



Suo Motu Statement by EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar in Lok Sabha on "The Situation in West Asia" (March 09, 2026)

[March 09, 2026](#)

Hon'ble Chairman sir,

I rise to apprise this august House of recent developments in West Asia that are a cause of deep concern to all of us. As Hon'ble Members are aware, this round of conflict started on 28 February 2026. It has witnessed not only fighting between Israel and the United States on one side and Iran on the other, 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.

2. At the very outset, Government had issued a statement on 28 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. It is also imperative that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states in the region be respected.

3. Chairman Sir, given the gravity of the situation, the Cabinet Committee of Security (CCS) met on 01 March under the Chairmanship of the Hon'ble Prime Minister. 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. It also focused on the implications for regional security and for economic and commercial activities. The Committee was apprised of difficulties faced by Indian travelers transiting the region and by students appearing for scheduled examinations in these countries. It directed all concerned Ministries and Departments to take appropriate measures to respond to these problems. Hon'ble Prime Minister continues to closely monitor emerging developments and the relevant Ministries are coordinating to ensure effective responses.

4. Chairman Sir, the conflict has continued to intensify and the security situation in the region has deteriorated significantly. We have noted that, in fact, the conflict has spread to other nations with mounting destruction and deaths. Normal life and economic activities in the entire region were visibly affected and, in some cases, have come to a halt. We, therefore, reiterated our call on 03 March for dialogue and diplomacy and spoke up for an early end to the conflict. I am confident, Sir, that the House joins me in expressing our sorrow at the loss of lives.

5. Hon'ble Chairman 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. We are a neighbouring region and understandably, have obvious stakes in West Asia remain stable and peaceful. 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. The region is key to our energy security and includes many important suppliers of oil and gas.

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

7. Hon'ble Chairman Sir, Government has been assessing the situation in West Asia continuously since the 12-day war in June 2025. We noted the indications of growing tension and cautioned the Indian community in Iran accordingly. On 5 January 2026, Indian nationals were advised by the Ministry of External Affairs to avoid non-essential travel to Iran. Those already resident there were urged to register with the Embassy, exercise due caution and monitor the Embassy website and social media handles. A second advisory was issued on 14 January 2026 reiterating the advice to avoid travel in even stronger terms. The Directorate General of Shipping Mumbai, in parallel issued its own advisory on 14 January 2026 for Indian seafarers asking them to follow Embassy advisories and avoid unnecessary movement ashore. Recruitment and Shipping Companies were also asked not to deploy or send Indian seafarers to Iran.

8. Chairman Sir, reflecting our assessment of the evolving situation, the Indian Embassy in Tehran issued an advisory on 14 January urging Indian nationals including students, pilgrims, businesspersons and tourists to leave Iran by all available means of transport, including commercial flights. They were asked to contact the Embassy for any assistance and provided with 24x7 helplines. This was again reiterated in strong terms through another advisory on 23 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. This was the situation until 28 February 2026.

9. Hon'ble Chairman Sir, once the conflict commenced, the Indian Embassy has facilitated the relocation of several Indian students in Tehran to places outside Tehran. An advisory update with emergency contact helplines was issued on 3 March. Similarly, facilitation was also extended to pilgrims for their internal movement. Indian nationals who were in Iran for business purposes were assisted to cross over to Armenia and to return home. The Embassy in Tehran remains fully operational, I would say in fact on the highest alert. 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. Where seafarers are concerned, the Directorate General of Shipping through an order on 2 March constituted a Quick Response Team for immediate response, coordination and support functions. This will function on a 24x7 basis.

10. Hon'ble Chairman Sir, I would like to inform you that every Indian Embassy in the region has similarly issued advisories. This is so with Israel, UAE, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Iraq. Many of them did so on the 28th of February, Israel did it again on 01st of March. Many of them again in Gulf did it on the 05th of March. Saudi Arabia did it on the 08th of March. So this has been a continuous exercise. The MEA 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 07 March.

11. 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. They have facilitated international border crossings for Indian nationals, including from UAE to Oman and from Qatar, Kuwait and Bahrain to Saudi Arabia. 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. Our estimate is that about 67,000 of our nationals have done so as a result. The Ministry of Civil Aviation has also put out figures for the last three days. On the 07th of March, there were a total of 51 inbound flights operated by Indian carriers, 49 on the 08th of March, and there are 50 flights planned for 09th of March.

12. Chairman Sir, throughout this period, Government has maintained close contact with the relevant countries. Hon'ble 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. 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. 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 5th of March. We will continue these high-level conversations in the coming days.

13. Sir, the House will also be interested in the issue of an Iranian vessel that is currently docked in Kochi. The Iranian side have requested permission on 28 February for three ships in the region to dock at our ports. This was accorded on 01st of March. IRIS LAVAN actually docked on 04th 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.

14. 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. For us, Sir, 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.

15. Hon'ble Chairman Sir, let me conclude by highlighting the three guiding factors of our approach:

(i) 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.

(ii) 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.

(iii) Our national interest, including energy security and trade flows, will always be paramount.

16. I am confident that Government has the full support of this august House on this matter. Thank you.

New Delhi
March 09, 2026

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