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EDITORIAL ANALYSIS

After the Ceasefire — The Geopolitics, Fragility, and India's Multi-Alignment Stakes in West Asia

 **INDIAN EXPRESS**9 April 2026 · **GS2**

CURATED & WRITTEN BY

**Bharat Choudhary**

UPSC Educator & Content Creator

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After the Ceasefire — The Geopolitics, Fragility, and India's Multi-Alignment Stakes in West Asia

The Indian Express 9 April 2026 **GS2**

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CONTEXT

The **Indian Express editorial** analyses the **US-Iran ceasefire announced on April 9, 2026**, after 39 days of conflict that disrupted the Strait of Hormuz. The editorial argues the ceasefire is fragile — Iran's core strategic interests (nuclear programme, regional influence, sanction relief) remain unresolved — and assesses implications for India, whose energy security and diaspora were severely exposed during the conflict.

THE EDITORIAL ARGUMENT

1. Iran's Retained Leverage

The editorial challenges the narrative of a decisive US victory. Despite the ceasefire, Iran:

- Retains **geography** — the Strait of Hormuz cannot be bypassed without significant cost
- Maintains **proxy networks** across the Gulf region — Houthi, Hezbollah, Iraqi militia capacity is intact
- Continues its **nuclear programme** — the ceasefire recognises enrichment rights rather than eliminating them
- Preserved its **ability to re-escalate** — the ceasefire is not a peace treaty

Iran's 10-point plan was conceded largely intact, suggesting the US settled more than it won.

2. India's Exposure During the Conflict

The editorial identifies three dimensions of India's acute vulnerability:

- **Energy:** ~60% of crude from Gulf; Brent above \$105/barrel during conflict; import bill surged by projected \$35 billion for FY27



- **Diaspora:** ~1 crore Indians in GCC countries; remittances (~₹2 lakh crore annually) disrupted; 8 casualties
- **Shipping:** LPG tankers, container vessels, IMEC infrastructure all exposed

3. The Multi-Alignment Dilemma

India abstained on UNSC resolutions, maintained ties with both Iran (Chabahar Port) and the US (defence partnerships), and was absent from the Islamabad Talks. The editorial asks: **is multi-alignment a doctrine or a default?**

It argues that multi-alignment serves India well in competitive peacetime but risks strategic irrelevance when crises require decisive positioning. India was not at the negotiating table despite having more economic exposure than Pakistan.

4. Recommendations for India

- **Diversify energy partnerships** — faster SPR Phase II build-out; long-term contracts with non-Gulf suppliers (Russia via Arctic routes, West Africa, US LNG)
- **Engage all ceasefire parties** — bilateral diplomatic engagement with both Tehran and Washington post-ceasefire to position India in reconstruction frameworks
- **Protect IMEC** — the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor must be insulated from future disruptions through diplomatic commitments
- **Review the Chabahar calculus** — Chabahar's value as an Iran bypass route is partly contingent on Iran's international status

UPSC RELEVANCE

GS Paper 2 — International Relations

- India's multi-alignment doctrine — definition, applications, critique
- India-West Asia relations — energy, diaspora, trade, IMEC
- US-Iran nuclear diplomacy — JCPOA legacy, enrichment question
- India's SPR inadequacy — structural vulnerability

Mains Angle

“The US-Iran ceasefire of 2026 exposed the limits of India's multi-alignment doctrine in situations requiring strategic positioning. Critically examine.” (GS2)



FACTS CORNER

ITEM	FACT
Conflict duration	39 days
Ceasefire date	April 9, 2026
Iran 10-point plan	Includes enrichment rights, not denuclearisation
India crude from Gulf	~60%
Brent crude during conflict	>\$105/barrel
India's Gulf diaspora	~1 crore
India's diaspora remittances from GCC	~₹2 lakh crore/year
Pakistan's role	Primary mediator (Islamabad Talks)
India's SPR	~9.5 days of consumption cover
IMEC	India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (G20 2023)
Chabahar Port	India-developed; key Iran connectivity asset

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