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Strait of Hormuz Widened Route and India's Energy Security

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WHY IN NEWS

Around June 27, 2026, following the ceasefire (<https://ujjyari.com/vocab/ceasefire/>) in the 2026 Iran-related conflict, the Joint Maritime Information Center (JMIC) announced a widened shipping route through the Strait of Hormuz near Oman, allowing two-way naval and commercial traffic and easing crude oil prices.

The development directly affects India, which imports more than 80% of its crude oil and routes a large share of its energy supplies through this chokepoint (<https://ujjyari.com/vocab/chokepoint/>). It revives focus on India's energy security and its strategy of diversified, autonomous sourcing.

GEOGRAPHY OF THE STRAIT OF HORMUZ

The **Strait of Hormuz** (<https://ujjyari.com/terms/strait-of-hormuz/>) is a narrow waterway that connects the **Persian Gulf** to the **Gulf of Oman** and onward to the **Arabian Sea**. It is the world's most critical oil transit chokepoint.

FEATURE	DETAIL
Connects	Persian Gulf to Gulf of Oman / Arabian Sea
Northern shore	Iran
Southern shore	Oman and the United Arab Emirates (UAE)
Traffic	Roughly 20% of global oil and LNG trade
Narrowest point	About 33 km wide, with even narrower shipping lanes

Because so much of the world's seaborne crude and liquefied natural gas (LNG) passes through it, any disruption at Hormuz sends global oil prices sharply higher. **The widened route announced by the JMIC** near the Omani coast was designed to ease this pressure by allowing simultaneous inbound and outbound transit through safer waters.

WHY THIS MATTERS FOR INDIA

India is among the largest crude importers in the world and imports over **80% of its crude oil** needs. A significant portion of its imports from West Asian suppliers transits the Strait of Hormuz, making the chokepoint central to India's economic and energy stability.

- **Price exposure:** Any spike at Hormuz raises India's import bill, widens the current account deficit and fuels inflation.
- **Supply security:** Disruption threatens both crude and LNG flows critical to power, fertiliser and transport sectors.
- **Citizen safety:** Large Indian diaspora (<https://ujijari.com/vocab/diaspora/>) and seafarers operate across the Gulf region.

INDIA'S OFFICIAL POSITION AND STRATEGY

Through the conflict, the Government of India maintained a position of **neutrality and strategic autonomy** (<https://ujijari.com/terms/strategic-autonomy/>), consistently urging **de-escalation and dialogue** while prioritising the safety of Indian citizens and the security of energy supplies. India does not take sides in the wider geopolitical contest and engages all parties to protect its national interest.

India's energy-security toolkit includes:

INSTRUMENT	PURPOSE
Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPR)	Emergency crude stockpiles to cushion supply shocks
Source diversification	Crude from Russia , the United States , West Africa and Latin America to reduce Gulf dependence
Alternative routes	Reduced exposure to a single chokepoint over time
Renewables and ethanol	Cutting long-run dependence on imported fossil fuels

ANALYSIS AND WAY FORWARD

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The Hormuz episode underlines a structural **vulnerability** (<https://ujiyari.com/vocab/vulnerability/>): a developing economy heavily dependent on imported energy concentrated through one strait. The widened JMIC route offers short-term relief, but the strategic lesson is the need to reduce single-point dependence.

The way forward lies in deepening source diversification, expanding strategic petroleum reserves toward international benchmarks, accelerating the energy transition to renewables and green hydrogen, strengthening maritime domain awareness in the Indian Ocean Region, and continuing a balanced foreign policy that keeps channels open with all West Asian partners. India's strategic autonomy allows it to safeguard energy and economic interests without entangling itself in great-power rivalries.

UPSC RELEVANCE

GS Paper 2 (International Relations): India and its neighbourhood; effect of policies of developed and developing countries on India's interests; **bilateral** (<https://ujiyari.com/vocab/bilateral/>) and regional groupings.

GS Paper 3 (Economy and Security): **Energy security** (<https://ujiyari.com/terms/energy-security/>); infrastructure; security challenges in the maritime domain.

Prelims pointers:

- The **Strait of Hormuz** connects the **Persian Gulf** to the **Gulf of Oman / Arabian Sea**.
- Bordered by **Iran** to the north and **Oman** and the **UAE** to the south.
- Carries roughly **20% of global oil and LNG** trade; the world's most critical oil chokepoint.
- The **Joint Maritime Information Center (JMIC)** announced a widened route near Oman around June 27, 2026.
- India imports over **80% of its crude oil**, much of it via Hormuz.
- India's stance: **neutrality, de-escalation and strategic autonomy**.

Mains question: "India's heavy dependence on energy imports through a few maritime chokepoints is a strategic vulnerability. In light of the recent Strait of Hormuz developments, discuss measures to strengthen India's energy security." (15 marks, 250 words)

FACTS CORNER

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Strait of Hormuz: Connects the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman / Arabian Sea.

Borders: Iran (north); Oman and the UAE (south).

Significance: Carries about 20% of global oil and LNG trade, the world's most critical oil chokepoint.

2026 development: The Joint Maritime Information Center (JMIC) widened the shipping route near Oman around June 27, 2026, easing crude prices.

India's exposure: Imports over 80% of its crude oil, a large share through Hormuz.

India's stand: Neutral, urging de-escalation, prioritising citizen safety and energy supply (strategic autonomy).

Energy security toolkit: Strategic Petroleum Reserves, diversified sourcing (Russia, US, West Africa) and the renewables push.

Sources: Ministry of External Affairs (<https://www.mea.gov.in/>), Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (<https://mopng.gov.in/>), International Maritime Organization (<https://www.imo.org/>)

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