



Eastern Maritime Corridor

For Prelims: [Blue Economy](#), [India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor](#), [Chennai-Vladivostok Maritime Corridor](#), [Northern Sea Route](#), [International North-South Transport Corridor](#), [Belt and Road Initiative \(BRI\)](#)

For Mains: Significance of Eastern Maritime Corridor, Significance of maritime trade and economic development, India-Russia Relations

[Source: IE](#)

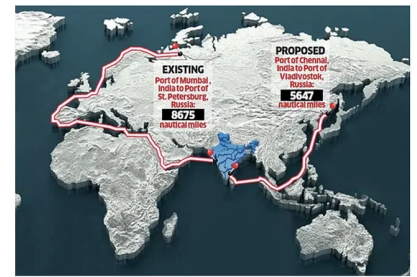
Why in News?

The recent launch of the **Eastern Maritime Corridor** between **Chennai and Vladivostok** (Russia) has enhanced India-Russia trade by reducing shipping time and costs.

- This new route is crucial for increasing trade in sectors like crude oil, coal, fertilizers, and metals, with India becoming the largest importer of Russian oil.
- The corridor is expected to significantly reshape bilateral trade dynamics, promoting economic and strategic cooperation between the two nations.

What is the Eastern Maritime Corridor (EMC)?

- **About:**
 - The [Chennai-Vladivostok Eastern Maritime Corridor \(EMC\)](#) is a sea link connecting the **east coast of India (Chennai Port)** with **ports in the far-east region of Russia (Vladivostok Port)**.
 - It passes through the [Sea of Japan](#), the [South China Sea](#), and the [Malacca Strait](#).
- **Significance:**
 - **Reduced Logistics Costs:**
 - EMC has reduced the shipping distance from 8,675 nautical miles (via the traditional **St Petersburg-Mumbai route** through Europe) to **5,600 nautical miles**, cutting transit time from over 40 days to just **24 days**.
 - This is significant for India as it has surpassed China to become the largest buyer of Russian oil in July 2024.
 - **India imports over 85% of its crude oil demand.**



- **Diversification of Trade:**
 - The corridor facilitates not only crude oil shipments but also **coal, LNG, fertilizers,** and other commodities, **broadening the trade relationship.**
- **Boost to India's Maritime Sector:**
 - The corridor **supports India's maritime sector**, which handles around **95% (by volume)** and **70% (by value)** of the country's trade, contributing to its growth and efficiency.
 - This new route aligns with [India's Maritime Vision 2030](#), which includes over 150 initiatives aimed at transforming the maritime sector.
- **Strategic Importance:**
 - Vladivostok is the **largest Russian port on the Pacific Ocean**, and the corridor passes through the **South China Sea** and strengthens India's strategic presence **addressing China's dominance** in the region.
 - The Chennai-Vladivostok corridor is aligned with other initiatives, such as the [Northern Sea Route](#) and the [International North-South Transport Corridor \(INSTC\)](#).
- **Advancing India's Act Far East Policy:**
 - The EMC **boosts India's access to Russian resources** and strengthens its position in the Pacific trade network.
 - By enhancing regional connectivity, it promotes trade with **East Asia, ASEAN, and Russia**, facilitates multimodal transport, and supports infrastructure development.
 - This also opens avenues for trade agreements, cultural exchanges, and tourism, positioning India as a key player in the region.

What are Other Maritime Corridors Significant for India?

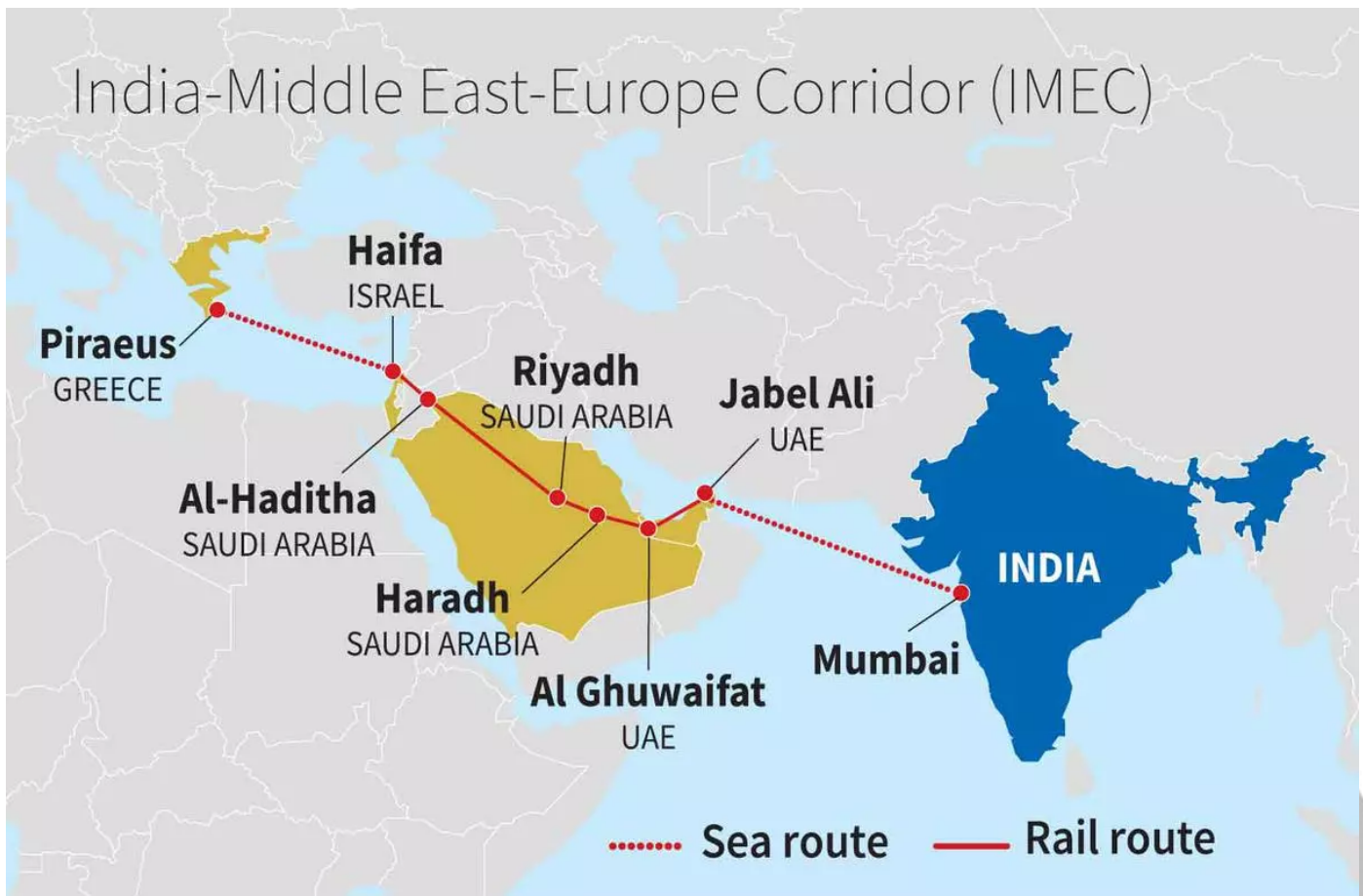
- **International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC):**
 - INSTC is a **7,200 km multimodal transit route** linking the **Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf** to the Caspian Sea via Iran, and further to northern Europe **via St. Petersburg, Russia**.
 - It was launched in 2000 through a trilateral agreement between **India, Iran, and Russia**, it has expanded to include **13 member countries**.
 - It connects **ship, rail, and road routes** between **India, Iran, Azerbaijan, Russia, Central Asia, and Europe**.
 - The corridor has 3 routes: the Central Corridor (India to Russia via Iran), the Western Corridor (Azerbaijan-Iran-India), and the Eastern Corridor (Russia to India through Central Asia).
 - In June 2024 Russia sent [two trains carrying coal to India](#) through the INSTC for the first time.



▪ **India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) Project:**

- The **IMEC Project** was announced at the **G20 Summit** (2023), the IMEC aims to **connect India, the Middle East, and Europe** through a network of **railways, roads, and ship-to-rail links**.
- It includes two corridors: the East Corridor linking India to the Arabian Gulf, and the Northern Corridor connecting the Gulf to Europe.
- The project will also feature an electricity cable, a hydrogen pipeline, and a high-speed data cable, fostering regional integration across Asia, Europe, and the Middle East.

India-Middle East-Europe Corridor (IMEC)



▪ Northern Sea Route (NSR):

- The NSR is a 5,600 km Arctic shipping route connecting the Barents and Kara Seas to the Bering Strait.
- It offers up to 50% shorter transit times than traditional routes like the Suez Canal and gained attention after the [2021 Suez Canal blockage](#).
 - It has also become an area of focus, with both nations working on projects related to Arctic shipping and polar navigation, providing a strategic shipping route between Western Eurasia and the Asia-Pacific.
- India is interested in the NSR due to growing imports of Russian crude oil and coal. The NSR is also key for balancing Russia-China influence in the region.



What are the Key Aspects of India-Russia Relations?

- **Strategic Partnership:** India and Russia formalized their strategic partnership in 2000, upgraded to a **Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership** in 2010.
 - The goal is to achieve USD 50 billion in investment and USD 30 billion in trade by 2025, with a target of USD 100 billion by 2030.
- **Bilateral Trade and Investment:** India-Russia trade reached **USD 65.7 billion** in FY 2023-24. The Key Import and Export From Russia (FY 2024):
 - **By Value:**
 - **Imports:** Crude oil, project goods, coal, coke, vegetable oils, and fertilizers.
 - **Exports:** processed minerals, iron and steel, tea, marine products, and coffee.
 - **By Quantity:**
 - **Imports:** Petroleum crude, coal, fertilizers, vegetable oil, and iron and steel,
 - **Exports:** Processed minerals, iron and steel, tea, granite, and processed fruits and juices.
 - Bilateral investments surpassed USD 30 billion in 2018, with a revised target of USD 50 billion by 2025.
 - **Indo-Russian JV for Vande Bharat Sleeper:** The **Indo-Russian JV Kinet** has taken over the **Marathwada Rail Coach Factory** in Latur to manufacture 1,920 **Vande Bharat Sleeper coaches**.
- **Energy Cooperation:** Russia plays a **key role in India's energy security**, with both countries cooperating extensively in the oil and gas sectors.
 - Russia's state-owned energy firms have made significant **investments in India's energy infrastructure**, while Indian companies are involved in oil exploration projects in Russia.
- **Defense and Security Cooperation:** India and Russia share long-standing defense cooperation, guided by the **IRIGC-M&MTC mechanism**, with regular bilateral and multilateral military exercises like **INDRA** and **Vostok 2022**.
 - Key defense projects include the supply of **S-400 systems**, licensed production of **T-90 tanks** and **Su-30 MKI**, **MiG-29** and **Kamov helicopters**, **INS Vikramaditya**, **Ak-203 rifles**, and **BrahMos missiles**.
 - The cooperation has evolved from a buyer-seller model to **joint research, development**, and production of advanced defense technologies.
- **Science and Technology:** It spans areas like **space (Gaganyaan)**, **nanotechnology**, and **quantum computing**.
 - Both jointly developed the **Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant**. Their partnership is guided by the 2021 roadmap for innovation, aiming to commercialize technologies and support joint projects.
- **Geopolitical and Regional Cooperation:**
 - The India-Russia relationship is underpinned by shared interests in global and regional security, including cooperation in multilateral forums like the **United Nations** and **BRICS**.
 - Russia's increasing focus on the **Asia-Pacific region** aligns with India's strategic priorities, particularly in the context of balancing China's maritime influence.
- **Economic Diplomacy and Taxation Agreements:**
 - The **India-Russia Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA)**, effective since 1996, is a key instrument in fostering **cross-border investments and trade** by eliminating **double taxation** and preventing **fiscal evasion**.

Drishti Mains Question:

Discuss the current state of India-Russia relations, highlighting key areas of collaboration and challenges. How can India strengthen this strategic partnership?

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year's Question (PYQs)

Prelims

Q. Consider the following in respect of Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS): (2017)

1. Inaugural IONS was held in India in 2015 under the chairmanship of the Indian Navy.
2. IONS is a voluntary initiative that seeks to increase maritime co-operation among navies of the littoral states of the Indian Ocean Region.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: (b)

Q. With reference to 'Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC)', consider the following statements: (2015)

1. It was established very recently in response to incidents of piracy and accidents of oil spills.
2. It is an alliance meant for maritime security only.

Which of the statements given above is/ are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: (d)

Q. Southeast Asia has captivated the attention of the global community over space and time as a geostrategically significant region. Which among the following is the most convincing explanation for this global perspective? (2011)

- (a) It was the hot theatre during the Second World War
- (b) Its location between the Asian powers of China and India
- (c) It was the arena of superpower confrontation during the Cold War period
- (d) Its location between the Pacific and Indian oceans and its preeminent maritime character

Ans: (d)

Mains

Q. Project 'Mausam' is considered a unique foreign policy initiative of the Indian government to improve relationships with its neighbours. Does the project have a strategic dimension? Discuss.(2015)

Q. With respect to the South China sea, maritime territorial disputes and rising tension affirm the need for safeguarding maritime security to ensure freedom of navigation and overflight throughout the region. In this context, discuss the bilateral issues between India and China. (2014)

