

West Asia conflict: Trump's stern warning to Iran, discussions on opening Strait of Hormuz and Basmati exporters seek support from government

US President, Donald Trump in a speech on April 1 said that the US had achieved its goals in Iran and the West Asia conflict would end soon. Significantly, senior officials in the US military – including the US Army Chief of staff -- were fired a day later, on April 2, by US Defence Secretary.



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Updated : Apr 07, 2026



Removal of senior US military officials in the Trump Administration

US President, Donald Trump in a speech on April 1 said that the US had achieved its goals in Iran and the West Asia conflict would end soon. Significantly, senior officials in the US military – including the US Army Chief of staff -- were fired a day later, on April 2, by US Defence Secretary Peter Hegseth. The officials fired by the Trump administration are: US Army Chief, Randy A. George and the chief of chaplains, Major General William Green Jr., and the commander of Army Transformation and Training Command, General David Hodne.

Trump's warning to Iran

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian penned a letter to the American people, which he shared on April 1, 2026. Said the Iranian President: 'Portraying Iran as a threat is neither consistent with historical reality nor with present-day observable facts.'

Iran downed a US warplane -- F-15E Strike Eagle - on April 3. While the pilot of the plane was rescued earlier, the fireman who was missing was rescued on April 5. US President in a post on Truth Social said:

'At my direction, the US Military sent dozens of aircraft, armed with the most lethal weapons in the World, to retrieve him. He sustained injuries, but he will be just fine.'

In an expletive laden post on Truth Social, on April 5, Trump warned Iran saying: 'Tuesday will be Power Plant Day, and Bridge Day, all wrapped up in one, in Iran. There will be nothing like it!!..'

Japanese, French and Omani vessels cross the Strait of Hormuz

On April 3, the US President had said that with a 'little more time' the US could open the Strait of Hormuz. Significantly, Omani, Japanese and French vessels crossed the Strait of Hormuz on Thursday, April 2. French President, Emmanuel Macron while referring to Trump's call for opening the Strait of Hormuz through a military operation said that this was 'unrealistic'. Differences between the US and several allies – especially NATO member states – have only increased in recent weeks. Spain and Italy have closed their airspace for US aircraft involved in the West Asia conflict.

Foreign Secretary participates in online discussion on Strait of Hormuz

Foreign Secretary, Vikram Misri participated in a virtual discussion organised by the UK on the West Asia crisis and the crisis pertaining to the Strait of Hormuz. According to a statement released by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Misri said that dialogue was essential for de-escalation. The Foreign Secretary, according to the statement also made the point that:

'... the impact of the crisis on India's energy security and the fact that India remains the only country to have lost mariners in attacks on merchant shipping in the Gulf,'

The Ministry of External Affairs also reiterated its stance in favour of 'safe and free navigation' via the Strait of Hormuz

According to estimates over 2000 commercial vessels – of which over 300 are oil and gas tankers – are still stranded in the Straits. Green Asha – an India flagged LPG tanker – surpassed the Strait of Hormuz on April 5.

India has purchased oil from Iran after a gap of 7 years – New Delhi had stopped purchased of Iranian oil due to sanctions. The Ministry of petroleum in a post on X said that Indian refiners have ‘secured their crude oil requirements’ from Iran.

India’s Basmati Sector impacted by the West Asian conflict

One of the sectors severely impacted by the current West Asia crisis is the Basmati Sector. India is the largest supplier of rice – basmati and non-basmati (it accounts for 40% of global rice exports). Nearly half of India’s Basmati exports are directed towards Middle Eastern countries – Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq and UAE. Saudi Arabia by itself accounted for over 16% of India’s Basmati imports.

India exports 6 million tonnes of basmati annually – estimated at Rs. 50,000 crore. Since Middle East countries account for a significant percentage of India’s rice exports, the West Asian conflict which has resulted in major disruptions in the Straits of Hormuz has impacted India’s rice exports. Many basmati consignments have been stranded due to the West Asia conflict – according to several estimates 400,000 tonnes of basmati rice are stuck in transit.

Punjab and Haryana jointly contributed 75-80% of India’s total basmati exports. Punjab Rice Millers Exporters Association in a letter to the Union Commerce Minister, Piyush Goyal called for revival of a ‘barter arrangement’ with Iran. Under this arrangement, India can import Iranian oil and export rice shipments through payment in Rupees. The association also sought financial handholding and assistance from the centre.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the growing differences between the US and NATO member states are important and reiterate the growing ruptures in the US-Trans-Atlantic alliance. India’s purchase of oil from Iran, after a period of 7 years is important. While more Indian vessels passing the Strait of Hormuz is a welcome development, the recommendation of rice exporters for exploring ‘barter trade’ with Iran is important. The talks between US and Iran, in recent weeks, have raised hopes of an end to the conflict, it remains to be seen if they finally bear fruit.

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