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India Needs Austerity, but Energy Security Requires Breaking Silos

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India Needs Austerity, but Energy Security Requires Breaking Silos

 **The Indian Express** 1 June 2026 **GS3** **GS2**

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INTERVIEW ANGLE

"India's energy-security policy sits across at least five ministries. Should India create a dedicated National Energy Security Agency or a Cabinet Committee with full inter-ministerial authority over energy?"

With the Hormuz crisis threatening India's energy supply, a cross-ministry energy security architecture is needed — not siloed departmental responses. India's fiscal discipline must be paired with institutional integration across MoPNG, MNRE, MEA, and Finance.

THE ARGUMENT IN ONE LINE

India's energy-security response is fragmented across five ministries — **a single-point Energy Security Secretariat** is needed to coordinate sourcing, reserves, renewables, and diplomacy simultaneously.

THE GOVERNANCE GAP

ACTION NEEDED	MINISTRY
SPR releases, sourcing diversification	MoPNG
Renewable acceleration	MNRE
Diplomatic sourcing (Gulf, Russia, US LNG)	MEA
Fiscal/OMC pricing	MoF
Who coordinates all?	No single body

INDIA'S ENERGY NUMBERS

- **~85% crude imports**; ~80% transit Strait of Hormuz.
- **SPR**: 5.33 million tonnes at Vizag, Mangaluru, Padur — ~9-10 days' cover (target: 90 days).
- **Renewable target**: 500 GW by 2030.

UPSC RELEVANCE

PAPER	RELEVANCE
GS3	Energy security; SPR; Strait of Hormuz; renewable energy
GS2	Inter-ministerial coordination; governance silos
Prelims	India's SPR locations (Vizag, Mangaluru, Padur); crude import dependence; Hormuz

Sources: *Indian Express, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas*

Source: India Needs Austerity, but Energy Security Requires Breaking Silos — Ujyari.com | Free UPSC & State PCS Editorial Analysis

● KEY ARGUMENTS AT A GLANCE

With West Asia conflict driving a global energy shock through the Strait of Hormuz, India must combine fiscal discipline with a coordinated, cross-ministry energy security architecture rather than siloed departmental responses, because the strategic dimensions of energy — diversification, strategic reserves, renewables, diplomacy — demand institutional integration beyond the current fragmented framework.

✓ SUPPORTING

- India's energy policy involves at least five ministries (Petroleum and Natural Gas, Power, New and Renewable Energy, External Affairs, Finance) that operate in silos — slowing India's response to energy shocks and producing sub-optimal policy at the intersection of sectors.

- The Strait of Hormuz shock — with ~80% of India's crude passing through — demands simultaneous action on SPR releases, alternative sourcing (Russia, US LNG, Africa), renewable acceleration, and diplomatic signalling to Oman and UAE; no single ministry can orchestrate this.
- Fiscal pressures (fuel subsidy burden, rupee depreciation) require the Finance Ministry's macro-stabilisation role to be integrated with energy supply strategy, not run in parallel.

COUNTER

Some argue the current Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs and the Energy Coordination Committee provide adequate interoperability, and that creating a new apex agency would add bureaucratic layers without improving execution.

WAY FORWARD

Strengthen the Cabinet Committee on Security's energy-security sub-mandate; create a permanent inter-ministerial Energy Security Secretariat staffed by officials from MoPNG, MNRE, MEA, and Finance; build and maintain strategic petroleum reserves at 90 days' cover; accelerate domestic renewable capacity to reduce import vulnerability.

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MAINS ANSWER FRAMEWORK

QUESTION

"India's energy security challenge is as much a governance problem as a resource problem." Critically examine the institutional framework and suggest reforms. (250 words)

INTRODUCTION

India's oil import dependence (~85%) makes every West Asian conflict an energy-security event. But the policy response — sourcing diversification, SPR management, renewable acceleration, diplomatic outreach — cuts across ministries that historically operate in silos, weakening India's resilience.

BODY

The Strait of Hormuz is the world’s most critical oil chokepoint; a disruption would simultaneously affect India’s crude supply, LNG imports, and fertiliser feedstock (which India still heavily imports). India’s fiscal response — whether to pass through or absorb fuel-price increases — involves the Finance Ministry and the Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs).

Its sourcing diversification — Russia, US, UAE, Africa — involves MEA. Its renewable-acceleration response — solar, green hydrogen — involves MNRE. Its SPR (Strategic Petroleum Reserve) decisions — presently holding ~5.33 million tonnes in Visakhapatnam, Mangaluru, and Padur — involve MoPNG. These moves need to happen simultaneously, in a coordinated sequence, under clear executive authority. The current structure, where each ministry optimises its mandate without a single point of accountability for energy security as a whole, produces a slower, piecemeal response than India’s scale of import dependence requires.

A permanent Energy Security Secretariat, drawing on these ministries, with authority to convene and decide, would fill the governance gap.

CONCLUSION

Austerity is a legitimate fiscal response to an energy shock. But India also needs institutional architecture that matches the scale and inter-dependence of the threat: an energy-security body that can integrate sourcing diversification, SPR management, renewable acceleration, and fiscal stabilisation into a single, coherent response.

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