

Israel-Iran Conflict

Posted at: 24/06/2025

Israel-Iran Conflict: Escalation and Implications for India

Current Status:

The Israel-Iran conflict has escalated into a full-blown warzone, with both nations now attacking each other's territories and infrastructures directly.

Brief History of Israel-Iran Tensions

- **1953:** US backed a coup in Iran, reinstating Shah Pahlavi to power.
- **1957:** US-Iran nuclear cooperation began with reactor and uranium support.
- **1970:** Iran ratified the **Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)**.
- **1979:** Islamic Revolution toppled the Shah, severing US-Iran ties.
- **1984:** US supported Iraq during its war with Iran.
- **1995:** Russia aided Iran in building a nuclear reactor.
- **2002:** Western intelligence exposed Iran's secret enrichment program.
- **2010:** Cyberattack (Stuxnet virus) damaged Iran's centrifuges — allegedly by US-Israel.
- **2015:** A global deal was signed to limit Iran's nuclear activities.
- **2018:** US exited the deal under Trump administration.
- **2020-2021:** Israel intensified attacks; Iran enriched uranium up to 60%.

- **2023:** Iran supported Hamas's attack on Israel from Gaza.
 - **2024:** Direct attacks began: *Israel's "Operation Rising Lion"* vs. *Iran's "True Promise 3"*.
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Why Israel and Iran Matter to India

- **West Asia's Role:** Provides **54% of India's oil imports** and 40% of remittances.
 - **Israel:** A key **defence partner**, with imports rising from **\$5.6M (2015) to \$128M**.
 - **Iran:** Though trade fell to **\$1.4B in 2024**, Iran remains vital for **energy and connectivity**.
 - **Diaspora:** Around **10,000 Indians in Israel** and **25,000-30,000 in Iran**.
 - **Strategic Routes:** Projects like the **India-Middle East-Europe Corridor (IMEC)** and **International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)** rely on both nations.
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Impact on India

- **Trade Disruption:**
 - India-Israel trade dropped from **\$11B (2022) to \$3.75B (2024)**.
 - Iran trade declined to **\$441M** amid payment delays and risks.
- **Energy Risk:**
 - **60-65% of Indian oil imports** pass through the **Strait of Hormuz**, now under threat.
 - Rising oil/LNG prices could strain the Indian economy.
- **Connectivity Delays:** Conflict affects progress on **IMEC and INSTC**.

- **Spiraling Costs:** Shipping, insurance, and import costs could rise, affecting inflation.
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Geopolitical Challenges for India

- **Balancing Act:** US and G7 back Israel, while the **Global South sympathizes with Iran**.
 - **Pakistan Angle:** Potential US-Pakistan cooperation in Iran may complicate India's stance.
 - **BRICS Dilemma:** With **Iran in BRICS**, India must navigate group positions carefully.
 - **Gulf Relations:** India must also manage ties with other Gulf nations amid rising tensions.
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India's Response So Far

- **Calls for Peace:** India urged restraint and dialogue from both sides.
 - **Diplomatic Outreach:** EAM Jaishankar held discussions with Iranian leaders.
 - **Neutral Stance:** MEA avoided direct criticism of Israel or Iran.
 - **SCO & UN Abstentions:** India dissociated from SCO's anti-Israel statement and abstained from a UN ceasefire vote.
 - **Evacuation Effort:** Launched **Operation SINDU** to bring citizens home safely.
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The Road Ahead for India

- **Diplomatic Role:** Push for de-escalation through **Track II dialogue** involving regional and global players.
- **Energy Diversification:** Reduce dependency on Gulf oil routes.
- **Strategic Navigation:** Balance ties with Israel, Iran, the Gulf, and global blocs like BRICS,

SCO, and Quad.

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