



English rendering of PM's remarks in the Lok Sabha on the ongoing conflict in West Asia

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Honourable Speaker,

I have come before this esteemed House to speak on the ongoing conflict in West Asia and the challenges it has posed for India. The situation in West Asia is deeply concerning. In the past two to three weeks, Shri Jaishankar ji and Shri Hardeep Puri ji have provided the House with necessary updates on this matter. Now that the crisis has lasted for more than three weeks, its adverse impact on the global economy and on people's lives is evident. The entire world is urging all parties for a swift resolution to this crisis.

Honourable Speaker,

This war has created unexpected challenges for India as well as economic, national security related, and humanitarian. India has extensive trade relations with the countries at war and those affected by it. The region where the war is taking place is also a crucial route for our trade with other parts of the world. Most importantly, a significant portion of our crude oil and gas requirements is met by this region. For another reason too, this region is vital for us-nearly ten million Indians live and work in the Gulf countries. A large number of Indian crew members also serve on commercial ships sailing in these waters. For all these reasons, India's concerns are naturally greater. Therefore, it is essential that from the Parliament of India, a united and unanimous voice goes out to the world regarding this crisis.

Honourable Speaker,

Since the war began, every Indian in the affected countries has been provided necessary assistance. I myself have spoken twice over the phone with the Presidents of most West Asian countries. All of them have assured full safety for Indians. Unfortunately, during this period, some people have lost their lives and some have been injured. In such difficult circumstances, their families are being given all possible support, and the injured are receiving the best possible medical treatment.

Honourable Speaker,

All our missions in the affected countries are continuously engaged in helping Indians. Whether they are workers or tourists, everyone is being given every possible assistance. Our missions are issuing regular advisories. Here in India and in other affected countries, 24/7 control rooms and emergency helplines have been set up. Through these, timely information is being provided to all those affected.

Honourable Speaker,

In times of crisis, the safety of Indians at home and abroad has been our highest priority. Since the war began, more than 375,000 Indians have safely returned to India. From Iran alone, nearly 1,000 Indians have returned safely, including more than 700 young students pursuing medical education. In Gulf countries, thousands of students study in Indian schools. The CBSE has cancelled the scheduled Class 10

and Class 12 examinations in all such schools. To ensure uninterrupted education for these children, CBSE is taking appropriate measures. This shows that the government is sensitive, vigilant, and ready to provide every possible assistance.

Honourable Speaker,

India imports large quantities of crude oil, gas, and fertilizers through the Strait of Hormuz. Since the war began, shipping through the Strait of Hormuz has become highly challenging. Despite this, our government has worked to ensure that the supply of petrol, diesel, and gas is not severely disrupted. Our focus has been to minimize difficulties for ordinary families. We all know that India imports 60% of its LPG requirements. Due to uncertainty in supply, the government has prioritized domestic use of LPG and is also increasing domestic production. Continuous efforts have been made to ensure smooth supply of petrol and diesel across the country.

Honourable Speaker,

In today's circumstances, the steps taken over the past decade for energy security have become even more relevant. Over the last 11 years, India has diversified its energy imports. Earlier, crude oil, LNG, and LPG were imported from 27 countries. Today, India imports energy from 41 countries.

Honourable Speaker,

In the past decade, India has also prioritized crude oil storage for times of crisis. Today, India has a strategic petroleum reserve of more than 5.3 million metric tonnes, and work is underway to expand it to over 6.5 million metric tonnes. The reserves maintained by our oil companies are separate. In the past 11 years, our refining capacity has also increased significantly.

Honourable Speaker,

The government is in constant contact with suppliers from different countries. Efforts are being made to ensure supply of oil and gas from wherever possible. The Government of India is keeping a close watch on shipping routes in the Gulf and surrounding areas. Our aim is to ensure that ships carrying oil, gas, fertilizers, and other essential goods reach India safely. We are in continuous dialogue with all our global partners to keep our maritime corridors secure. As a result of these efforts, several of our ships stuck in the Strait of Hormuz have recently reached India safely.

Honourable Speaker,

At this time of crisis, another preparation of the country is proving very useful. In the past 10–11 years, unprecedented work has been done on ethanol production and blending. A decade ago, India had only about 1.5% ethanol blending capacity. Today, we are close to achieving 20% ethanol blending in petrol. This has reduced oil imports by about 45 million barrels annually. Similarly, railway electrification has brought huge benefits. Without such electrification, about 1.8 billion litres of additional diesel would have been required every year. We have also expanded the metro network. In 2014, India's metro network was less than 250 kilometers; today it has grown to nearly 1,100 kilometers. We have strongly promoted electric mobility. The central government has provided states with 15,000 electric buses. At the scale at which work is being done on alternative fuels today, India's future will be even more secure.

Honourable Speaker,

We know that energy is the backbone of the economy, and West Asia is a major source of meeting global energy needs. Naturally, the world economy is being affected by the current crisis, and continuous efforts are being made to ensure that India faces the least possible adverse impact. The government is working with a clear strategy for short-term, medium-term, and long-term effects. The fundamentals of India's economy are strong, which has also helped the country greatly. We are holding discussions with

stakeholders across every sector, and wherever necessary, support is being provided. The Government of India has also set up an inter-ministerial group, which meets daily to assess difficulties in imports and exports and works continuously on necessary solutions. I am confident that through the combined efforts of the government and industry, we will be able to face these circumstances more effectively.

Honourable Speaker,

A major question is what impact the war will have on agriculture. Our farmers have filled our food grain reserves, so India has sufficient food stocks. Our effort is also to ensure proper sowing for the Kharif season. In recent years, the government has made adequate arrangements for fertilizers to deal with emergencies. In the past too, our government ensured that global crises did not burden farmers. During the COVID period and wars at that time, global supply chains were disrupted. The price of a bag of urea in world markets had reached ₹3000, but Indian farmers were provided the same bag at less than ₹300.

Honourable Speaker,

To protect farmers from such crises, many steps have been taken in recent years. In the past decade, six urea plants have been started in the country, adding more than 7.6 million metric tonnes of annual production capacity. During this period, domestic production of fertilizers like DAP and NPKS has also increased by nearly 5 million metric tonnes. Not only this, fertilizer imports have also been diversified, just like oil and gas. For DAP and NPKS imports too, we have expanded our options.

Honourable Speaker,

The government has also given farmers the option of Made-in-India nano urea. Farmers are being encouraged towards natural farming. Under the PM-KUSUM scheme, more than 2.2 million solar pumps have been provided to farmers, reducing their dependence on diesel. Through this House, I assure the farmers of the country that the government will continue to provide every possible assistance.

Honourable Speaker,

Another major challenge of the war is that summer is beginning in India. With rising temperatures, electricity demand will increase in the coming months. At present, all power plants in the country have adequate coal stocks. India has set a record of producing 1 billion tonnes of coal for the second consecutive year. From power generation to power supply, all our systems are being continuously monitored, and renewable energy has also supported our preparedness. In the past decade, India has taken major steps towards renewable energy. Today, half of our total installed power generation capacity comes from renewable sources. Our total renewable capacity has crossed the historic mark of 250 gigawatts. In the past 11 years, solar power capacity has risen from about 3 gigawatts to 140 gigawatts. Nearly 4 million rooftop solar installations have been set up in recent years, with the PM Surya Ghar Free Electricity Scheme providing significant help. Under the GobarDhan scheme, 200 compressed biogas plants are already operational in the country. All these efforts are proving very useful today. The government has also promoted nuclear energy production through the Amrit Kaal Energy Transition initiatives. Just a few days ago, the Small Hydro Power Development Scheme was approved, which will add 1500 megawatts of new hydro capacity in the next few years.

Honourable Speaker,

As far as diplomacy is concerned, India's role has been clear. From the beginning, we have expressed deep concern over this conflict. I myself have spoken with all relevant leaders in West Asia. I have urged them to reduce tensions and end the conflict. India has opposed attacks on civilians, energy, and transport-related infrastructure. Attacks on commercial ships and obstruction in international waterways like the Strait of Hormuz are unacceptable. Through diplomacy, India is continuously working to ensure safe passage for Indian ships even in this war environment.

Honourable Speaker,

India has always raised its voice for humanity and in favor of peace. I repeat again-dialogue and diplomacy are the only solutions to this problem. All our efforts are aimed at reducing tensions and ending this conflict. Any threat to human life in this war is against the interest of humanity. Therefore, India's effort is to encourage all parties towards a peaceful resolution at the earliest.

Honourable Speaker,

In times of such crises, some elements also try to misuse the situation. Therefore, all law enforcement agencies have been kept on alert. Coastal security, border security, cyber security, and protection of strategic installations are all being strengthened.

Honourable Speaker,

This war has created difficult global conditions that may persist for a long time. Hence, we must remain prepared and united. We faced similar challenges during the COVID crisis with unity. Now again, we must prepare in the same way. With patience, restraint, and calmness, we must face every challenge-that is our identity, that is our strength. At the same time, we must remain vigilant and cautious. Those who try to exploit the situation will attempt to spread falsehoods, but we must not let them succeed. Through this House, I also urge all state governments that during such times, black-marketeers and hoarders become active. Strict monitoring is necessary, and wherever such complaints arise, immediate action must be taken. When every government and every citizen of the country works together, we can challenge any challenge. With this appeal, I conclude my statement.

Thank you very much.

MJPS/VJ/ST

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