi) downstream of the **Khoda Afarin Dam**.
- Built both to generate electricity and to irrigate the plains in the region, it is the third joint Azerbaijan–Iran project on the Aras River



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



On May 13, 2024, India and Iran finally 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, in the presence of India's Ports, Shipping and Waterways Minister Sarbananda Sonowal. Mr. Sonowal said that the deal and the Chabahar Port is more important than just a bridge linking India with Iran. It is a critical economic route that links India with Afghanistan and the Central Asian countries.

But before this, a similar, and equally important, connectivity project, the IMEC, or the Indian-Middle East-Europe Corridor, was signed on the sidelines of the G-20 summit in New Delhi on September 9, 2023 by the European Union, France, Germany, India, Italy, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the United States. Designed and formulated under the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII), it aims to stimulate economic development through enhanced connectivity and economic integration between Asia, the Arabian Gulf and Europe.

As a counter to the BRI

The IMEC will comprise two separate corridors – an east corridor connecting India to the Arabian Gulf and a northern corridor connecting the Arabian Gulf to Europe. In addition to existing maritime and road transport routes, it will include a 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 also envisages along the railway route, the laying of cable for electricity and digital connectivity and a pipeline for clean hydrogen export. In its plan, 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, and along with the ports in Marseille in France, Messina in Italy and Piraeus in Greece.

This 4,800 kilometre-long IMEC corridor aims to secure regional supply chains, increase trade accessibility and improve trade facilitation across regions. Currently, much of the trade between India and Europe is through the Suez Canal as there is no overland access due to Pakistan being located to India's west overland. The IMEC will thus help overcome this obstacle and also cut down on the time, distance and costs of transit of goods from India to Europe significantly. It is



Rajeev Agarwal

a retired colonel, is the Assistant Director of the Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (MP-IDSA), New Delhi. He was Director in the Ministry of External Affairs and Director, Military Intelligence

Any conflict situation in the Persian Gulf poses a serious threat, but there are solutions

estimated that the time and cost of transporting goods to Europe from India will be reduced by 40% and 30%, respectively. It is also being touted as an effective counter to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in the region – and, therefore, has the U.S. as one of its major stakeholders.

The shadow of the Gaza war

But even before the potential impact of this path-breaking project could be examined by experts, the war in Gaza broke out on October 7, less than a month after its announcement. As a result, the whole project was stalled. In an interview on May 12, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar acknowledged that the delay in implementation of the IMEC in view of the current situation in West Asia is a matter of "concern" and the expectation generated following firming up of the initiative in September last has to be "adjusted" a bit now. He, however, was confident that work on the project would progress well after the war.

However, the Gaza war has amply proven that the IMEC has serious missing links in its current form. During the course of this war, the Houthis in Yemen have blocked the ships of Israel and its western allies from access to the Red Sea. Despite naval deployment by the U.S. Navy and Europe, the Houthis have not been deterred and have successfully targeted those ships. As a result, 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.

During the same period, Iran has repeatedly 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. In fact, a similar situation happened during the Persian Gulf Crisis in the summer of 2019 which was triggered by the downing of a U.S. drone by the Iranian military; the drone was over Iran. Reports suggested that the U.S. President ordered retaliatory military strikes against Iran, to be executed at dawn on June 21 before changing his mind at the last moment.

During this period, there were repeated incidents of Iran intercepting ships in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz. The Indian Navy had to launch 'Operation Sankalp' in order to ensure the safe passage of Indian flagged ships through the Persian Gulf. There were armed security teams from the Indian Navy on Indian flag ships transiting the Persian Gulf.

Coming back to the Gaza war, in Israel, two of its major ports, Eilat and Haifa, have suffered

heavy losses due to disruption in trade through the Red Sea and also the targeting of these critical ports by Hamas and its allies. A consortium led by India's Adani Group purchased Haifa port in January 2023, expecting an expansion and an increase in traffic but the Gaza war has put everything on hold.

On Oman and Egypt

The IMEC envisages that the ports in the UAE such as Fujairah and Jebel Ali will form the eastern offload points for ships transiting to India. The problem here is that all the ports of the UAE are located in the Persian Gulf and are well within the Strait of Hormuz. Therefore, they will always be threatened by any conflict situation in the Persian Gulf.

What is the way out? Oman provides the perfect foil to this threat. Its ports open up into the Arabian Sea, well away from direct influence of an Iranian threat. It also offers the closest and direct link to ports in India. Traditionally too, merchants in Oman and India have traded for centuries through small boats called 'dhows' and Oman is considered India's gateway to West Asia. Oman is also an acceptable partner politically in the region as it has good relations with all stakeholders, including Israel.

Similarly, 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 also 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.. In fact, Egypt had quietly voiced its displeasure on being left out of the IMEC and such an extension will not only take care of the politics but also the economics of it.

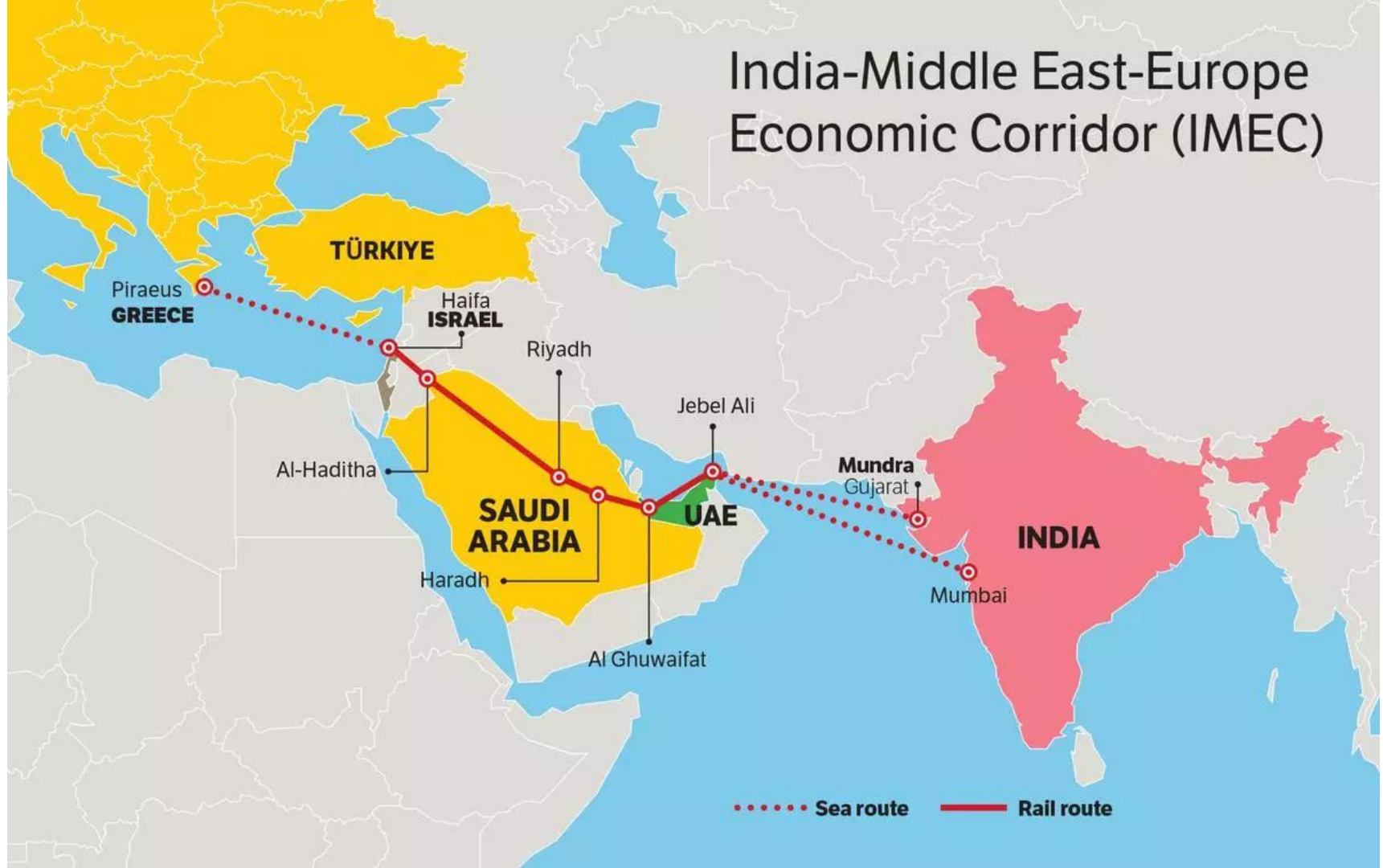
With the inclusion of Oman to the east and Egypt to the west, the IMEC can be made safe from disruptions from future conflicts and can, therefore, be considered vital to plug the critical missing links in the current structure of the IMEC.

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 but also as 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

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India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)



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- **it aims to stimulate economic development through enhanced connectivity and economic integration between Asia, the Arabian Gulf and Europe**

As a counter to the BRI

- **The IMEC will comprise two separate corridors — an east corridor connecting India to the Arabian Gulf and a northern corridor connecting the Arabian Gulf to Europe.**
- **In addition to existing maritime and road transport routes, it will include a 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 also envisages along the railway route, the laying of cable for electricity and digital connectivity and a pipeline for clean hydrogen export.**

- **In its plan, 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, and along with the ports in Marseille in France, Messina in Italy and Piraeus in Greece.**
- **This 4,800 kilometre-long IMEC corridor aims to secure regional supply chains, increase trade accessibility and improve trade facilitation across regions.**

- **Currently, much of the trade between India and Europe is through the Suez Canal as there is no overland access due to Pakistan being located to India's west overland.**
- **The IMEC will thus help overcome this obstacle and also cut down on the time, distance and costs of transit of goods from India to Europe significantly**

On Oman and Egypt

- **The IMEC envisages that the ports in the UAE such as Fujairah and Jebel Ali will form the eastern offload points for ships transiting to India.**
- **The problem here is that all the ports of the UAE are located in the Persian Gulf and are well within the Strait of Hormuz.**

- **Therefore, they will always be threatened by any conflict situation in the Persian Gulf. Oman provides the perfect foil to this threat.**
- **Its ports open up into the Arabian Sea, well away from direct influence of an Iranian threat. It also offers the closest and direct link to ports in India.**

- **Similarly, 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 also 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..**

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