

Iran and US giving a chance to diplomacy after two weeks of conflict?

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On July 26, Iran said that it has halted attacks against US allies in the Middle East after Washington had stopped its strikes on the country for two successive nights. US Ambassador to the United Nations Mike Waltz while speaking to Fox News said that US President Donald Trump was giving “some space” to talks with Iran. The US paused attacks against Iran after two successive weeks of strikes.

Yemen's Houthis on July 20 declared a maritime blockade against Saudi Arabia. On July 22, Houthis announced that they had hit two Saudi oil tankers in the Red Sea. Houthis control the Bab-El-Mandeb Strait at the southern entrance to the Red Sea.

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US President Donald Trump while issuing a warning to Iran said, “Please let this TRUTH serve to represent that if they do this again, the U.S. will hold Iran responsible, in that the Houthis are a Surrogate and/or Proxy of Iran, and major military punishment will be inflicted upon Iran and, of

course, the Houthis, themselves, who I am very disappointed with in that they have, until now, acted very professionally and smart”.

Well over 10% of global trade passes through the Red Sea. The Bab-El Mandeb is a vital chokepoint in terms of global oil trade. After the closure of Strait of Hormuz due to tensions in West Asia, this blockade could further impact the global energy market. India is looking at alternative routes such as UAE's Fujairah terminal and Sohar Port (Oman). Apart from this, India is also looking at oil imports from alternative suppliers like Angola and Venezuela.

Oil prices had risen significantly to over \$100 a barrel after the Houthi attacks on tankers.

India's Basmati exports are also likely to get impacted due to the disruptions and uncertainty pertaining to both Bab El-Mandeb and the Strait of Hormuz. Saudi Arabia and Iran account for almost 2 million tonnes of India's Basmati exports. Due to uncertainty regarding the Strait of Hormuz already 0.5 million tonnes of rice export cargo has been stranded at the Kandla and Mundra Ports in Gujarat.

India's invitation to Bangladesh PM as special guest for attending BRICS Summit

India has invited Bangladesh PM Tarique Rahman for the 18th BRICS Summit to be held in Delhi from September 12-13, 2026.

Bangladesh Minister of State for External Affairs Shama Obaed Islam confirmed the same.

PM Modi had invited the Rahman to New Delhi. The latter it is believed does not want to take the risk given former Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina's presence in Delhi (Hasina has been in exile in India since 2024).

India had sent Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla and Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri for attending Rahman's oath ceremony in February 2026.

In April 2026, Bangladesh Foreign Minister Khalil Ur Rahman and the Bangladesh PM's Foreign Policy advisor Humayun Kabir visited India and met with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar. Both sides underscored the need for putting the relationship back on track, after strains had emerged during the tenure of Bangladesh's interim government.

Tarique Rahman's first overseas visit was to China June 22-24, 2026. During the visit, an MoU was signed between both countries via which a Chinese company will develop a Special Economic (SEZ) at the strategically located Mongla Port. In 2015, Bangladesh had signed an MoU with India for development of the SEZ at Mongla Port. During Rahman's China visit, both sides agreed to advance the Teesta River project. This is important for two reasons. First, the project is near the Chicken's neck - Siliguri corridor. Chinese presence near such a strategically important point will be observed with caution in New Delhi.

Similarly, Mongla Port is not very far from the Indian border

While Dhaka has been giving mixed signals vis-à-vis ties with India, the External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar met with Khalil Ur Rahman on the sidelines of the ASEAN Summit.

India has invited Bangladesh in its capacity as chair of Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC). While India has been focusing on BIMSTEC, ever since the suspension of the SAARC process in 2016. At a meet of BIMSTEC NSA's held at New Delhi on July 16, the Defence Adviser to the Prime Minister of Bangladesh Brig. Gen. AKM Shamsul Islam (retired) pitched for the revival of the SAARC process. He said:

“Bangladesh believes that both the regional cooperation processes, with their distinctive strengths, ought to move hand in hand.”

Tarique Rehman during his first press conference as PM had also called for resumption of the SAARC process.

Bangladesh has also applied for membership of BRICS. It has received support from Russia and China. Significantly, Bangladesh became the first non-BRICS member to join the New Development Bank (NDB) formed by the founding members of BRICS – Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

It remains to be seen if the Bangladesh PM attends the BRICS Summit.

Jaishankar meeting with Russian Foreign Minister on sidelines of ASEAN meetings

External Affairs Minister, S Jaishankar met with Russian Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov on the sidelines of the ASEAN Foreign Affairs meeting at Manila.

India highlighted its concerns pertaining to the safety of Indian sea farers in the Black Sea region. On July 19, a Russian attack on a Guinea-Bissau-flagged merchant vessel had killed 10 people including four Indian crew members.

Jaishankar in a post on social media said, “Reiterated our strong concern regarding the safety of Indian seafarers in the region. Discussed various aspects of our partnership, including trade and investment, energy and connectivity, science and technology, and mobility”

Jaishankar had also met with US Secretary of State, Marco Rubio and Chinese Foreign Minister, Wang Yi on the sidelines of the ASEAN meet. During his meeting with Wang Yi, Jaishankar reiterated the importance of the India-China relationship in the context of a “multi polar Asia” and “multipolar world”. While the External Affairs Minister highlighted important steps taken towards improving ties between both countries, he underscored the need for stability along the Line of Actual control (LAC) as well as issues pertaining to fair market access and trade balance as important factors in the bilateral relationship.\

Conclusion

In conclusion, the recent developments in the Red Sea pose significant challenges for global energy markets, as has been discussed earlier. India's invitation to Bangladesh for the BRICS Summit is important and while there has been a downturn in ties between both countries in the past two year and the BNP dispensation has handed over important projects to China, it is important for New Delhi to follow a pragmatic approach and not be reactive. While some important points were highlighted at the recent ASEAN meeting in Manila, S Jaishankar's meeting with the Russian and Chinese Foreign Ministers were important. India needs to be deft in its navigation of a changing geopolitical landscape, while making the most of multilateral platforms.

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

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