

The Minister of External Affairs (Dr Saurab Manyam Jaishankar made a Statement a Minister regarding The Situation in West Asia

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (DR. SUBRAHMANYAM JAISHANKAR): Hon. Chairperson, I rise to apprise this august House of recent developments in West Asia that are a cause of deep concern for all of us. As hon. Members are aware, this round of conflicts started on 28th February, 2026. It has witnessed not only fighting between Israel and United States on one side and Iran on the other side, but also attacks on a number of Gulf States. There have been numerous casualties, including at the leadership level in Iran as well as destruction of infrastructure in the region.

At the very outset, Government had issued a statement on 28th February, expressing its deep concern and urging all sides to exercise restraint, avoid escalation and prioritize the safety of civilians.

We believed and we continue to believe that dialogue and diplomacy should be pursued to de-escalate tensions and address underlying issues. ? (*Interruptions*) It is also imperative that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States in the region be respected.? (*Interruptions*)

Hon. Chairperson, Sir, given the gravity of the situation, the Cabinet Committee of Security (CCS) met on 01st March under the Chairmanship of the hon. Prime Minister. ? (*Interruptions*) It was briefed on the airstrikes in Iran and the subsequent attacks in several Gulf countries. The CCS was concerned over the safety and security of the Indian community in the region. ? (*Interruptions*) It also focused on the implications for regional security and for economic and commercial activities. ? (*Interruptions*) The Committee was apprised of difficulties faced by Indian travellers transiting the region and by students appearing for scheduled examinations in these countries. ? (*Interruptions*) It directed all concerned Ministries and Departments to take appropriate measures to respond to these problems. ? (*Interruptions*) Hon. Prime Minister continues to closely monitor emerging developments and the relevant Ministries are coordinating to ensure effective responses. ? (*Interruptions*)

Hon. Chairperson Sir, the conflict has continued to intensify and the security situation in the region has deteriorated significantly. ? (*Interruptions*) We have noted that, in fact, the

conflict has spread to other nations with mounting destruction and deaths. ? (Interruptions) Normal life and economic activities in the entire region are visibly affected and, in some cases, have come to a halt. We, therefore, reiterated our call on 03rd March for dialogue and diplomacy and spoke up for an early end to the conflict. ? (Interruptions) I am confident, Sir, that the entire House joins me in expressing our sorrow at the loss of lives. ? (Interruptions)

Hon. Chairperson, Sir, while any development that negatively impacts peace and security in the world is deeply troubling, this ongoing conflict is an issue of particular concern for India. ? (Interruptions) We are a neighboring region and understandably, have obvious stakes in West Asia remaining stable and peaceful. ? (Interruptions) There are almost one crore Indian citizens who live and work in the Gulf nations. In Iran too, there are a few thousand Indians who are there for study and employment. ? (Interruptions) The region is key to our energy security and includes many important suppliers of oil and gas. ? (Interruptions)

..... : The Government has been very vocal in its condemnation of the conflict and has been working to ensure the safety of Indian citizens in the region. We have also been working to ensure that the conflict does not escalate further and that there is a peaceful resolution to the conflict. We have also been working to ensure that the conflict does not affect the energy security of India. We have also been working to ensure that the conflict does not affect the economic activities in the region. We have also been working to ensure that the conflict does not affect the lives of the people in the region. ?

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DR. SUBRAHMANYAM JAISHANKAR: Hon. Chairperson, Sir, the Gulf is also a major trade partner, accounting for about USD 200 billion almost annually ? *(Interruptions)*. The House is also aware that in the last decade, there have been significant investments from the region into the Indian economy. ? *(Interruptions)* Therefore, the serious supply chain disruptions and climate of instability that we perceive are indeed serious issues. ? *(Interruptions)* Furthermore, these include attacks on merchant shipping where Indian nationals often constitute a large proportion of the crews. ? *(Interruptions)* We have sadly already lost two Indian mariners and one remains missing in such incidents. ? *(Interruptions)* I know, Sir, that the House joins me in condoling their deaths. ? *(Interruptions)*

Chairman, Sir, reflecting our assessment of the evolving situation, the Indian Embassy in Tehran issued an advisory on 14th February urging Indian nationals including students, pilgrims, businesspersons and tourists to leave Iran by all available means of transport, including commercial flights. ? (Interruptions) They were asked to contact the Indian Embassy for any assistance and provided with 24x7 helplines. ? (Interruptions) This was again reiterated in very strong terms through another advisory on 23rd February. Some heeded these advisories and have left the country; however, many others have disregarded them and remain in Iran. We were also in touch with our fishermen who operate out of Iran. ? (Interruptions) This was the situation until 28th February 2026. ?

(Interruptions)

Hon. Chairman, Sir, once the conflict commenced, the Indian Embassy has facilitated the relocation of several Indian students in Tehran to places outside Tehran. ? (Interruptions) An advisory update with emergency contact helplines was issued on 3rd March, 2026. ? (Interruptions) Similarly, facilitation was also extended to pilgrims who were there in Iran for their internal movement. ? (Interruptions) Indian nationals who were in Iran for business purposes were assisted to cross over to Armenia and to return home. ? (Interruptions) The Indian Embassy in Tehran remains fully operational, I should say, in fact, on the highest alert. ? (Interruptions) They are totally committed to supporting the Indian community in this difficult situation and in assisting Indian nationals who may wish to cross international borders. ? (Interruptions) Where seafarers are concerned, the Directorate General of Shipping, through an order on 2nd March constituted a Quick Response Team for immediate response, coordination and support functions. ? (Interruptions) This will function on a 24x7 basis. ? (Interruptions)

Hon. Chairman, Sir, I would also like to inform you that every Indian Embassy in the region has similarly issued advisories. ? (Interruptions) This is so with Israel, UAE, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Iraq. Many of them did so on the 28th of February, 2026. Israel did it again on the 1st of March. Many of them in the Gulf again did it on 5th March. Saudi Arabia did it on the 8th of March. So, this has been a continuous exercise. ? (Interruptions)

The Ministry of External Affairs has set up a dedicated special control room to monitor the situation and respond to queries from those affected, as well as their families. Our last update was issued on the 7th of March. ? (Interruptions)

Chairman, Sir, I would like to inform the House through you that our diplomats are working hard to assist stranded transit passengers in hubs like Dubai, Doha and Abu Dhabi. ? (Interruptions) They have facilitated international border crossings for Indian nationals, including from UAE to Oman and from Qatar, Kuwait and Bahrain to Saudi Arabia. ? (Interruptions) Wherever there has been a partial opening of air space, we have approved and undertaken commercial flights including non-scheduled flights for the return of Indian passengers. ? (Interruptions)

Our estimate is that about 67,000 of our nationals have done so as a result. ? (Interruptions)

Sir, the Ministry of Civil Aviation has also put out figures for the last three days. On the 7th of March, there were a total of 51

inbound flights operated by Indian carriers. There were 49 flights on the 8th of March, and there are 50 flights planned for the 9th of March. ? (Interruptions)

Chairman Sir, throughout this period, Government has maintained close contact with the relevant countries. Hon. Prime Minister has personally spoken to the President of UAE, the Amir of Qatar, the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, the Crown Prince of Kuwait, the King of Bahrain, the Sultan of Oman, the King of Jordan, and the Prime Minister of Israel. ? (Interruptions) In each case, we received assurances that the well-being of the Indian community will be the priority for the host Government. I have similarly been in close touch with my counterparts in these countries. ? (Interruptions) Insofar as the United States is concerned, we have maintained regular contacts through diplomatic channels. While attempts have been made, contacts with Iran at the leadership level are obviously difficult at this time. I have, however, spoken to Foreign Minister Araghchi on 28th of February and the 5th of March. We will continue these high-level conversations in the coming days. ? (Interruptions)

Sir, the House will also be interested in the issue of an Iranian vessel that is currently docked in Kochi. The Iranian side had requested permission on 28 February for three ships in the region to dock at our ports. This was accorded on 1st of March. ? (Interruptions) IRIS LAVAN actually docked on 4th March in Kochi. The crew is currently in Indian naval facilities. We believe that this was the right thing to do and the Iranian Foreign Minister has expressed his country's thanks for this humane gesture. ? (Interruptions)

Sir, in view of the implications of this conflict for our energy security, I also seek to address that particular concern. Government remains committed to ensuring that fully, taking into account the availability, costs and risks of the energy markets. ? (Interruptions) For us, the interests of the Indian consumer has and will always be the overriding priority. Where required, Indian diplomacy has supported the endeavours of our energy enterprises in this volatile situation.

Hon. Chairman, Sir, let me conclude by highlighting the three guiding factors of our approach. One, India is in favour of peace and urges a return to dialogue and diplomacy. We advocate de-escalation, restraint and ensuring the safety of civilians. Two, the well-being and security of the Indian community in the region is our overriding priority. We will continue to work with the Governments of the region towards that end. And three, our national interest, including energy security and trade flows, will

I am confident that the Government has the full support of this august House in this matter. ? (Interruptions)

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Thank you very much.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: I would like to request one thing to all the Members of Parliament.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Now, you are raising some concerns through your placards. You are raising an issue of energy security.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: You are raising an issue of energy security.

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HON. CHAIRPERSON: K. C Venugopal ji, you have not heard what he has said. The Foreign Minister has already issued a

statement on all these subjects.

? (Interruptions)

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Even if you are not satisfied -- you may not be satisfied -- then, you can raise this issue in the Business Advisory Committee.

? (Interruptions)

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Let there be no discussion, no debate.

? (Interruptions)

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HON. CHAIRPERSON: You are not allowing.

? (Interruptions)

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Now, hon. Parliamentary Affairs Minister.

? (Interruptions)

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12.33 hrs

15.00 hrs

(Shri Jagdambika Pal in the Chair)

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