

# Iran opens fully Strait of Hormuz; Trump welcomes move



TEHRAN/WASHINGTON, Apr 17  
(PTI)

**IN A** major breakthrough, Iran on Friday said that the Strait of Hormuz is “completely open” for all commercial vessels, a move welcomed by US President

**US’ blockade of Strait of Hormuz will “remain in full force” until Iran reaches a deal with the US to end war, says Donald Trump**

Donald Trump.

Trump, however, said the naval blockade against Iran will remain in “full force” until Tehran reaches an agreement with the US to end the war.

The announcement of the reopening of the vital waterway by Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi comes a day after President Trump announced a 10-day ceasefire between Lebanon and Israel.

“In line with the ceasefire in Lebanon, the passage for all

*(Contd on page 3)*

## Israel-Lebanon 10-day truce goes into effect

BEIRUT, Apr 17 (AP)

**A 10-DAY** truce began in Lebanon on Friday that could pause fighting between Israel and the Hezbollah militant group and boost attempts to extend ceasefire between Iran, the US and Israel after weeks of devastating war.

However, Israel has not been fighting with Lebanon itself, but rather with the Iranian-backed Hezbollah militants inside the country, who were not formally part of the agreement. Barrages of gunshots rang out across Beirut as residents fired into the air just after midnight to celebrate the beginning of the truce. Displaced families began moving toward southern Lebanon and Beirut’s southern suburbs, despite warnings.

# India, China hold SCO talks

**Both sides discuss implementation of SCO Leaders decisions, organisation's future course**

NEW DELHI, Apr 17 (IANS)

**INDIA** and China held Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Bilateral Consultations in New Delhi, discussing the implementation of the SCO Leaders' decisions and the future course of the organisation.

The two sides agreed to continue and consolidate mutual cooperation and consultations in SCO matters, according to a statement released by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Friday. India's SCO National Coordinator, Ambassador Alok A Dimri and China's National Coordinator, Ambassador Yan Wenbin, led the respective delegations during the meeting held

in New Delhi on April 16-17.

"Both delegations, jointly, called on Secretary (West) Shri Sibi George to review cooperation within the SCO framework, including in the areas of security, trade, connectivity, and people-to-people ties. Both sides agreed to continue mutual consultations in future," the MEA release said.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) was established on June 15, 2001, with its founding members being China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. In 2017, India and Pakistan joined it. In 2023, Iran became a member, followed by Belarus in 2024, bringing the total number of SCO member states to 10.



# India welcomes Israel-Lebanon ceasefire

## Supports every step leading towards peace

NEW DELHI, Apr 17 (IANS)

INDIA on Friday welcomed the ceasefire announced between Israel and Lebanon, expressing support for every step that leads towards peace.

While addressing a weekly media briefing in New Delhi on Friday, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said, "We welcome the ceasefire. We welcome every step that leads towards peace."

MEA's statement comes after the US President Donald Trump on Thursday announced a ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon aimed at bringing a temporary cooling-off along another front linked to the Iran conflict.

Lebanon is not directly engaged in a formal war with Israel, but Hezbollah controls

large parts of southern Lebanon and has carried out attacks on Israel, prompting retaliatory strikes.

Unable to rein in Hezbollah, Lebanon has borne the brunt of Israeli retaliation.

When asked about Israel requesting India to designate Hamas as a terrorist organisation and India's policy about disarming Hamas, Jaiswal responded, "We have a process in place, and those issues are addressed under that process."

**OVER 2300 INDIANS SAFELY BROUGHT BACK FROM IRAN SINCE WEST ASIA CONFLICT BEGAN:** MEA: THE Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Friday that India has safely brought back home 2,361 people since the beginning of the conflict in West Asia.

Addressing a weekly media briefing in New Delhi on Friday,

MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal stated that these 2,361 people include Indian students, fishermen and also three foreigners. "Since the outbreak of

the conflict, we have helped bring 2,361 Indian citizens safely from Iran to India. Of these, 2,060 came via Armenia and 301 via Azerbaijan.

### India rejects Pak attempts to intrude into internal matters in delimitation exercise

NEW DELHI, Apr 17 (IANS)

THE Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Friday firmly dismissed Pakistan's statement about the delimitation process in India.

Islamabad had reacted to reports that India's Delimitation Bill 2026 outlines a legal framework for conducting constituency delimitation in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).

MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal stated, "Internal matters of India are internal matters of India and we reject any attempts to make intrusion in those and make any such remarks."

MEA's statement comes as Lok Sabha is continuing discussion on three bills, aimed at amending the women's reservation law and establishing a delimitation commission.

# Macron, Starmer hold international summit on reopening Hormuz

PARIS, Apr 17 (AP)

THE leaders of France and the UK gathered dozens of countries - but not the United States - on Friday to push forward plans to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, a key oil shipping route choked off by the US-Israeli war on Iran.

The Paris meeting is part of attempts by sidelined nations to ease the impact of a conflict they didn't start and haven't joined, but that has sent the global economy reeling.

After the war started on February 28, Iran effectively shut the narrow strait through which a fifth of the world's oil usually passes.

50 nations and international organisations, including over 30 heads of State and Govt attended the meeting

Macron's office said the summit on Friday afternoon gathered about 50 nations and international organisations, including over 30 heads of State and Government. The list has not been disclosed.

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz and Italian Premier Giorgia

Meloni were attending in person, while others joined by video.

The US is not part of the planning for what has been branded the Strait of Hormuz Maritime Freedom of Navigation Initiative.

In a post on X ahead of Friday's conference, French President Emmanuel Macron said the mission to provide security for shipping through the strait would be "strictly defensive," limited to non-belligerent countries and deployed "when security conditions allow". British PM Keir Starmer, facing political troubles at home, was greeted by Macron in the courtyard of the Elysee presidential palace on Friday afternoon.

# Trump claims nuke deal with Iran to end siege of Hormuz

## US Prez: Will Recover Enriched Uranium At A Leisurely Pace

Chidanand Rajghatta | TNN

**Washington:** US President Donald Trump announced on Friday that Iran has agreed to give up its enriched uranium and reopen the Strait of Hormuz — in return for unspecified rewards and concessions, according to reports.

In a series of social media posts that was neither confirmed nor contested by Iran, Trump said the US “will get all Nuclear ‘Dust,’ created by our great B2 Bombers - No money will exchange hands in any way, shape, or form.” A report in the journal *Axios* had said Washington was considering a \$20 billion cash-for-uranium exchange.

Trump also told Reuters in an interview that the US will enter Iran at a “leisurely pace” to recover its enriched uranium and bring it back to the US.

While the deal-hungry US president appeared to be referring to the enriched uranium that has been entombed by the US-Israeli bombing of Iranian nuclear facilities, there was no mention of other Iranian uranium, much less the centrifuges, domain expertise, and knowledge base that will enable Tehran to resume enrichment any time it wants.

Earlier on Thursday, Trump told reporters in the White House that Iran does not have a nuclear weapon, and “they’ve agreed to that... very powerfully.” Iran has publicly forsworn nuclear weapons on several occasions but has said that as a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) it has the right to a civilian nuclear programme.

Distrust of Tehran’s pledges is at the heart of the US-Israeli



A pro-govt National Army Day demonstration is held in Tehran on Friday

### Iran official: Ships crossing Hormuz need OK from IRGC, unfreezing funds part of deal

**Dubai/London:** All ships can sail through the Strait of Hormuz but this needs to be coordinated with Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, a senior Iranian official said, adding that unfreezing Iranian funds was part of the deal. Foreign minister Abbas Araqchi wrote on X that the strait was open after a ceasefire accord was agreed in Lebanon.

Hundreds of ships and 20,000 seafarers have remained stranded inside the Gulf waiting to pass through the key waterway. The Iranian official said transits would be restricted to lanes that Iran deemed safe, adding that military ves-

seli attack on Iran, and Trump’s claim of an imminent deal did not provide any details or clarity on how this issue would be resolved. Iran has also demanded removal of sanctions, return of its assets frozen by the US, and reparations for damage caused by the US and Israeli attacks. Trump did not

sels were still prohibited from crossing the strait.

“Releasing Iran’s funds was part of the agreement for reopening the strait,” the official noted, referring to an estimated \$30 billion in frozen revenue, generated mainly from oil and gas exports, blocked amid US sanctions on Tehran.

It was not immediately clear if this included or excluded the established Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS) lanes for entering and exiting the Gulf used by international shipping since the 1970s.

“Even US vessels would be permitted, excluding military ships,” he said. REUTERS

refer to any of these demands in his triumphant posts.

Trump also contested the Iranian claim that re-opening of Hormuz was contingent on the ceasefire in Lebanon, saying “This deal is in no way subject to Lebanon, either, but the USA will, separately, work with Lebanon, and deal with

the Hezbollah situation in an appropriate manner.”

The US president’s head-spinning social media calisthenics and grandstanding also involved thanking Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and UAE for their help, while snubbing Nato for not helping with a deal he assumes is done and dusted.

“Now that the Hormuz Strait situation is over, I received a call from NATO asking if we would need some help. I TOLD THEM TO STAY AWAY, UNLESS THEY JUST WANT TO LOAD UP THEIR SHIPS WITH OIL. They were useless when needed, a Paper Tiger!” Trump said, speaking transparently of a growing trans-Atlantic rift that has damaged ties with the UK, France, Germany, Spain, and Italy, among others.

Instead, Trump was effusive in his praise of Pakistan, thanking “its Great Prime Minister and Field Marshall (sic), two fantastic people!!!” He also thanked Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Qatar “for your great bravery and help!”

While there remained widespread scepticism in the US commentariat about the deal given the lack of specifics, the MAGA supremo also lashed out at familiar domestic targets, the so-called “fake news,” saying they are “desperately” looking for a reason to criticise him on the Iran situation.

“Why don’t they just say, at the right time, JOB WELL DONE, MR. PRESIDENT, and start to gain back their credibility???” Trump said. But scepticism of Trump’s claim of an imminent deal still runs deep in the American media and the commentariat given the lack of specifics and the US president’s penchant for grandstanding.

# Women's quota bill defeated in LS

298 members supported the bill while 230 voted against it

NEW DELHI, Apr 17 (PTI)

**IN** A major setback to the Government, a Constitution Amendment Bill to implement 33 per cent reservation for women in legislatures in 2029 and increase the number of Lok Sabha seats to 816 was defeated on Friday, with the ruling dispensation asserting that the struggle to give the rights to women will continue.

This was for the first time a bill under the Modi Government was defeated in Parliament.

While 298 members voted in support of the bill in Lok Sabha, 230 MPs voted against it. Out of 528 members who voted, the bill required 352 votes for a two-third majority.

According to the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, Lok Sabha seats were to be increased to 816 from the current 543 to "operationalise" the women's reservation law before the 2029 parliamentary polls, following a delimitation exercise based on the 2011 Census.

(Contd on page 3)



Woman BJP MPs and others protest after the Constitution Amendment Bill was defeated. (PTI)

## It's an insult to 'Nari Shakti': Shah

NEW DELHI, Apr 17 (PTI)

**UNION** Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday warned the Congress and other parties which opposed the women's reservation amendment bill

that this insult to "Nari Shakti" will travel far and wide.

Slamming the Congress and its allies for the defeat of a Constitution amendment bill to implement 33 per cent women's quota in legislative

bodies before the 2029 Parliamentary polls, Shah on Friday said their mindset is neither in the interest of women, nor the country.

"Rejecting the bill that would

(Contd on page 3)

## Oppn lost historic opportunity: Rijju

NEW DELHI, Apr 17 (IANS)

**PARLIAMENTARY** Affairs Minister Kiren Rijju lashed out at the Opposition after the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill was defeated in the Lok Sabha on Friday, saying that they have "lost the opportunity of a historic moment".

"The results have come on such a historic and important Bill, which aimed at giving respect and rights to the country's women. The Opposition did not support it. It is very unfortunate," he said.

"This historic moment was an opportunity which you (Opposition) have lost."

"Besides the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, we have two other bills, which are intrinsically interrelated with the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, so they cannot be viewed in isolation," he said.

## Sad day: Priyanka Chaturvedi takes different stand

MUMBAI, Apr 17 (PTI)

**SHIV** Sena (UBT) leader Priyanka Chaturvedi on Friday diverged from her party's stand and rued the defeat of the Women Reservation Bill in Lok Sabha, calling it a sad day for women who hoped to find themselves in the Parliament or Assembly.

In a post on X, Chaturvedi said, "Sad day for India's women who hoped to find themselves in the Parliament or Assembly." "I have a stand on women's reservation and consistently have had it and I will continue to express it. Deal with it," the former Rajya Sabha MP said in another post. Chaturvedi's term in the RS ended this month.

Uddhav Thackeray had demanded that the Centre immediately implement the 2023 Act that gives 33 per cent reservation to women.