

सीएमईसी नीति संवाद

समुद्री गलियारों के जरिए संपर्क:
वैश्विक अनिश्चितताओं के बीच
लचीलापन

3:00 बजे, सोमवार 2 नवंबर 2026
जीपी हॉल, आरआईएस

CMEC Policy Dialogue

Connectivity through Maritime
Corridors: Resilience amidst
Global Uncertainties

3:00 PM, Monday, 2 November 2026
GP Hall, RIS

1. Background

The global economic order is passing through a phase of heightened uncertainty. Geopolitical tensions, shifting trade patterns, disruptions to established shipping routes and growing vulnerabilities around critical maritime chokepoints have increased risks to the continuity of global supply chains. Recent disruptions have demonstrated how shocks at key maritime routes can quickly affect shipping costs, transit times, energy flows and the reliability of international trade, whose trickle-down effect is felt by the entire economy.

These developments have renewed attention to the importance of diversifying maritime connectivity and strengthening the resilience of trade routes. While maritime transport will remain central to global trade, resilience increasingly requires a network of alternative routes, ports, logistics nodes and supporting infrastructure that can enable trade to continue when established routes come under stress. The objective, therefore, is not to replace existing maritime routes, but to create alternate corridors with greater flexibility, redundancy and capacity to adapt to disruptions.

Maritime corridors are emerging as an important instrument in this context. By connecting ports and markets across regions and integrating maritime services with supporting logistics networks, they can reduce concentration risks, widen market access and provide additional options for the movement of goods. The India–Middle East–Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC), for example, envisages connecting India's western ports (Mundra, Kandla, JNPA, etc.) to the Arabian Gulf, with onward connectivity to Europe through the Middle East and Mediterranean. Its broader economic proposition is built around faster and more cost-efficient trade route, with estimates suggesting that effective utilisation could reduce transportation time by up to 40 per cent and logistics

costs by around 30 per cent on India–Europe routes. Beyond physical connectivity, such corridors are increasingly conceived as wider economic networks encompassing ports, logistics systems, digital platforms, energy infrastructure and trade facilitation. The IMEC, for instance, envisages digital connectivity, interoperable systems and energy linkages alongside transport infrastructure.

Recent policy discussions, however, have underlined that the effectiveness of maritime corridors will depend on how successfully they address their implementation constraints. Discussions at the *2025 IMEC Conclave*, co-organized by RIS along with Dalberg and others, highlighted the importance of interoperability, financing, institutional coordination, regulatory alignment and capacity building, while recognising the need for phased development and practical priorities. The discussions also proposed dedicated coordination mechanisms, technical working groups, voluntary regulatory guidelines and innovative financing instruments to support implementation.

The evolving connectivity around Chabahar port adds another dimension to this discussion. The recent completion of the *Chabahar–Zahedan rail link* is expected to strengthen the port's hinterland connectivity and improve its potential as a gateway towards Afghanistan and Central Asia. In conjunction with the International North–South Transport Corridor (INSTC), this development could expand the range of connectivity options available to Indian trade and strengthen the role of Chabahar within a wider regional network. At the same time, its effectiveness will depend on cargo volumes, port utilisation, operational arrangements, financing, geopolitical conditions and the ability to connect maritime services with reliable inland logistics.

Similarly, the heightened discussion around Sohar Port in Oman also points to the potential for established maritime gateways to assume greater importance during periods of disruption. Growing interest from Indian logistics operators, increasing cargo activity and Sohar's location outside the Strait of Hormuz provide an opportunity to examine whether alternative ports can play a larger role in serving Indian trade with the Gulf and in strengthening the resilience of India's westward maritime connectivity.

These developments also raise a broader set of challenges:

- i. Maritime corridors can face geopolitical and security risks arising from instability around critical chokepoints;
- ii. Financial risks associated with large capital requirements, cost overruns, currency and financing conditions;
- iii. Regulatory and governance risks arising from differences in standards, customs procedures, institutional mandates and decision-making arrangements;
- iv. Technical and operational risks related to interoperability, information systems, port capacity and coordination among multiple stakeholders; and
- v. Furthermore, with divergent priorities among participating countries the risk of delayed decisions and weaken corridor coherence also exists.

This raises the central policy question for the discussion: what makes a maritime corridor resilient? Exploring the policy dilemma whether and how the alternative routes can add real value, what constraints prevent their effective use, and what policy, institutional framework, commercial and infrastructure measures are required to strengthen India's maritime resilience.

2. Objectives

- i. Examine the role of maritime corridors in strengthening resilience of global and Indian supply chains amid geopolitical, economic and operational disruptions.
- ii. Assess the potential of diversified maritime routes and alternative gateways to provide effective continuity of trade during disruptions.
- iii. Identification of key geopolitical, financial, regulatory and governance, and technical and operational risks affecting the development and utilisation of maritime corridors.
- iv. On the digital front, consider the requirements for interoperability, information visibility and institutional coordination to make alternative maritime routes operationally usable.
- v. Draw lessons from emerging corridor initiatives and recent disruptions to identify practical measures for strengthening India's maritime connectivity architecture.

3. Expected Results

- i. Enhance understanding of the role of maritime corridors in strengthening supply-chain resilience and reducing risks associated with critical maritime chokepoints through enhancing resilience.
- ii. Identify key constraints affecting the development and utilisation of alternative maritime routes and gateways.
- iii. Generate insights on mechanisms for improving coordination among governments, ports, shipping lines, logistics providers, financial institutions and other stakeholders.
- iv. Identify practical measures for strengthening route diversification, contingency planning and operational readiness.
- v. Contribute policy-oriented recommendations through policy papers/ briefs for strengthening India's maritime connectivity and resilience in line with Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047 and Maritime India Vision 2030.
- vi. Research scope for CMEC in specific areas where challenges exist.

4. Date and Venue

Date & Time: 2 November 2026, 3:00pm

Venue: GP Hall, RIS, Core-4A, 4th floor, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi

5. Participants

The discussion will bring together senior policymakers and former government officials, maritime and connectivity experts, representatives of industry and logistics companies, multilateral development institutions, academics and think-tank researchers working on maritime connectivity, trade, logistics and supply-chain resilience.

6. About CMEC Policy Dialogue

The Centre for Maritime Economy and Connectivity (CMEC) was established at RIS under the aegis of the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Government of India. As part of its capacity-building and knowledge-generation mandate, CMEC has initiated the Policy Dialogue. The dialogue provides a platform for policymakers, practitioners, industry leaders, researchers and other stakeholders to deliberate on emerging issues shaping India's maritime sector. It seeks to contribute to the objectives of Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047 and Maritime India Vision 2030 through informed dialogue on maritime trade, ports, shipping, logistics, connectivity and the wider maritime economy. The policy dialogue to bridge policy research and practical experience and facilitate exchange of knowledge on opportunities and challenges confronting the sector.