



## India's Interest in Stability in Iran

**OE Watch Commentary:** The governments in South Asia have been closely watching the civil unrest in Iran as it has unfolded. As the excerpted articles demonstrate, India has a particular interest in the outcome. The first article comes from *The Wire*, an independent English news website in India, and offers some analysis of the situation from an Indian perspective. It notes that the unrest is “nowhere as big as what occurred during the Green Movement” and that “what is going on presently is not a revolutionary process, especially because it is unorganized and leaderless.” The author believes that “it is highly doubtful that the current Iranian unrest will somehow blossom into a flame that burns away Iran’s theocratic regime,” but that “once again, as in 2009, the Iranian regime finds itself thrown into an unprecedented crisis of legitimacy.”

While *The Wire* article does not necessarily advocate for any particular outcome of the situation in Iran, the article from the *Maharashtra Times*, a Marathi language newspaper with a large readership in Mumbai, discusses how India does have a vested interest in Iran. The article notes that on December 3, “the President of Iran, Hassan Rouhani inaugurated Chabahar port” and that “India has invested \$500 million in the project.” India has already sent a well-publicized shipment of grain to Afghanistan through Chabahar Port and the article notes that one of the goals of the port is to “control the ambitions of China (CPEC and Gwadar).” CPEC refers to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and Gwadar (Port) now serves as a waypoint in the corridor after significant Chinese investments. The author warns that “mismanagement in [Iran’s] Chabahar port will lead to benefits for Pakistan’s Gwadar port.” As the unrest and its aftermath continues to unfold in Iran, India will be closely watching what happens, particularly as it looks to compete with China. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)**



Chabahar Port.  
Source: Alireza numberone via Wikimedia Commons, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:3A%D8%A8%D9%86%D8%AF%D8%B1-%DA%86%D8%A7%D8%A8%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%B1.jpg>, CC BY-SA 4.0.

**“India has invested \$500 million in the project, while Indian companies have invested Rs 1 trillion [\$15.6 billion] in the ‘Chabahar finance center’...”**

**Source:** Jahanbegloo, Ramin. “As Unrest Grips Iran for a Fifth Day, the Regime Is Once Again Locked in a Crisis of Legitimacy,” *The Wire*, 2 January 2018. <https://thewire.in/209899/iran-protest-corruption-supreme-leader-mashhad/>

*...though the new riots in Iran are general and intense, thus far they are nowhere as big as what occurred during the Green Movement, in which millions took part. What is going on presently is not a revolutionary process, especially because it is unorganized and leaderless. Also, in contrast to 2009, these protests seem to be a direct challenge to the rule of the Supreme Leader Khamenei...*

*Most of the demonstrators who have been questioning the entire legitimacy of Iran’s supreme leader and the Islamic regime in the past week are, unlike their parents, children of the Iranian revolution. They belong to a new generation who did not experience the revolution of 1979 and want another Iran...Having said this, one needs to also add that Islamic Iran is more divided than at any time since 1979, a divide between the Rouhani government and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) that have the monopoly of violence in the country...But one way or another, it is highly doubtful that the current Iranian unrest will somehow blossom into a flame that burns away Iran’s theocratic regime. However, once again, as in 2009, the Iranian regime finds itself thrown into an unprecedented crisis of legitimacy...*

**Source:** “चीन व पाकला शह देण्याची सागरी संधी (A Maritime Opportunity To Deal With China and Pakistan),” *Maharashtra Times*, 26 December 2017. <https://maharashtratimes.indiatimes.com/editorial/article/iranian-president-hassan-rouhani-inaugurates-chabahar-port/articleshow/62245802.cms>

*On 3 December, the President of Iran, Hassan Rouhani inaugurated Chabahar port... welcom[ing] a new era [in the] tripartite relationship of Iran, India, and Afghanistan. India has invested \$500 million in the project, while Indian companies have invested Rs 1 trillion [\$15.6 billion] in the ‘Chabahar finance center’...All three countries will be getting individual benefits through this marine transport and will also control the ambitions of China (Sipak and Gwadar ports)...*

*Along with the Chabahar port formation, India needs to build a railway line of 500 km Zaheden in Iran. This route will help getting direct entry into Afghanistan...Around 218 km railway line work of the project has completed. The port and railway line needed to start at the same time to take the maximum financial benefit out of it. But the work delayed due to insufficient funds...*

*The mismanagement in Chabahar port will lead to benefits for Pakistan’s Gwadar port. This port is just 72 km away from Chabahar port. It is true that India has planned Chabahar port to challenge Gwadar port, but the development and survival capacity of port depends on its lucrative capacity of international trade...*