

# Maritime choke points of Indian Ocean

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## What is Maritime Choke Point ?

- A chokepoint refers to a point of natural congestion along two wider and important navigable passages.
- Maritime choke points are naturally narrow channels of shipping having high traffic because of their strategic locations.
- Maritime chokepoints, or oil chokepoints, are congestive pathways in some of the world's famous shipping routes.
- There are many such choke points around the world, however, a few of them are extremely famous for ships and thus face high international security conflicts and cross-border terrorism threats.
- As maritime choke points are located at indispensable marine trade routes, in case of global security problems, avoiding these choke points has often been suggested as a workable option.

## Indian Ocean Choke Points

- Indian Ocean has some of the world's most important choke points, notably the Straits of Hormuz, Malacca, and the Bab-el Mandeb.
- These choke points are strategically important for global trade and energy flow, the security of them become strategically important.
- Indian Ocean has always been vulnerable to criminals and anti-national activities. The Indian Ocean is an area of conflict.
- According to a recent analysis of global conflicts by the Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research, altogether 42% of world conflicts can be

associated with Indian Ocean countries.



### Importance of Indian Ocean Region (IOR)

- Around 40% of the world's oil and gas reserves, and controls a large quantum of the global trade.
- The Indian Ocean contains 60 percent of uranium, 40 percent of gold, and 98 percent of the world's supply of diamonds.
- The region has vast marine food potential.
- The mineral resources.
- Critical for global trade and commerce, as it links the West to the East.

### Challenges in Indian Ocean Region (IOR)

- High risk for piracy and armed robbery against ships, particularly in the Gulf of Aden, along the east coast of Africa and the Strait of Malacca.
- Aggressive soft power diplomacy (through infrastructure projects, soft loans and its Belt and Road Initiative), influence countries in the Indian Ocean region.
- China String of Pearls strategy to surround India.
- Maritime boundary, border issues between the countries

surrounding the ocean.

- Human trafficking, maritime terrorism and unscientific fishing.

### **Indian Ocean Region Importance for India**

- The polymetallic nodules in the deep sea-beds are a rich source of metals containing manganese, nickel, cobalt, copper and uranium.
- The Indian peninsula is surrounded by the Indian Ocean in its three sides, a reality that has strategic implications.
- India imports 70 % of its oil.

### **Seven famous maritime chokepoints around the world are:**

1. The Malacca strait in the Indian Ocean
2. The Gulf of Hormuz in the Middle-east
3. The Suez Canal linking the Mediterranean and the Red Sea
4. The Panama Canal linking the Atlantic with the Pacific Ocean
5. The Strait of Bosphorus (Turkish Strait) linking the Mediterranean Sea to the Black Sea
6. The three Danish Straits linking the Baltic Sea with the North Sea
7. The Strait of Bab el-Mandeb forming a gateway for vessels to pass through the Suez Canal, through the east coast of Africa

