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Philippines Energy Emergency and Hormuz GNSS Disruption — Global Energy Security Under Stress

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SUBJECTS COVERED

IR **SECURITY & DEFENCE**

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Philippines Energy Emergency and Hormuz GNSS Disruption — Global Energy Security Under Stress

25 March 2026 · 4 min read

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✎ WHY IN NEWS

The Philippines became the first country to declare a national energy emergency on March 25, 2026, as fuel supplies run critically low following the effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz after the US-Israel-Iran conflict. Simultaneously, the Persian Gulf is witnessing the largest documented GPS jamming event in maritime history.

Philippines Energy Emergency

President **Ferdinand Marcos Jr** declared the state of emergency, with Energy Secretary **Sharon Garin** revealing alarming fuel supply data:

| FUEL TYPE | DAYS OF SUPPLY REMAINING |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Gasoline | 53 days |
| Diesel | 46 days |
| Jet Fuel | 39 days |
| LPG | 24 days |
| Kerosene | ~100 days |
| Average across all fuels | ~45 days |

Economic Impact

Pump prices have surged nearly **200%**:

- Petrol: above **90 pesos/litre** (~\$1.50)
- Diesel: near **130 pesos/litre**
- Kerosene: close to **145 pesos/litre**

The government is working to procure **1 million barrels of oil** from countries within and outside ASEAN to build buffer stock.

Root Cause — Strait of Hormuz Closure

Following **Operation Epic Fury** (US-Israel strikes on Iran beginning February 28, 2026), Iran effectively blocked the Strait of Hormuz. The Strait is the only sea connection between the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean.

Hormuz — Why It Matters

| PARAMETER | DATA |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Width | ~33 km |
| Navigable lane | 3 km each way |
| Daily crude oil flow (pre-crisis) | ~20 million barrels |
| Share of global traded oil | ~20% |
| Share of global LNG trade | ~25-30% |
| Key exporters via Hormuz | Saudi Arabia, Iraq, UAE, Kuwait, Qatar, Iran |

Asian countries are especially vulnerable — the Middle East accounts for about **60% of Asia’s oil supply**.

GNSS Disruption — Largest GPS Jamming Event in Maritime History

The conflict has produced unprecedented electronic warfare in the maritime domain.

Scale of Disruption

| DATE | VESSELS AFFECTED |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| February 28 (Day 1 of strikes) | 1,100+ |
| March 7 | 1,650+ (55% increase in 2 weeks) |

Maritime analytics firm **Windward** identified at least **30 distinct jamming clusters** across the waters of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE, Qatar, Oman, and Iran.

How GNSS Jamming Works

Jamming involves broadcasting powerful radio signals on the same frequencies as GPS satellites (L1: 1575.42 MHz), drowning out the legitimate satellite signal. **Spoofing** involves transmitting fake GPS signals that receivers accept as authentic, causing vessels to display incorrect positions.

Impact on Navigation

Spoofed or jammed positions propagate into:

- **ECDIS** (Electronic Chart Display and Information Systems)
- **AIS** (Automatic Identification System)

This creates false compliance alerts, potential regulatory violations from apparent territorial incursions, and critically impairs **collision avoidance** in congested waters. By March 7, maritime traffic through the Strait fell to **near-zero levels** — only **three vessel crossings recorded in a single day**.

India's Vulnerability

India is among the most exposed countries:

- **85-88% crude oil import dependence**
- **~9 million Indians** in Gulf countries
- **~\$40 billion annual remittances** from the Gulf
- SPR capacity: only **9.5 days** (vs IEA-recommended 90 days)
- **60-65% of crude imports** transit through Hormuz

Lessons for Global Energy Governance

The crisis exposes structural vulnerabilities in global energy architecture:

- ① **Chokepoint dependence** — Hormuz, Malacca, Suez, Bab el-Mandeb
- ② **Inadequate strategic reserves** — most Asian nations hold far less than IEA's 90-day standard
- ③ **Electronic warfare and maritime security** — GPS-dependent navigation is a single point of failure
- ④ **Transition energy security** — renewables reduce oil dependence but LNG (also transiting Hormuz) is a transition fuel

UPSC RELEVANCE

Strait of Hormuz location and significance, GNSS/GPS, ECDIS, AIS, ASEAN, Operation Epic Fury, India's SPR locations

India's energy diplomacy; impact of West Asia conflict on India's interests; diaspora vulnerability

Energy security; maritime security; electronic warfare as hybrid threat; critical infrastructure protection

“The Philippines declared an energy emergency within weeks of the Hormuz closure. How should India redesign its energy security framework?”

★ FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

PHILIPPINES ENERGY EMERGENCY:

First country to declare national energy emergency

President: Ferdinand Marcos Jr

Energy Secretary: Sharon Garin

Average fuel supply: ~45 days

Target procurement: 1 million barrels

Pump price surge: ~200%

STRAIT OF HORMUZ:

Location: between Iran and Oman/UAE

Width: ~33 km (navigable: 3 km each way)

Daily crude flow: ~20 million barrels

Global oil trade share: ~20%

Global LNG trade: ~25-30%

GNSS/GPS DISRUPTION:

1,650+ vessels affected (by March 7)

30+ jamming clusters identified

GPS frequency: L1 at 1575.42 MHz

ECDIS: Electronic Chart Display and Information Systems

AIS: Automatic Identification System

Maritime traffic fell to near-zero on some days

INDIA'S EXPOSURE:

Oil import dependence: 85-88%

Indians in Gulf: ~9 million

Gulf remittances: ~\$40 billion/year

SPR: 9.5 days (IEA recommends 90 days)

Crude via Hormuz: 60-65% of imports

OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:

Operation Epic Fury began: February 28, 2026

ASEAN members: 10 (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam)

IEA (International Energy Agency) HQ: Paris; members: 31 countries

India joined IEA as Association Country in 2017

Global maritime chokepoints: Hormuz, Malacca, Suez, Bab el-Mandeb, Panama Canal, Turkish Straits

Sources: [Bloomberg](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [CNN](#), [France 24](#)

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