



KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY
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Pipelines as Alternatives to Strait of Hormuz Gain Attention Amid Middle East Tensions

Published On: 15-04-2026



Why Strait of Hormuz is Important:

The Strait of Hormuz is one of the world's most critical oil transit chokepoints, through which nearly 20% of global oil supply passes. Recent geopolitical tensions in the Middle East, including threats of blockade, have highlighted the vulnerability of global energy supply chains.

Why Alternatives are Being Discussed:

With rising conflict risks, countries are exploring alternative routes (especially pipelines) to bypass the Strait and ensure uninterrupted oil exports. However, experts note that these alternatives have limited capacity and cannot fully replace the Strait.

Key Pipelines that Can Bypass the Strait:

Saudi Arabia's East-West Pipeline (Petroline)

Saudi Arabia operates a major pipeline connecting its oil fields in the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea port of Yanbu, allowing exports without passing through Hormuz. This pipeline has been heavily utilized during crises to maintain oil flow.

UAE's Habshan-Fujairah Pipeline:

The UAE has developed a pipeline from Habshan oil fields to Fujairah port (Gulf of Oman), which bypasses the Strait. It enables direct access to international markets without entering the chokepoint.

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Iran's Goreh–Jask Pipeline:

Iran has also built the Goreh–Jask pipeline leading to the Gulf of Oman, reducing dependence on Hormuz. This route allows Iran to export oil even if the Strait is disrupted.

Limitations of These Pipelines:

Combined capacity is much lower than Hormuz traffic

Vulnerable to attacks during conflicts

Require significant infrastructure and maintenance

Cannot handle full global oil demand

Even with these pipelines, a prolonged closure of Hormuz would still cause major global energy disruption.

Strait of Hormuz connects:

Persian Gulf ? Gulf of Oman ? Arabian Sea

Major exporters using this route:

Saudi Arabia, UAE, Iraq, Iran, Kuwait

Around 20 million barrels/day oil passes through it

Alternative pipeline capacity: ~3.5–5.5 million barrels/day