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DAILY Editorials & Articles

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UPSC 360°

The Hindu Unwrapped - Daily Current Affairs Mastery for UPSC CSE (Clear that it's based on The Hindu editorials / news analyses - very aspirant-friendly)

Significance

The recent LPG supply concerns and rising geopolitical tensions in West Asia highlight India's vulnerability due to heavy dependence on imported fossil fuels. This situation strengthens the need for accelerating renewable energy expansion. By investing in solar, wind, and green hydrogen, India aims to enhance energy security, reduce import dependence, and build a resilient, sustainable energy future.

LPG Supply Concerns and the Rise of India's Green Energy Strategy

Introduction: Energy Security in a Turbulent World

India is the **third-largest energy consumer in the world**, and its economic growth, industrial development, and urbanization have significantly increased energy demand. However, the country still relies heavily on **imported fossil fuels**, particularly crude oil, liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), and natural gas.

Recent geopolitical tensions in West Asia involving countries such as **Iran**, **Israel**, and the **United States** have raised concerns about potential disruptions in global energy supply chains. These tensions are particularly sensitive because a large portion of the world's oil and gas trade passes through the strategically crucial **Strait of Hormuz**.

At the same time, India has recently faced **localized LPG supply issues**, highlighting the vulnerability of a fossil-fuel-dependent energy system. This situation has strengthened the

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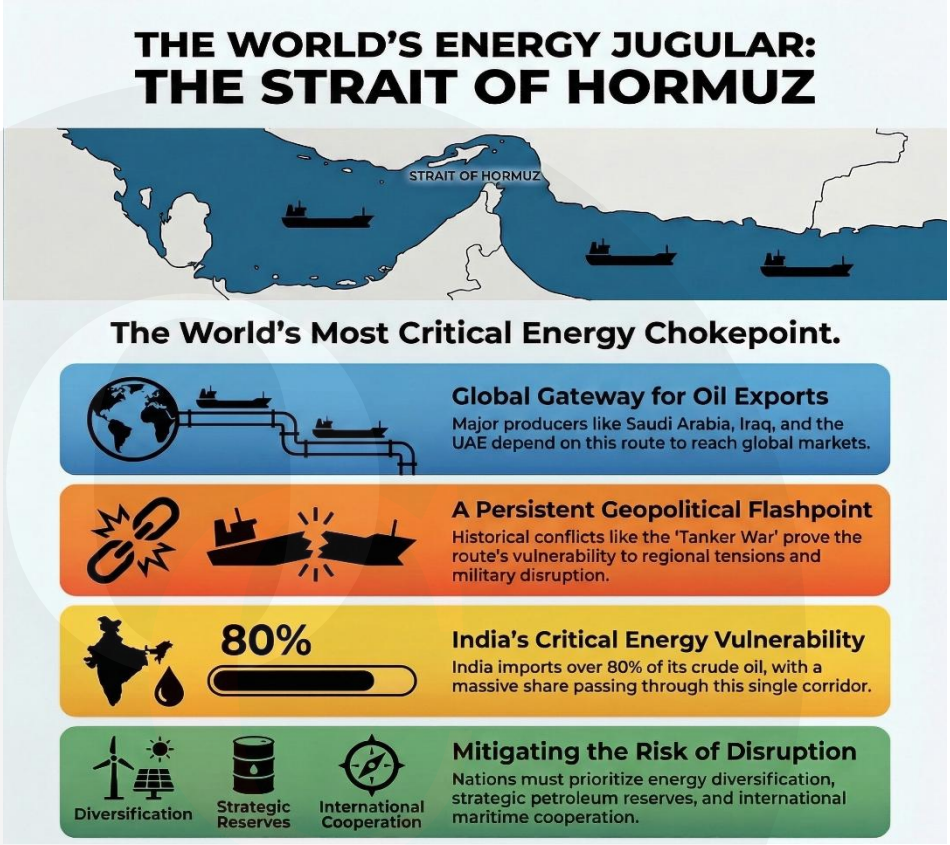
argument for accelerating India's **green energy transition**, which aims to create a more resilient, sustainable, and self-reliant energy system.

India's Dependence on Imported Energy

India's energy demand is rising rapidly due to population growth, industrial expansion, and increasing household consumption. However, domestic fossil fuel production is insufficient to meet this demand.



Heavy Dependence on Oil Imports

India imports **over 80-85% of its crude oil requirements**, making it highly vulnerable to global price fluctuations and geopolitical instability. Oil is critical for sectors such as transportation, petrochemicals, aviation, and manufacturing.

Dependence on Imported Natural Gas

India imports about **45-50% of its natural gas needs**, mainly in the form of liquefied natural gas (LNG). Natural gas is widely used in power generation, fertilizers, industrial heating, and urban cooking gas networks.

LPG Consumption and Import Reliance

LPG has become one of the most widely used cooking fuels in India, especially after the expansion of clean cooking programs such as **Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana**, which has provided millions of rural households with LPG connections.

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Because of this rapid expansion in consumption, India imports a large share of LPG from countries such as **Saudi Arabia**, **Qatar**, and the **United Arab Emirates**.

As a result, geopolitical disruptions in these regions can directly impact domestic energy availability and prices.

West Asia Conflict and Global Energy Supply Risks

West Asia is one of the most important energy-producing regions in the world. Many major oil and gas exporters are located in this region, and global energy markets are highly sensitive to instability there.

Strategic Importance of the Strait of Hormuz

The **Strait of Hormuz** is one of the world's most important maritime chokepoints. Approximately **one-third of global seaborne oil trade** passes through this narrow waterway every day. Any military escalation or blockade in this region could significantly disrupt global energy supply.

Impact on Oil and Gas Prices

Geopolitical tensions often cause **sharp spikes in global oil prices**, even if actual supply disruptions do not occur. This is because energy markets respond to perceived risks.

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For a large importer like India, higher oil prices can increase the **current account deficit, inflation, and fiscal pressure**.

Supply Chain Vulnerabilities

Conflicts can disrupt tanker routes, insurance costs, and shipping schedules. If energy shipments are delayed, countries dependent on imports may experience temporary shortages or price increases.

LPG Supply Issues in India

In recent months, several regions in India have reported **temporary shortages or delays in LPG cylinder delivery**.

Causes of the LPG Supply Issue

1. **Global Supply Disruptions**
   Geopolitical tensions have affected shipping routes and energy supply chains.
2. **Rising Domestic Demand**
   The rapid expansion of LPG access through government schemes has increased consumption significantly.
3. **Allocation Priorities**
   During supply constraints, the government often prioritizes household LPG over commercial usage, which affects sectors such as restaurants, hotels, and small food businesses.
4. **Logistical Bottlenecks**
   Transportation delays, tanker shortages, and port congestion can slow distribution.

Impact on the Economy

- Restaurants and hotels face higher operational costs.
- Consumers experience delays in cylinder deliveries.
- Some households temporarily shift to alternative cooking methods such as electric induction stoves.

India's Green Energy Strategy

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Recognizing the vulnerabilities associated with fossil fuel imports, India has launched an ambitious renewable energy expansion strategy.

Solar Energy Expansion

India has become one of the world's fastest-growing solar power markets. Large solar parks across states like Rajasthan and Gujarat are contributing to electricity generation.

India is also a founding member of the **International Solar Alliance**, which promotes global cooperation in solar energy deployment.

Wind Energy Development

India has significant wind energy potential, especially in coastal regions such as Tamil Nadu and Gujarat. Offshore wind projects are also being explored.

National Green Hydrogen Mission

India launched the **National Green Hydrogen Mission** to develop hydrogen produced from renewable energy sources.

Green hydrogen has the potential to replace fossil fuels in industries such as steel, fertilizer, and heavy transport.

Renewable Energy Targets

India has committed to achieving **500 gigawatts (GW) of non-fossil fuel electricity capacity by 2030**, making it one of the most ambitious clean energy targets in the world.

Importance of Energy Security for India

Energy security refers to the **availability, affordability, and sustainability of energy supplies**.

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For a developing country like India, energy security is crucial for maintaining economic growth and social stability.

Key Dimensions of Energy Security

1. **Availability** - Ensuring reliable access to energy resources.
2. **Affordability** - Protecting consumers from sudden price spikes.
3. **Sustainability** - Reducing environmental impact and carbon emissions.
4. **Resilience** - Building systems that can withstand geopolitical shocks.

Policy Measures and the Way Forward

Diversifying Energy Imports

India must expand energy partnerships beyond West Asia to include regions such as Africa, Russia, and North America.

Expanding Strategic Energy Reserves

India has been developing **strategic petroleum reserves** to store crude oil that can be used during emergencies or supply disruptions.

Accelerating Renewable Energy Investments

Scaling up solar, wind, and green hydrogen production will reduce long-term dependence on fossil fuel imports.

Promoting Electric Cooking and Clean Energy

Encouraging electric cooking technologies, biofuels, and improved energy efficiency can reduce LPG consumption.

Strengthening Energy Infrastructure

Investment in pipelines, storage facilities, LNG terminals, and grid modernization will make the energy system more resilient.

Conclusion

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The recent LPG supply concerns and geopolitical tensions in West Asia highlight the fragility of global energy markets. For India, which depends heavily on imported fossil fuels, such crises underscore the urgent need to accelerate the transition toward renewable energy.

India's growing investments in solar power, wind energy, and green hydrogen represent a strategic shift toward a **secure, sustainable, and self-reliant energy future**. By strengthening energy infrastructure, diversifying import sources, and expanding clean energy technologies, India can reduce its vulnerability to global shocks while supporting long-term economic growth and environmental sustainability.

UPSC CSE & State PCS Relevance

Prelims

- Energy security → Strait of Hormuz, SPR, import dependence
- Schemes → National Green Hydrogen Mission, PM Surya Ghar
- Targets → 500 GW non-fossil by 2030

GS-2

- India's foreign policy in energy diplomacy
- Federalism in energy distribution

GS-3

- Energy security & renewable energy
- Economic impact of geopolitical shocks
- Sustainable development & climate goals

Essay / Interview

- "Geopolitical Disruptions as Catalysts for India's Energy Transition"
- "Balancing Energy Security with Net-Zero Ambitions"

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MCQs

1. The Strait of Hormuz is critical for global energy trade because it handles approximately what percentage of seaborne oil?

(a) 10%

(b) 20%

(c) 30%

(d) 40%

Answer: (b)

2. India's current Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) capacity provides cover for approximately how many days of consumption?

(a) 5-10 days

(b) 20-30 days

(c) 50-60 days

(d) 90+ days

Answer: (a)

3. Which of the following is India's flagship mission for promoting green hydrogen?

(a) National Solar Mission

(b) National Green Hydrogen Mission

(c) FAME-III

(d) SATAT

Answer: (b)

4. India's non-fossil fuel electricity capacity target by 2030 is:

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(a) 300 GW

(b) 400 GW

(c) 500 GW

(d) 600 GW

Answer: (c)

Mains Questions

1. "Geopolitical tensions in West Asia repeatedly expose India's energy vulnerabilities." Discuss the current crisis and suggest long-term measures to build energy resilience. (15 marks / 250 words)
2. Analyse the role of the National Green Hydrogen Mission in reducing India's dependence on imported fossil fuels. (10 marks / 150 words)
3. "Diversification of energy sources and routes is as important as domestic production for India's energy security." Critically examine in light of recent West Asia disruptions. (15 marks / 250 words)
4. Essay (250 marks) "From Crisis to Opportunity: How West Asia Conflicts Are Accelerating India's Green Energy Transition"

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