

India-Iran Relations in the Post-Cold War Era: Navigating Geo-Economic Connectivity and Nuclear Dilemmas

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Abstract:

In the years following the Cold War, India and Iran changed their old partnership based in traditional trade cooperation to a modern partnership that heavily relies on regional connectivity and energy security. The analysis of bilateral relations sheds light on how emerging powers can balance their need for strategic autonomy with systemic constraints due to the unilateral sanctions imposed by a third party and the global non-proliferation regime. The research looks at important geo-economic projects, namely the Chabahar Port and the International North–South Transport Corridor (INSTC), through the prism of geopolitical tensions that have been caused by U.S. sanctions and Iran’s nuclear issues. The results reveal that although such transit routes give India a unique and highly advantageous opportunity to access Afghanistan and Central Asia without having to go through Pakistan, the rise in geopolitical tensions was detrimental to India-Iran cooperation. This was the reason behind India’s inability to increase crude oil imports from Iran, the loss of important upstream possessions like the Farzad-B gas field, and significant changes in the work at Chabahar port after the expiration of U.S. sanction waivers. So engagement with Tehran demands thorough risk management, fast energy diversification, and continuous diplomatic flexibility. At the same time, this research provides crucial insights into the weaknesses of economic corridors in the region in a world which is becoming increasingly fragmented and multipolar.

Keywords: Nuclear, Energy, Sanctions, Cooperation

A. INTRODUCTION

Historical Background

India and Iran share a deep, uninterrupted relationship rooted in ancient Indo-Iranian ancestry, shared linguistics (Sanskrit and Persian), and parallel Vedic-Zoroastrian traditions (Jorfi, 1994). Over millennia, this bond flourished through maritime and overland trade, shared philosophy, medical exchanges, and artistic integration. During the medieval and Mughal periods, Indo-Persian interactions reached a golden age. This era witnessed the rise of Sufism, the emergence of the Urdu language, and architectural syntheses seen in monuments like the Taj Mahal. According to Jorfi 1994 this historic connection was severely disrupted during

the colonial era, when European powers which includes mainly Great Britain and Russia used Iran as a strategic buffer and severed traditional Asian trade routes and people-to-people exchanges. Following India's independence in 1947, both nations revived diplomatic ties. Today, their relationship is marked by pragmatic cooperation in energy, transit routes to Central Asia, industry, and mutual political support. India's foreign policy is based on pluralism and non-interference and respects theocratic Iran, while being able to maintain strategic independence. The two countries have had a difficult relationship throughout history, especially with Cold War dynamics at play: the US-backed Shah of Iran was supportive of Pakistan, whereas India leaned towards the Soviet Union. However, things changed in the mid-1990s when the two countries started cooperating due to common interests in security and military affairs in Afghanistan, where India and Iran worked together in supporting the Northern Alliance against the Mujahedeen backed by Pakistan. (Pethiyagoda, 2018).

Post cold war Developments

The end of the Cold War fundamentally reshaped India's foreign policy, replacing rigid ideological commitments with pragmatic and interest-driven partnerships. Simultaneously, the 1991 economic crisis prompted Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao to dismantle Jawaharlal Nehru's closed economic model through liberalization. Integrating into the global market allowed Delhi to pursue flexible alignments across the world that also includes strengthening ties with Iran in order to directly protect its vital economic and national security interests. As India expands its global footprint, managing its relationship with Iran requires a careful diplomatic balance. Historically connected, both nations share vital modern interests. From an economic standpoint, Iran is vital for ensuring energy supply and trade routes necessary to support Indian growth. On the other hand, Tehran plays a vital strategic role for Delhi as a gateway to Central Asia and Afghanistan, allowing it to counter influence of China and Pakistan in the region. However, this partnership is subject to tensions, resulting from pressure from the USA and the Gulf countries aimed at isolating Iran. Regardless of geopolitical constraints posed by the fact that India is under pressure and the policies of its Western partners, India continues cooperating with Iran due to its necessity to ensure the country's economic and strategic autonomy.

Tehran and Delhi Declaration

The Tehran Declaration is an agreement that was signed on April 10, 2001. The Declaration laid down a strategic guideline for improving bilateral relationship between India and Iran and focused on principles of mutual respect for state sovereignty and non-interventionism, and total nuclear disarmament. It was agreed that both countries would develop international cooperation through intercultural dialogue. The New Delhi Declaration signed in 2003 established a formal strategic partnership between India and Iran based on common

civilizational links and mutual geopolitical interests. The main idea expressed in this agreement is the commitment to the multipolarity of the world, the primacy of the UN, and respect for state sovereignty. From an economic point of view, Iran's great oil and gas resources were seen as one of the main components in the provision of the growing energy needs of India. The text of the New Delhi declaration also stated that the agreement aimed at developing regional connectivity, including the acceleration of the implementation of the International North–South Transport Corridor project and the development of the Chabahar port as a means to reach Afghanistan and Central Asia. In addition to that, India and Iran declared that they were ready to cooperate against terrorism.

B. ROLE OF ECONOMIC CONNECTIVITY

Chabahar Port Development

India's interest in developing the port of Chabahar in Iran is primarily motivated by strategic considerations in order to obtain an uninterrupted, secure land route to landlocked Afghanistan and Central Asia. As per Bhatnagar & John (2023), even though Pakistan provides the most direct land route, Islamabad has always rejected India's request for transit of cargo to Afghanistan. This is a deliberate action taken by Pakistan to minimize India's grip over the region and maintain closer links with Afghanistan. In some rare cases, Pakistan has allowed India transit under the supervision of the United Nations, but in general, all bilateral transit agreements have outrightly denied any transit of Indian goods. In this case, the Chabahar port provides an important maritime and land route for bypassing Pakistani territory altogether.

The establishment of Chabahar Port is strategically and economically advantageous to India as it provides a direct trading route to Central Asia and Afghanistan. After spending around \$2.5 billion on Afghanistan's reconstruction, New Delhi can use this port and Zaranj-Delaram highway to increase its commercial exchanges with Kabul to over \$700 million, while negotiating more favorable tariffs with Iran (Bhatnagar & John, 2023). Beyond direct commerce, Chabahar provides a viable maritime gateway to export vital mineral wealth, including iron ore from Afghanistan's Hajigak mines, via planned railway links. Ultimately, the port functions as an indispensable springboard into the Central Asian Republics, unlocking landlocked markets through expanding road links to Uzbekistan and integrated regional rail networks extending toward Termez.

India's 10-year agreement through India Ports Global Limited to equip and operate the Shahid Beheshti terminal at Iran's Chabahar Port which is backed by a \$120 million equipment commitment and a \$250 million credit window (A, 2026). However, this strategic initiative faces persistent friction with Washington; although India previously secured a narrow sanctions waiver under the 2018 Iran Freedom and Counter-Proliferation Act to support Afghan reconstruction, the formalized long-term contract has drawn renewed U.S. warnings of

potential secondary sanctions for doing business with Tehran, prompting New Delhi to consistently argue that the port is a critical regional connectivity hub rather than a purely bilateral enterprise.

Figure 1: Chabahar transit project route



Source: <https://valdaiclub.com/a/highlights/chabahar-port-transit-project-the-eastern-wing/>

India's involvement in the Chabahar Port is widely interpreted through the lens of Sino-Indian strategic competition. New Delhi has long harboured concerns over China's potential "strategic encirclement" via regional port developments in Sri Lanka, Myanmar, and Bangladesh. These anxieties intensified after Pakistan transferred operations of the Beijing-funded Gwadar Port which is located just 76 km from Chabahar to China, alongside plans for a Kashgar-Gwadar transit corridor. Presenting Chabahar exclusively in terms of rivalry with China overlooks realities in the region. While Iran has full control over its strategic decisions, India is simply endeavouring to maintain its right to non-dependent movement to Afghanistan and Central Asia.

The Indian Union Minister Nitin Gadkari signed a deal for \$195 million for the construction of Chabahar port in May 2015. Since then, India has taken steps to reinforce its economy in Afghanistan and Central Asia. After the visits by ministers Dharmendra Pradhan and Sushma Swaraj to Iran in April 2016, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Iran in May 2016. This visit finalized a trilateral transit corridor pact with Afghanistan, a 10-year contract to develop and operate five berths, a \$150 million MoU, ₹3,000 crore for steel rail imports, and a \$1.6 billion MoU for the Chabahar–Zahedan railway line.

The end of the U.S. sanction waiver on April 26, 2026, has pushed India to undertake a crucial balancing act in terms of foreign policy, putting at risk its 23-year-old project of connecting the Chabahar Port in Iran, which could be severely impacted by the U.S. sanctions campaign called the "Operation Economic Fury." After the initial six-month wind-down notice issued in late 2025, India tried to safeguard its entities from the effects of the U.S. secondary sanctions by withdrawing its on-site personnel, prepaying its \$120 million investment commitment, and withholding fresh allocations in Union Budget 2026, while negotiating a tactical transfer of

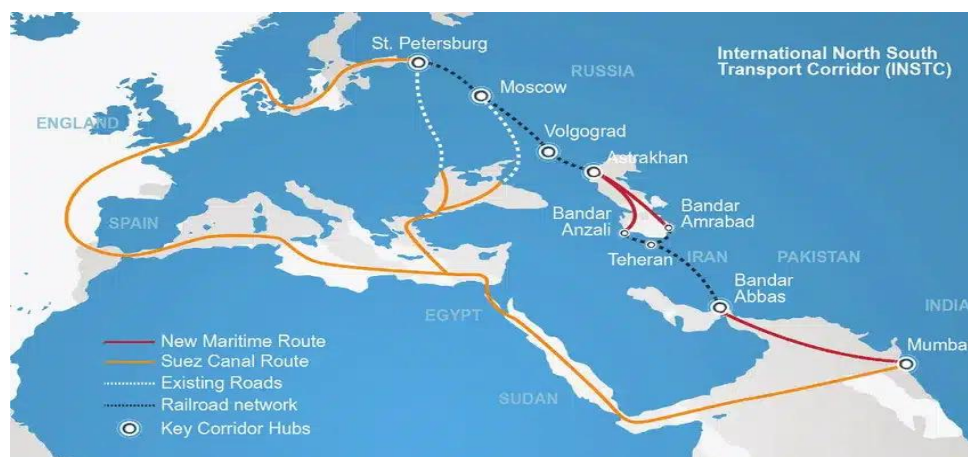
its terminal operational stake from an India Ports Global subsidiary to a local Iranian firm to retain a path for a future return (Haidar, 2026). This forced retreat severely strains India's strategic autonomy and creates a major bottleneck for its trade connectivity to Afghanistan and Central Asia.

The International North–South Transport Corridor (INSTC)

The International North–South Transport Corridor (INSTC), created in 2000 by India, Iran, and Russia, is a multimodal trade network that connects India to Eurasia while bypassing the Suez Canal. Although conflicting interests and infrastructure gaps initially slowed its growth, the Eastern Route which is 928-km Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran (KTI) railway is driving trade forward. Built with \$370 million from the Islamic Development Bank out of a \$1.4 billion budget, this route opened in 2014 to link Central Asia, Iranian ports, and India (Wani, 2025). It was further strengthened by the shorter Moscow-Aprin line. In contrast, the shorter 5,100-km Western Corridor faces major delays due to international sanctions on Iran and an unfinished Rasht-Astara railway link. Consequently, the Eastern Route has taken the lead. Following its official launch in 2022, cargo shipments nearly tripled to about 1.8 to 2 million tonnes between 2023 and 2024. Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif during his visit in August 14, 2015 said “We both, India and Iran, are eager to engage in this. I believe sooner rather than later we will start serious work” (Roy, 2015).

Central Asian countries actively support trade links with India through high-level talks and joint forums. To boost infrastructure, India offered a \$1 billion credit line in 2020 (Wani, 2025). Both sides are concentrating on using Chabahar Port in Iran, with the agreement of a permanent working group and a 2024 agreement regarding port improvement for the next ten years. Additionally, the new line from Chabahar to Zahedan will facilitate the effective conduct of trade in the region. The International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) represents a valuable option, enabling international cargo transport to be made noticeably quicker and less expensive. (Roy, 2015).

Figure 1.1: Route map of International North–South Transport Corridor (INSTC)



Source: <https://lotusarise.com/international-north-south-transport-corridor-upsc/>

The corridor enables India to gain direct access to Eurasian and European markets without having to go through Pakistan while making exports more competitive. Furthermore, expanding the rail networks in Iran, Central Asia and Turkey is expected to enhance the regional economic integration between the Indian Ocean, the Persian Gulf and Europe. While the INSTC is affected by the West-imposed sanctions, acute problems of infrastructure and funding and different standard railway gauges, the regional rivalries and the long history of the geopolitical mistrust between Russia, Iran and Azerbaijan significantly complicate the situation.

Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline

The Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline is a substantial transnational energy project that stretches 1,680 kilometers in order to move natural gas from Turkmenistan's rich South Yolotan-Osman gas field through Afghanistan and Pakistan and finish in Fazilka in India. Under the multilateral framework agreement, the conduit is projected to deliver 90 million cubic metres of natural gas per day (mmcmd), allocating 38 mmcmd each to India and Pakistan, with Afghanistan securing the remaining 14 mmcmd (Joshi, 2011). Upstream supply security is fundamentally underpinned by Turkmenistan's vast gas wealth which is ranked fourth globally with 7.94 trillion cubic meters according to the 2011 BP Statistical Review it is bolstered further by South Yolotan-Osman's estimated 4 to 14 trillion cubic meters of reserves, which alone can yield an annual output of 70 billion cubic meters to double the nation's baseline capacity. From an execution and financial standpoint, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has estimated the total capital expenditure at \$7.6 billion, offering to act as lead financier and coordinator, with commercial operations targeted for 2017 under the operational stewardship of a private consortium responsible for construction, maintenance, and sustained transit flow. The TAPI pipeline serves as a key pillar of the US-backed "*New Silk Route*" initiative linking Central and South Asia, designated by former petroleum minister Murli Deora in 2010 as a major driver of rapid regional economic growth (Maini, 2012).

This pipeline is more economical and feasible for India vis-a-vis the import of liquefied natural gas by means of vessels. This additional gas supply will also take care of 12.5% to 16% of India's future energy needs (Joshi, 2011). For India, this cost-effective pipeline is not only fulfilling the energy demands to a considerable extent but also facilitating the establishment of Central Asian trade routes, apart from providing means to foster the cooperation with both Pakistan and Afghanistan. Some of the important key benefit for India would be (Maini, 2012):

1. **Cost Oversight and Tariff Leverage:** Being a consortium member enables India to negotiate transportation charges and oversee project costs.
2. **Significant Price Advantage:** Gas is expected to cost \$10 per Metric Million British Thermal Unit (mmbtu) (which includes \$3 in transportation costs), making it much more affordable compared to long-term contracts and current market rates of approximately \$16 per mmbtu.

3. **Substantial Supply Volume:** The pipeline supplies 38 million Metric Standard Cubic Meters of inexpensive gas every day, resulting in a significant increase in volume that will surpass the expected reduced output of Reliance Industries Ltd. (RIL), which is anticipated to fall to 20 mmscmd by 2014-15 and potentially below.
4. **Supply Security and Complementary Infrastructure:** By 2016–17, as domestic commercial shale gas production begins across India's 6.1 trillion cubic feet of reserves, sufficient regasified LNG (R-LNG) terminals and floating regasification units will be operational to mitigate supply disruption risks.

C. DYNAMICS OF NUCLEAR ISSUE

Role of Sanctions and Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)

Iran faces international and single-country sanctions mainly due to fears surrounding its nuclear activities. These penalties ramped up after August 2002, when an Iranian opposition group in Washington exposed the hidden Natanz uranium enrichment plant. Even before this discovery, the United States had already imposed sanctions on Iran for supporting terrorism, developing delivery systems for weapons of mass destruction, and other illicit actions. In late 2005 and early 2006, India made a major change in its foreign policy as it voted with Western countries at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to send reports on Iran's nuclear program to the United Nations Security Council. Due to concerns over hidden nuclear activities, Iran was referred to the UN Security Council in 2006, leading to four mandatory resolutions (1737, 1747, 1803, and 1929) under Chapter VII of the UN Charter passed between 2006 and 2010 (C Rajiv, 2016). These sanctions aimed to stop Iran's uranium enrichment and enforce international nuclear compliance by freezing assets and banning travel for roughly 120 linked individuals and groups. Additionally, the measures blocked Iran from acquiring military and nuclear technology, developing ballistic missiles, investing in overseas nuclear projects, and dealing with blacklisted banks. India maintains that while it must obey United Nations Security Council sanctions, it is not required to follow single-country sanctions imposed by the US or others. In March 2007, then-External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee stated in Parliament that UN Resolution 1737 did not affect India, because the country engaged in no nuclear or missile trade with Iran (C Rajiv, 2016). India was against the independent sanctions that the US, under President Obama, placed on Iran as part of its dual-track policy (C Rajiv, 2016). After the sanctions laws took effect, India had to adapt to the resulting market pressures. Consequently, it raised its oil imports from major producers like Saudi Arabia and diversified its intake by buying from countries such as Iraq and Venezuela.

On November 24, 2013, Iran and the P5+1 agreed to the Joint Plan of Action (JPOA) to establish a pathway toward a long-term solution. In the initial period, Iran committed to capping uranium enrichment at 5%, neutralizing its 20% enriched stockpile through dilution and conversion, halting infrastructure expansion at

Natanz, Fordow, and Arak, and stopping reprocessing activities (C Rajiv, 2016). In exchange for daily inspections, managed facility access, and an updated Arak DIQ, the P5+1 agreed to give a pause on new sanctions, ease measures on the petrochemical and automotive sectors, stabilize Iranian crude oil sales, and release \$11.9 billion in restricted oil revenues through extensions until June 2015. In July 2015 a historic pact was established called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) agreement was negotiated between Iran and the P5+1 which includes Germany and the five permanent UN Security Council members: the US, UK, France, Russia, and China along with participation from the European Union (Robinson, 2023). According to the deal, Iran agreed to significantly roll back its nuclear operations and allow deeper international monitoring of its sites, in return for the removal of billions of dollars in economic penalties. Implemented in January 2016, the JCPOA placed strict limits on Iran's non-military uranium enrichment activities. Some of the important benefit of JCPOA for India highlighted (Singh Sidhu, 2015):

1. **Stronger US–India Ties:** By removing the obstacles from US sanctions imposed on Iran, a significant diplomatic barrier is eliminated which paves the path of India's strategic and nuclear collaboration with the US.
2. **Regional Cooperation in Afghanistan:** Better relations between America and Iran would allow India to work with the countries in stabilizing Afghanistan and ensuring smooth transit through the area.
3. **Chabahar Port Development:** With no limitations imposed, opportunities of multilateral cooperation on Chabahar port arise, which opens up additional access for India to Central Asia and Afghanistan.
4. **Access to Iranian Oil:** India may continue increasing procurement of crude oil from Iran after the complete halt in its oil purchases under the sanctions.
5. **Leverage for Global Nuclear Integration:** Closer cooperation with Washington provide India the diplomatic opportunity needed to secure membership in global export control regimes.

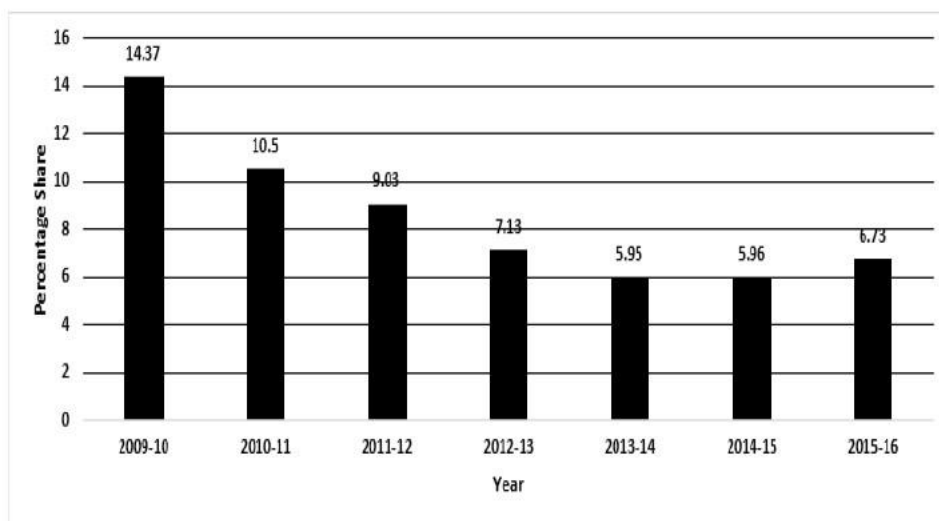
Impact of sanctions on India

Being one of the largest energy consumers in the world and a country that is dependent mainly on imports, India strives to keep its supply security in alignment with geopolitics. While Western sanctions and the need to diversify oil supply sources have resulted in a decrease in Iranian oil imports to 6%, the country still plays an important role as an energy partner that could contribute to gas projects and exploration ventures (Madan, 2014). Sanctions have led to the emergence of rupee payments for oil purchases that can contribute to ever-growing bilateral economic cooperation and greater economic activities between both countries.

India's nuclear deal with the United States in 2005 damaged its relationship with Iran. In order to obtain civil nuclear cooperation from the United States and conform to international nuclear regulations, India voted in favor of a 2005 resolution on Iran's nuclear plans, which worsened the relations between New Delhi and Tehran (Moonakal, 2020). India's import of energy from Iran fell by more than 50 percent in terms of both

volume and value between 2009 and 2016. As a result, Iran's standing as a source of oil to India decreased sharply, dropping from being the second-largest supplier in 2009-10 to the seventh position between 2012 and 2015 before gaining slightly to attain the sixth position in 2015-16 (C Rajiv, 2016). To make up for the loss of Iranian oil, India successfully found new sources, like Iraq quickly stepped up to become the second-largest supplier after Saudi Arabia. The oil coming from Iraq almost doubled between 2010 and 2012, growing from nearly US\$ 9 billion in 2010-11 to around US\$ 19 billion by 2012-13 (C Rajiv, 2016). Saudi Arabia also increased its supply, providing US\$ 10 billion more oil in 2011-12 than it did the previous year.

Figure 1.2: Oil import reduction from Iran (2009-2016)



Source: Iran Sanctions and India: Navigating the Road Blocks (Monograph)

India also turned to Africa and Latin America for its energy needs. As C Rajiv 2016 has highlighted that by 2011-12, the value of oil from Africa jumped by 66% compared to 2009-10. Meanwhile, imports from Latin America grew more than four times in value by 2013-14. Venezuela has emerged as a significant partner, almost doubling its oil exports to India during the period from 2009 to 2016. Nevertheless, in the final year of this period (2015-16), the overall value of energy imports from Africa and Latin America was significantly less.

In 2008, Iran's Farzad-B Offshore gas field was discovered by an ONGC Videsh Limited (OVL) consortium, which contains around 21-23 trillion cubic feet of natural gas (almost 60% recoverable). India had invested around \$400 million in exploration and proposed a plan of \$6.2 billion for development to tap gas of 1.1 billion cubic feet a day (Anand Teltumbde, 2026). On May 17, 2021, National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) signed a \$1.78 billion deal with Petropars Group for developing Farzad_B gas field putting ONGC Videsh Ltd to the sidelines (Firstpost, 2021). After its discovery in 2008, negotiations for a contract were stalled in 2012 as tough conditions and international sanctions were imposed. Though negotiations were resumed again from

2015 to 2016 under the Iran Petroleum Contract regarding upstream and downstream development, nothing could be finally materialised. Even before the signing of the Iran nuclear deal (JCPOA) in 2015, strict sanctions were placed on Iran by US government during the tenure of President Barack Obama. Although these restrictions were in place, the United States issued exemptions to India to continue purchasing crude oil from Iran without incurring any penalties from the US government. The main hurdle arose from the re-introduction of US sanctions in November 2018 during Donald Trump's presidency, which made it impossible for India to finish necessary technical studies. Currently, India is shifting towards a gas-based economy where over half of all gas needs are sourced externally. Farzad-B promised cheaper access to long-term cheap natural gas sourced through routes in the Persian Gulf, and its cancellation was serious setback for India's energy diversification efforts. Despite the American pressure to cease oil purchases from Iran, India actually increased those purchases in 2018-2019. That year, Indian purchases of crude oil from Iran amounted to 479,500 barrels per day, which is higher than in the previous 2017-2018 year. US sanctions prevented India from using the dollar in oil trade with Iran and also imposed various US financial penalties against Indian companies and banks essentially forcing India to replace Iran crude oil with supplies from other exporters.

Recent Developments

On May 8, 2018, U.S. President Donald Trump announced the decision to withdraw from the Iran nuclear agreement due to strategic evaluation of U.S. policies towards Iran. As per Trump's statement, he did not issue a certification of compliance for Iran as the country has reportedly breached the underlying principles of the agreement by developing ballistic missiles with nuclear capabilities and financing terrorism (Dr. Deepika Saraswat, 2018). In the year 2018, India was buying an average of 518,000 barrels of Iranian crude every day. However, from January to May 2019, this was drastically reduced to only 268,000 barrels of oil imported daily because of the limited license granted by the US (Gandhi, 2026). Given the increased pressure from foreign political sources and tightening of the secondary sanctions, India was forced to cut down on its imports of crude oil from Iran to zero (Abbas, 2026). In light of that, Iran has shortened the payment period for Indian companies from 90 to 60 days.

In 2026, the closure of the Strait of Hormuz as a result of the U.S.-Iran conflict created a new global energy crisis. Thus, the crisis posed great danger to an import-oriented economy like India which depends heavily on foreign sources for crude oil for nearly 90% of its crude oil and 60% of its LPG (Arup Roychoudhury, 2026). This chokepoint disruption represents an immediate and critical threat to its national energy security and supply chain stability. In just four weeks, the cost of the crude oil India buys rose sharply from around \$70 to more than \$120 a barrel. To safeguard its long-term energy security, India faces an urgent imperative to push for regional de-escalation, protect critical sea lanes of communication, expand its strategic petroleum reserves, and accelerate the diversification of both its import corridors and domestic energy basket.

D. CONCLUSION

The post-Cold War era in the relationship between India and Iran is characterized by the conflict of vital strategic objectives and the challenging geopolitical context. The significance of Tehran for New Delhi is that it serves as a crucial energy supplier and a transit hub to Afghanistan, Central Asia, and Eurasia through its initiatives, namely the Chabahar Port and the International North–South Transport Corridor. These economic corridors serve the purposes of weakening regional enemies, extending India's reach, and improving a multipolar perspective. However, external influences in the form of the US sanctions, nuclear conflicts, and the changing Middle East have disrupted this cooperation repeatedly. Moreover, the U.S. sanctions against India complicate investments made by India into the port, even though a waiver was granted. Generally, it is important to note that both countries share a mutual interest in regional stability in South Asia, given that it would have implications for their economy. In this context, India faces a paradox regarding its Iranian oil imports: on the one hand, compliance with U.S. pressure and cessation of imports would undermine its longstanding aim of attaining strategic independence, while the alternative of continuing to import oil from Iran while circumventing U.S. sanctions may jeopardize Indian American strategic partnership. Moving forward, India must balance its strategic autonomy with its broader global partnerships. Sustaining engagement with Tehran requires pragmatism, robust risk mitigation, and continuous diplomatic dexterity to safeguard New Delhi's core energy and regional security interests.

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