

India's Strategic Response: Keeping Kitchens Running Amid Crisis

A coordinated effort ensured energy security during the Hormuz blockade.

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India faced a significant challenge during the Hormuz crisis, which led to a four-month blockade that threatened domestic kitchens. The government's strategic response focused on energy security, ensuring that households had access to liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) despite the disruptions. To address the crisis, the Indian government swiftly enacted emergency measures that directed refineries to increase LPG production by utilizing propane and butane. This initiative raised daily indigenous LPG production from 35 metric tonnes (TMT) to 54 TMT, ensuring a steady supply for households. Central to this response was a concerted effort to supply public sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) such as Indian Oil, Bharat Petroleum, and Hindustan Petroleum, guaranteeing that LPG reached consumers without significant delays. In addition to boosting

included engaging with countries like the United States, Norway, Canada, Algeria, and Russia, reducing reliance on Gulf nations for LPG supplies. Handling such a significant crisis required collaboration across various sectors, including the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, OMCs, refineries, state governments, and civil supply departments. Unlike crude oil, India does not have substantial strategic reserves for LPG, making careful management of existing stocks crucial. The government instructed OMCs to develop plans to maintain LPG reserves for a minimum of 30 days, emphasizing long-term strategic planning and close monitoring of inventory levels to prevent shortages, especially in remote areas. Consumer panic posed a major risk during the crisis, as buyers began ordering cylinders more frequently than usual, leading to potential artificial shortages. To mitigate this, the government implemented strict booking in-

black market activities. Continuously communication about supply stability was essential in restoring public confidence. These measures, combined with strict booking intervals, helped alleviate fears of shortages and ensured a steady supply of LPG to households. One of the most challenging decisions involved rationing commercial LPG, capping its supply at 20% of pre-crisis levels. This was crucial to prioritize household cooking needs over commercial demands, which operate in a de-regulated market susceptible to speculative practices. By limiting commercial access, India effectively addressed the risk of subsidized domestic cylinders being diverted for commercial use, ensuring that households remained the priority during the crisis. The introduction of a mandatory delivery authentication code (DAC) served as a critical tool in maintaining order during the crisis. The DAC, along with digital booking methods such as IVRS and

preventing misallocation. Compliance rates for DAC delivery soared to between 95% and 98.5%, reinforcing public trust that domestic supplies were secure and that the government was effectively managing the crisis. As the situation stabilized, the government took a cautious approach to restoring commercial LPG supplies, avoiding a sudden influx that could lead to renewed panic and logistical challenges. This phased restoration allowed OMCs to better understand their customer base. Reflecting on the global ramifications of the 2026 Middle East crisis, India's strategic response stands out. While other nations faced severe fuel shortages and skyrocketing prices, India ensured minimal impact on household consumers through a commitment to domestic supply and effective demand management. The resilience of the Indian economy is evident as the government successfully maximized local production, diversified import channels, and staved off

inconvenience is feasible, but securing household fuel is paramount. The Hormuz crisis, which erupted in early 2026, was a geopolitical conflict that significantly impacted global energy markets. The Strait of Hormuz, a vital waterway for oil and gas shipments, became a focal point of tension, leading to fears of supply disruptions. As a result, countries heavily reliant on energy imports faced the daunting task of securing their energy needs amid rising prices

KEY POINTS

- India increased LPG production from 35 TMT to 54 TMT to ensure household supply.
- The government diversified import sources, engaging with countries like the US and Russia.
- Strict booking intervals were implemented to prevent hoarding and panic buying.
- A mandatory delivery authentication code was introduced to ensure



As the crisis stabilised, commercial LPG was not reinstated overnight. A sudden release would have caused an immediate second demand shock and fresh backlogs in domestic

largest consumers of LPG in the world, was particularly vulnerable to these disruptions, given its limited domestic production capacity and heavy dependence on imports from the Gulf region.

the context of this crisis, India's energy landscape is characterized by a growing demand for LPG, driven by urbanization and a shift towards cleaner cooking fuels. The government's push for

Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, aimed at providing LPG connections to millions of households, further intensified the need for a stable supply. This initiative not only aimed to improve health

OPINION

How India managed to avoid the worst of the Hormuz energy shock: a crisis that never came.

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India's Smooth Sailing Through the Hormuz Energy Crisis Every so often, a crisis emerges that not only challenges resilience but also reshapes it entirely. The ongoing turmoil in the Strait of Hormuz has served as a critical examination of global energy security in recent years. This vital waterway is responsible for transporting roughly 25% of the world's seaborne crude oil and petroleum products, making its stability essential. As tensions mounted, many feared a fuel crisis that could ripple through economies worldwide. However, India managed to navigate this turbulent period with remarkable agility. By diversifying its energy sources and forging strategic agreements, the country avoided the worst impacts of the anticipated crisis. India's proactive measures, including increasing imports from other regions and investing in alternative energy, played a crucial role in maintaining its fuel supply. As a result, the nation emerged from this period with its energy security largely intact, defying the doom-laden predictions that had many on

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Why India's higher education crisis won't be solved by foreign universities

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The Limits of Foreign Universities in India's Higher Education Landscape While the integration of foreign universities into India's education system has been touted as a potential solution to elevate local institutions' global rankings, the reality is more complicated. Concerns have emerged regarding unapproved collaborations between foreign higher educational institutions (HEIs) and Indian counterparts, including franchise deals with ed-tech companies to deliver online degrees. These arrangements, deemed illegal under recent UGC Regulations, prompted the commission to issue a firm directive in December 2023: "No Foreign Higher Educational Institution shall offer any programme in India without the prior approval of the Commission." The UGC's stance reflects a legitimate apprehension — foreign universities should not exploit the Indian market for profit, especially at the expense of students seeking quality education. Many Indian students invest significant resources, from hefty loans to selling fam-

Thus, the prospect of foreign universities establishing a presence in India could alleviate some of these financial pressures, but its success hinges on regulatory oversight and maintaining educational standards. Moreover, the influx of foreign institutions may exacerbate existing challenges within Indian academia. As these universities establish permanent campuses and hire local talent, they risk enticing away highly skilled faculty from Indian institutions, contributing to a concerning trend of 'faculty brain drain.' This, combined with discrepancies in pay structures and retirement regulations, could create an imbalance playing field. The UGC might need to reconsider policies, such as the retirement age for faculty, to retain experienced educators. The regulatory environment for higher education in India is complex, often requiring institutions to navigate a maze of guidelines that can impede their operations. Despite welcoming foreign entities, the government must ensure that local institutions are not left disadvantaged. Initiat-

be addressed. Ultimately, the success of foreign universities in India relies on a balanced approach that supports both local and international academic frameworks. The Limits of Foreign Universities in India's Higher Education Landscape While the integration of foreign universities into India's education system has been touted as a potential solution to elevate local institutions' global rankings, the reality is more complicated. Concerns have emerged regarding unapproved collaborations between foreign higher educational institutions (HEIs) and Indian counterparts, including franchise deals with ed-tech companies to deliver online degrees. These arrangements, deemed illegal under recent UGC Regulations, prompted the commission to issue a firm directive in December 2023: "No Foreign Higher Educational Institution shall offer any programme in India without the prior approval of the Commission." The UGC's stance reflects a legitimate apprehension — foreign universities should not exploit the Indian market for

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Punjab's stubble burning crisis eased by Gurudwaras, despite bans' failure

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Punjab didn't end stubble burning with bans. Gurudwaras played a role too Punjab didn't end stubble burning with bans. Gurudwaras played a role too In a village in Punjab, Jaswinder Kaur attended a camp unlike any she had been invited to earlier. Held within the premises of a Gurudwara, the session focused on crop residue management, water conservation and soil health. She listened carefully, asked questions, and returned home with new ideas. Over the following weeks, she shared what she had learned with the men in her household, neighbours and fellow villagers. "When women have access to the right information," she later reflected, "We don't just grow crops. We grow communities." Kaur does not own any land. In Punjab, women account for less than two per cent of landholders, despite contributing substantially to agricultural labour. Yet, she was an agent of change within a deeply patriarchal society. Her story points to a question that development practitioners, policymakers and behaviour-change experts have

and how does it take root? This is where the lessons from The Nature Conservancy's PRANA (Promoting Regenerative and No-Burn Agriculture) programme in Punjab prove useful. When PRANA came to Punjab in 2021 to address the issues of stubble burning, it confronted an environmental policy problem that had been misread for a long time. Farmers were not burning because they were uninformed. They were burning because, in the narrow window between paddy harvest and wheat sowing, burning was fast, cheap, and familiar. Apart from these operational pressures, there was a deeper misalignment in how the problem had always been framed. Crop residue burning is typically presented as an air pollution crisis. That framing, while accurate, does not resonate with a farmer whose immediate concerns are yield, cost, and soil. However, paddy residue contains nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, sulphur, and carbon. When incorporated back into the soil rather than being burnt, it enriches fertility and reduces dependence on chemical

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Punjab's stubble burning decline is linked to Gurudwaras, not just bans

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policymakers and behaviour-change experts have grappled with for decades: who carries change into a community, and how does it take root? This is where the lessons from The Nature Conservancy's PRANA (Promoting Regenerative and No-Burn Agriculture) programme in Punjab prove useful. When PRANA came to Punjab in 2021 to address the issues of stubble burning, it confronted an environmental policy problem that had been misread for a long time. Farmers were not burning because they were uninformed. They were burning because, in the narrow window between paddy harvest and wheat sowing, burning was fast, cheap, and familiar. Apart from these operational pressures, there was a deeper misalignment in how the problem had always been framed. Crop residue burning is typically presented as an air pollution crisis. That framing, while accurate, does not resonate with a farmer whose

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pursue degrees abroad, yet often return to a saturated job market that leaves them underemployed. Thus, the prospect of foreign universities establishing a presence in India could alleviate some of these financial pressures, but its success hinges on regulatory oversight and maintaining educational standards. Moreover, the influx of foreign institutions may exacerbate existing challenges within Indian academia. As these universities establish permanent campuses and hire local talent, they risk enticing away highly skilled faculty from Indian institutions, contributing to a concerning trend of 'faculty brain drain.' This, combined with discrepancies in pay structures and retirement regulations, could create an imbalance playing field. The UGC might need to reconsider policies, such as the retirement age for faculty, to retain experienced educators. The regulatory environment for higher education in India is complex, often requiring institutions to

entities, the government must ensure that local institutions are not left disadvantaged. Initiatives like the Gift City in Gujarat show promise, but spatial limitations and urbanization concerns need to be addressed. Ultimately, the success of foreign universities in India relies on a balanced approach that supports both local and international academic frameworks. The Limits of Foreign Universities in India's Higher Education Landscape While the integration of foreign universities into India's education system has been touted as a potential solution to elevate local institutions' global rankings, the reality is more complicated. Concerns have emerged regarding unapproved collaborations between foreign higher educational institutions (HEIs) and Indian counterparts, including franchise deals with ed-tech companies to deliver online degrees. These arrangements, deemed illegal under recent UGC Regulations, prompted the commission to issue a

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The fuel crisis that never happened: How India navigated the Hormuz energy shock successfully.

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