

West Asia Conflict: Uncertainty despite a temporary ceasefire and India's pro-active outreach to GCC

The Iranian delegation consisted of 27 people apart from Ghalibaf and Araghchi consisted of negotiators from Iran's foreign ministry, national security apparatus, members of parliament



Tridivesh Singh Maini

Updated : Apr 14, 2026



On April 7 in a post on truth social, US President Donald Trump said that the US had agreed to ‘..suspend the bombing and attack of Iran for a period of two weeks.’

This announcement came as a big relief to the global community. Israel's attacks on Lebanon continued however on March 8. US said that Lebanon was not part of the ceasefire.

US-Iran talks

Talks were held between the US and Iran on April 11 in Islamabad (Pakistan). While the US delegation consisted of US Vice President JD Vance, senior envoy Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner the Iranian delegation was led by the country's parliament speaker Bagher Ghalibaf and Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi in Islamabad. The Iranian delegation consisted of 27 people apart from Ghalibaf and Araghchi consisted of negotiators from Iran's foreign ministry, national security apparatus, members of parliament

These negotiations were the highest face to face negotiations between Iran and the US since 1979. US Vice President JD Vance announced that the US delegation was leaving Pakistan without reaching a deal. While speaking to journalists he said:

'They have chosen not to accept our terms,' US sought a clear commitment from Iran that it would not build nuclear weapons, and this proved to be a sticking point. Iranian state broadcaster IRIB said that talks had failed because US demands were 'unreasonable'.

Donald Trump said that he did not care if the talks were not successful. The US President also said that the US would go ahead with a naval blockade, from April 13 onwards, of all traffic entering and leaving Iranian ports in the Strait of Hormuz. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) on its part has said that while military vessels approaching the Strait will be dealt with 'severely', civilian shipping is permitted. After Trump's announcement oil prices once again surpassed \$100 per barrel.

On April 12, the Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian who has been in favour of putting an end to the conflict reiterated the point that Iran was open to a fair deal. Iran's Foreign Minister in a post on X said that the US and Iran were close to an agreement, but US maximalism and 'shifting goal posts; proved to be a stumbling block.

Russian President, Vladimir Putin spoke to Pezeshkian and said that he was ready to help mediate efforts.

Significantly, Iran's Consul General in Mumbai, Saeid Reza Mosayeb Motlagh highlighted the positive role of Russia, China and India in the West Asia conflict. Said the senior Iranian diplomat:

'India, China, and Russia, by refraining from intervening in the conflict despite risks to their own interests, have demonstrated that they seek peace....Rather, they sought to promote peace and stabilise economic markets.'

While the temporary ceasefire has provided temporary relief, it remains to be seen if this can sustain post April 21. While Trump is giving mixed signals, US allies like UAE, Israel and Saudi Arabia are not in favour of a ceasefire until Iran does not address security concerns – especially related to Iran's missiles and nuclear risks -- of other countries in the region. Apart

from this, several countries want clear guarantees regarding free passage via the Strait of Hormuz.

Bangladesh Foreign Minister visit to India

Bangladesh Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman during his two-day India (April 7-9, 2026) visit met with several senior officials including External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Hardeep Singh Puri.

Several important issues were discussed during the Bangladesh Foreign Minister's meetings. Some of the important matters discussed were:undoing trade restrictions imposed by India during the previous government of Yunus, New Delhi had cancelled transshipment rights for Bangladeshi exporters to third countries via Indian ports and airports (transit to Nepal and Bhutan was excluded from this cancellation).

Khalil Ur Rehman, while thanking India for the supply of diesel to Bangladesh requested an increase in diesel and fertilisers during his meeting with Hardeep Singh Puri. India has been supplying oil to Bangladesh via the India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline, which became operational in 2022. This pipeline delivers 100, 000 tonnes annually. In March 2026, India had supplied 5000 tonnes of diesel under an agreement. The Bangladesh Foreign Minister during his visit also raised the issue of extradition of Bangladesh's deposed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina -- who has been in India since July 2024.

It would be pertinent to point out, that India had also delivered 38,000 metric tonnes of diesel after Sri Lanka was facing shortages in the aftermath of the West Asia crisis. India's reset of ties and pragmatic approach vis-à-vis relations with Bangladesh and Sri Lanka is important. Even countries in the neighbourhood which have strong economic ties with China realise the perils of overdependence upon Beijing.

Key Ministers visit Gulf countries

While S Jaishankar visited the UAE (April 11-12, 2026), Hardeep Singh Puri visited Qatar (April 9-10, 2026). India shares close ties with both countries. The relationship with UAE is multi-dimensional, driven by growing strategic and economic convergence

Qatar accounts for over 40% of India's LNG imports. In the aftermath of the West Asia crisis, India has been importing LNG from other countries

During his visit, Hardeep Singh Puri met with Saad Sherida Al-Kaabi -- Qatar's Minister of State for Energy Affairs and President and CEO of QatarEnergy. Several issues including trade and energy were discussed both sides welcomed the temporary ceasefire.

According to a statement released by the Government of India, Al Qaabi reiterated Qatar's '...commitment to remain a reliable energy supplier and looked forward to continuing and strengthening energy relations and cooperation with India.

S Jaishankar during his UAE visit (April 11-12) met with UAE President Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan and the Crown Prince of Dubai, Hamdan bin Mohammed Al Maktoum

During his meetings with the UAE President and the UAE Deputy PM, the External Affairs Minister discussed several issues – especially the current situation in West Asia. While referring to his meeting with the UAE President, Jaishankar in a post on X said that he had ‘conveyed the warm greetings of PM Modi’ and India’s ‘gratitude for ensuring the well-being of Indian community during the West Asia conflict’.

He began his visit with an interaction with the Indian diaspora in UAE. UAE is home to a large Indian community. Jaishankar’s visit is important since it comes at a time when the geopolitical landscape of GCC region is witnessing significant changes.

Conclusion

In conclusion, there is still no clarity regarding the situation in West Asia. While both Donald Trump and Iran are giving mixed signals regarding putting an end to the conflict, Israel and UAE do not seem to be in any mood to relent. The temporary ceasefire has provided some respite, a renewal of conflict will have severe economic repercussions. It remains to be seen if Russia can play a constructive role as a mediator. Visits of senior ministers to two Gulf countries – UAE and Qatar -- reiterate the importance India attaches to its relationship with the GCC – which is multi-layered. On the other hand, Iran’s appreciation of India’s stance vis-à-vis the conflict is also significant.

(The author is a policy analyst and faculty member at the Jindal School of International Affairs, OP Jindal Global University, Sonapat)

(Disclaimer: The views expressed above are the author's own and do not reflect those of DNA)