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CURRENT AFFAIRS

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CHENNAI-VLADIVOSTOK MARITIME ROUTE

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Chennai-Vladivostok maritime route". The topic "Chennai-Vladivostok maritime route" has relevance in the International Relations section of the UPSC CSE exam.

Relevance:

For Prelims:

Facts about Chennai-Vladivostok maritime route?

For Mains:

GS 2 and 3: International Relations and Infrastructure.

Significance of Chennai-Vladivostok maritime route?

Challenges for India?

Way forward?

Why in the news?

India and Russia are keen to make the Chennai – Vladivostok maritime route operational, and a stakeholder meeting to work out details have been scheduled in September, says Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal

Facts about Chennai-Vladivostok maritime route?

The Chennai-Vladivostok maritime route is a proposed shipping route connecting the Indian port of Chennai (formerly known as Madras) with the Russian port of Vladivostok. Here are some key facts about the Chennai-Vladivostok maritime route:

- **Geographical Significance:** The Chennai-Vladivostok route aims to establish a direct maritime link between the eastern coast of India and the Far East region of Russia. This route passes through the Bay of Bengal, the Andaman Sea, the Strait of Malacca, and the South China Sea, offering a shorter and more efficient trade route between the two countries.
- The aim is to access natural resources from Northeast Asia and the Western Pacific region.
- The Chennai-Vladivostok sea route will reduce transportation time from over 40 days to 24 days for cargo between India and Far East Russia.
- The route can serve as a corridor to counter China's Maritime Silk Route and its presence in Southeast Asia.
- Russia is concerned about increasing the Chinese population in its Far-eastern region, which could alter demographics.
- The initiative aims to strengthen economic ties, enhance regional connectivity, and address geopolitical concerns.

Significance of Chennai-Vladivostok maritime route?

- **Strengthening Economic Ties:** The maritime route can enhance bilateral trade between India and Russia by providing a direct and more efficient transportation corridor. It would reduce transit times, costs, and logistical complexities, thereby boosting the volume of trade and fostering economic cooperation between the two countries.
- **Diversifying Trade Routes:** Currently, India relies heavily on the traditional land and sea routes for trade with Russia, which pass through Europe and the Middle East. The Chennai-Vladivostok route would offer an alternative and shorter route, diversifying India's trade routes and reducing dependence on congested and politically volatile regions.
- **Access to the Far East Region:** The maritime route would provide India direct access to the resource-rich Far East region of Russia. This region offers opportunities for collaboration in sectors such as energy, mining, fisheries, and infrastructure development. Access to these resources can contribute to India's energy security and support its economic growth.
- **Strengthening Geopolitical Influence:** The establishment of the Chennai-Vladivostok route aligns with India's broader Indo-Pacific strategy. It enhances India's presence and influence in the region, particularly in the context of geopolitical developments and China's increasing influence. It enables India to deepen its engagement with Russia, a key player in the Asia-Pacific region.
- **Connectivity Initiatives:** The Chennai-Vladivostok route is part of India's efforts to enhance connectivity with Eurasian countries and strengthen the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC). The route can connect with other multimodal transportation networks, such as roads, railways, and inland waterways, facilitating greater regional integration and trade flows.
- **Cultural and People-to-People Exchanges:** Improved connectivity through the maritime route can foster cultural and people-to-people exchanges between India and Russia. It can facilitate tourism, educational collaborations, and cultural exchanges, strengthening the bilateral relationship at the societal level.
- **Regional Stability and Security:** Enhanced economic ties and collaboration between India and Russia through the maritime route can contribute to regional stability and security. Increased trade and economic cooperation often serve as a stabilizing factor in international relations, promoting peaceful coexistence and reducing conflicts.

Challenges for India?

- **Infrastructure Development:** The successful operation of the maritime route requires the development of robust infrastructure, including ports, terminals, and transportation networks. India would need to invest in expanding and upgrading its existing port facilities to handle the increased trade volume and accommodate larger vessels. This entails significant financial investment and coordination among various stakeholders.
- **Logistical Challenges:** The route passes through multiple international waters and straits, including the Bay of Bengal, the Andaman Sea, the Strait of Malacca, and the South China Sea. Navigating these waters can pose logistical challenges, including piracy, maritime security concerns, congestion, and adverse weather conditions.
- **Connectivity with Hinterland:** Establishing a seamless connectivity network from the ports to the hinterland is crucial for the success of the maritime route. Efficient road and rail networks need to be developed to ensure smooth transportation of goods to and from the ports.

- **Regulatory and Customs Procedures:** Streamlining regulatory and customs procedures is essential to facilitate smooth trade operations along the Chennai-Vladivostok route. Harmonizing customs regulations, reducing paperwork, and implementing efficient clearance processes would help minimize delays and improve the ease of doing business.
- **Market Access and Trade Barriers:** India would need to address trade barriers, tariffs, and non-tariff barriers to ensure favorable market access for its goods in Russia and other countries along the route. Negotiating trade agreements and resolving trade disputes would be crucial to promote trade and remove impediments to the flow of goods.
- **Competition from Existing Routes:** The Chennai-Vladivostok route would face competition from established trade routes connecting India and Russia through Europe and the Middle East. Convincing stakeholders to shift their existing trade patterns to the new route would require demonstrating its advantages in terms of cost, time, and reliability.
- **Political and Geostrategic Considerations:** The successful operation of the maritime route may be influenced by geopolitical dynamics and political considerations. It would require maintaining cordial relations with neighboring countries and managing potential sensitivities related to territorial disputes or competing strategic interests.

Way forward?

- **Infrastructure Development:** The Indian government should prioritize infrastructure development, including the expansion and modernization of ports along the route. Investments should be made to enhance port capacities, improve connectivity with hinterland regions, and develop efficient multimodal transportation networks.
- **Stakeholder Collaboration:** Close collaboration among various stakeholders is crucial. The government should engage with port authorities, private sector players, logistics providers, and international partners to foster cooperation and address the specific needs and challenges of the maritime route.
- **Streamlining Regulatory Procedures:** Efforts should be made to simplify customs procedures, reduce paperwork, and harmonize regulations. This can be achieved through the digitization of trade documentation, implementing single-window clearance mechanisms, and promoting mutual recognition agreements to streamline customs processes.
- **Enhancing Maritime Security:** Collaboration with regional navies and maritime security agencies is essential to address piracy, ensure safe passage, and enhance security along the maritime route. Sharing intelligence, conducting joint patrols, and investing in surveillance systems can help mitigate security risks and instill confidence among traders and shipping companies.
- **Trade Facilitation and Market Access:** The Indian government should actively engage in trade negotiations and dialogues to address trade barriers and promote favorable market access for Indian goods in Russia and other countries along the route. Bilateral and regional trade agreements can be explored to simplify customs procedures and reduce trade barriers.
- **Diplomatic Engagement:** Diplomatic efforts should be focused on building strong relationships with countries along the route. Regular dialogues, high-level visits, and strategic partnerships can create a conducive environment for trade and cooperation, while addressing any political or geopolitical sensitivities that may arise.
- **Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation:** Establishing a monitoring and evaluation mechanism is crucial to assess the progress, identify challenges, and make necessary

adjustments. Regular reviews can help track the performance of the maritime route, address emerging issues, and ensure that the route operates efficiently and effectively.

Source:

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/logistics/india-and-russia-aim-to-establish-chennai-vladivostok-maritime-route-promising-time-and-cost-savings/article67011647.ece>

Q.1 Which of the following statements is/are correct regarding the Chennai-Vladivostok maritime route?

1. The maritime route is intended to enhance trade connectivity between India and Far East Russia.
2. The initiative to establish the maritime route is part of India's Indo-Pacific strategy to counter China's Belt and Road Initiative.
3. The Chennai-Vladivostok maritime route primarily focuses on strengthening cultural and people-to-people exchanges between India and Russia.

Select the correct option using the codes below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3

Answer: (a)

Q.2 Which of the following statements regarding the new trade route (Chennai-Vladivostok) between India and Russia is/are correct?

1. The route is expected to significantly reduce the transportation time between India and Russia.
2. It is a land-based corridor primarily focusing on road and rail connectivity.
3. The trade route is a part of India's strategic initiatives in the Arctic region.

Select the correct answer using the codes below:

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3

Answer: (a)

Q.3 Analyze the significance and potential challenges of the Chennai-Vladivostok maritime route for India's regional connectivity and geopolitical interests.

Rishabh