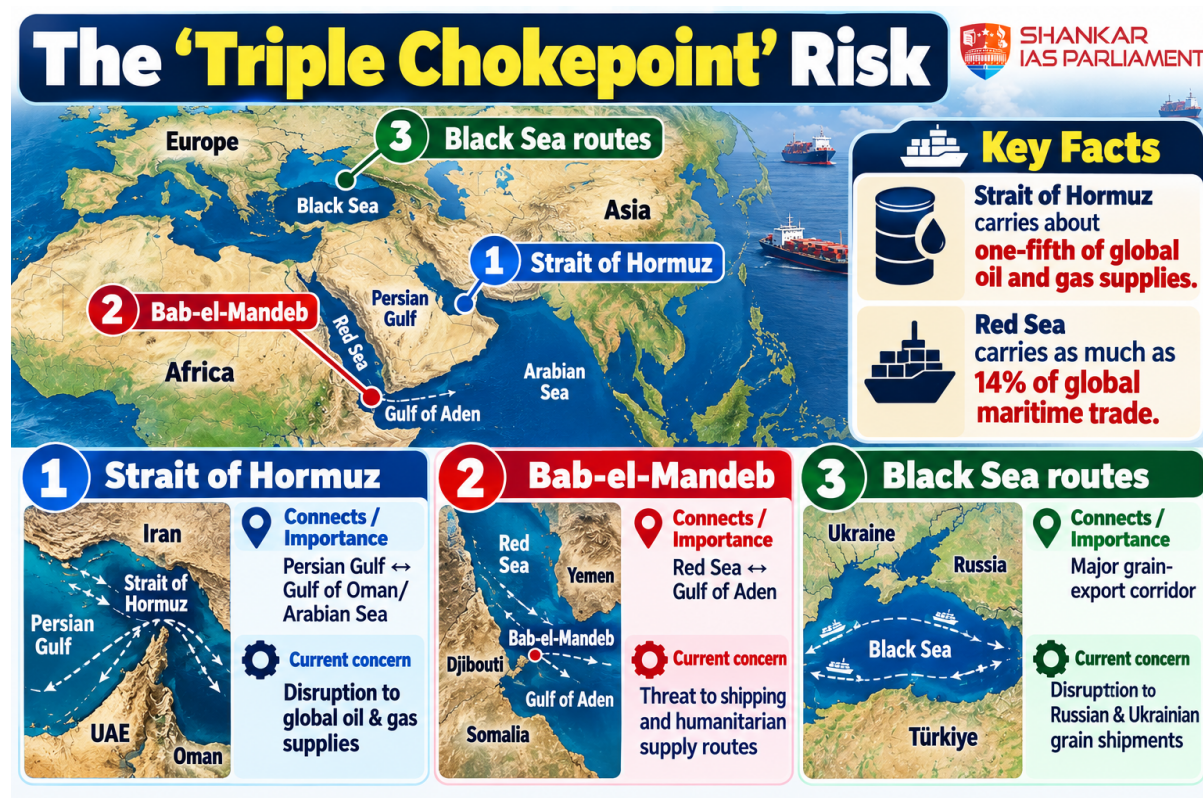


Maritime Chokepoints - Global Food & Fuel Security Risks

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | International Relations

Why in News?

Simultaneous disruptions in the **Strait of Hormuz**, **Black Sea**, and **Bab-el-Mandeb/Red Sea** threaten global oil, grain, and fertilizer flows, increasing risks to food and fuel security.



Strait of Hormuz

- **Location** - Between Iran and Oman.
- **Connects** - Persian Gulf with Gulf of Oman and Arabian Sea.
- **Importance** - Major global route for oil and gas transportation.
- **Disruption impact**
 - Raises crude oil and fuel prices.
 - Increases shipping and insurance costs.
 - Can contribute to inflation.

Bab-el-Mandeb & Red Sea

- **Location** - Connects the **Red Sea with the Gulf of Aden**.
- **Strategic importance** - Important maritime route between Europe/Mediterranean and Asia through the **Suez Canal-Red Sea corridor**.

- **Security concerns** - Risks around Yemen and **Perim Island**.
- **If disrupted:**

- Ships may reroute around the **Cape of Good Hope**.
- Adds around **25-30 days** to voyages.
- Increases fuel, insurance and freight costs.
- Delays delivery of food and other commodities.

Black Sea

- **Importance** - Major global corridor for **wheat and other grains**.
- **Russia + Ukraine**
 - Accounted for **27.3% of global wheat exports** in 2025-26.
 - Russia - **48 million tonnes**.
 - Ukraine - **14.1 million tonnes**.
- **Disruption impact**
 - Reduces grain export flows.
 - Puts pressure on global food prices.
 - Particularly affects import-dependent countries.
 - Creates challenges for humanitarian food programmes.

Alternative Trade Routes

- **EU - Solidarity Lanes**
 - Created to facilitate movement of Ukrainian goods through alternative routes.
 - Nearly **230 million tonnes** of Ukrainian goods moved since May 2022.
 - Included around **94 million tonnes** of grain, oilseeds and related products.
 - However, they cannot fully match the scale of Black Sea ports.
- **Russia - Baltic & Arctic Routes**
 - Russia is using alternative terminals in the **Baltic and Arctic regions**.
 - **Ust Luga** - Capacity of around **37 million tonnes**.
 - **Murmansk** - Capacity of up to **24 million tonnes**.
 - Higher transportation costs and limited capacity restrict their ability to completely replace Black Sea routes.

***Ust Luga and Murmansk** are two of Russia's most critical strategic maritime and energy export hubs located in the Baltic and Arctic regions, respectively.*

Diversification of Grain Sources - Importing countries are actively pursuing alternative suppliers.

- **Examples**
 - **Argentina** - Increased corn exports
 - **Australia** - Alternative wheat supplier
 - **France** - Wheat shipments to Sudan

- **Bangladesh** - Seeking supplies from Romania and Argentina
- **Libya** - Using French port of Rouen
- Argentina's corn exports were projected to reach **10 million tonnes in August and September 2026**, compared to the typical 3 million tonnes for this period.

Reference

[Down to Earth | Maritime Chokepoints](#)

