Syllabus subtopic: India and its neighborhood - relations.

Prelims and Mains focus: about the exercise; Gwadar and Chabahar ports; China incursions in India’s neighborhood and its implications

News: Navies of China and Pakistan, holding nine-day exercises in the Arabian Sea to enhance their all-weather strategic partnership, have for the first-time deployed submarines, providing a rare major exposure to the Chinese navy in the region.

About Pakistan-China Joint maritime exercise

- The joint maritime exercises began on Monday in the North Arabian Sea, regarded strategically significant for China which is now developing Pakistan's deep water Gwadar port there.
- The joint exercises are expected to be the first of many to come, as China and Pakistan have now developed a series of joint exercises covering the navy, army and air force.
- The exercise is also the first between China and Pakistan that will feature anti-submarine and submarine rescue training, indicating a high-level of strategic mutual trust.

About Gwadar port

- Gwadar is being connected through the over USD 60 billion China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to China's Xinjiang province, providing a key land route to China to access the warm waters of Arabian Sea. India has objected to China over the CPEC as it is being laid through the Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).

- The Gwadar is also located close to Iran's Chabahar Port being jointly developed by Iran, India and Afghanistan to ensure a trade corridor for Indian exports to Afghanistan.
Strategic importance of Arabian Sea for India

- The Arabian Sea region is strategically important for India as **major ports** including Kandla, Okha, Mumbai, Nhava Sheva (Navi Mumbai), Mormugão, New Mangalore, and Kochi are located there.

- The Arabian Sea provides entry to the Indian Ocean where China currently has built a logistics base at Djibouti in the **Horn of Africa**.