

International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)

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In news– Recently, the movement of containers from Russia's Astrakhan port to Nhava Shiva port in Mumbai has signalled the launch of the International North South Transport Corridor (INSTC).

About the International North South Transport Corridor (INSTC)-

- INSTC is a **7,200-km multi-modal transport corridor that combines road, rail and maritime routes connecting Russia and India via central Asia and Iran.**
- INSTC links the Indian Ocean to the Caspian Sea via the Persian Gulf.



- **The primary objective** of the INSTC project is to reduce costs in terms of time and money over the traditional route currently being used
- The corridor also **aims to increase trade connectivity between major cities such as Mumbai, Moscow, Tehran, Baku, Bandar Abbas, Astrakhan, Bandar Anzali, etc**

- **The legal framework for the INSTC is provided by a trilateral agreement signed by India, Iran and Russia at the Euro-Asian Conference on Transport in 2000.**
- Since then Kazakhstan, Belarus, Oman, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Syria have signed instruments of accession to become members of the INSTC.
- **Once fully operational, the INSTC is expected to reduce freight costs by 30% and journey time by 40% in comparison with the conventional deep sea route via the Suez Canal.**
- **India's investment in the INSTC is exemplified by its involvement in Iran's Chabahar port** and the construction of a 500-km Chabahar-Zahedan railway line.
- Once completed, this infrastructure will allow India access to Afghanistan and central Asia, a prospect strengthened by the Taliban government's support for the project.
- **The India Ports Global Limited, a joint venture between the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust and Kandla Port Trust, will develop the port along with Iran's Aria Banader.**
- INSTC provides an opportunity for the internationalisation of India's infrastructural state, with state-run businesses taking the lead and paving the way for private companies.
- With the INST, India can now bypass Pakistan to access Afghanistan, central Asia and beyond.
- It can shape a north-south transport corridor that can complement the east-west axis of the China-led Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).