

WHY TÜRKİYE MATTERS IN THE ONGOING IRAN CRISIS — AN INDIAN PERSPECTIVE

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The eyes of the world are fixed on Iran today as armed conflict in West Asia continue to escalate and new strategic scenarios unfold almost daily. For India, these developments are unfolding in what many analysts often describe as its extended neighbourhood.¹ While New Delhi has sought to maintain a careful distance from the ongoing conflict and uphold its preference for strategic disentanglement, the ripple effects of instability in the region are difficult to ignore. Energy markets, maritime security, and evolving regional alignments ensure that developments around Iran are felt strongly in India as well. In this environment, it becomes important to closely watch not only the primary actors in the conflict but also those regional powers whose positions could shape the broader trajectory of the crisis.

One such actor is Türkiye. Sharing a 560-kilometre border with Iran that has remained largely unchanged for nearly four centuries, Türkiye occupies a position of immediate geographic proximity to the unfolding crisis.² As Iran’s neighbour and a country with a long history of both rivalry and pragmatic cooperation with Tehran, Türkiye has frequently figured in debates surrounding Iran’s regional role.³ At the same time, Ankara’s uneasy relationship with Israel, combined with its membership in NATO, places it in a particularly complex position as the conflict unfolds. For India—which maintains complicated yet pragmatic ties with both Türkiye and Iran—understanding where Ankara stands today, how it is navigating the current crisis, and what this means for the wider regional picture is, therefore, essential.

This article proceeds from the argument that the implications of the Iran crisis for India are meaningfully impacted by Türkiye’s own choices. Ankara has a clear interest in preventing a

¹ “How the Gulf Became Integral Part of India’s ‘Extended Neighbourhood’ under PM Modi,” *DD News*, 20 June 2024. <https://ddnews.gov.in/en/how-the-gulf-became-integral-part-of-indias-extended-neighbourhood-under-pm-modi/>

² Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Türkiye–Iran Relations,” accessed 6 March 2026. <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye-iran-relations.en.mfa>

³ S Gülden Ayman, “Turkey and Iran: Between Friendly Competition and Fierce Rivalry,” *Arab Studies Quarterly* 36, no 1 (2014): 7–27. <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/76a6/0e65475208f6759c5069afd76a58e40dad2d.pdf>

collapse of the Iranian State while also limiting Tehran's regional influence, placing it in the position of both competitor and stabilising neighbour. How Türkiye manages this balance will impact the extent to which the conflict disrupts energy flows and maritime trade through the Strait of Hormuz and the wider Persian Gulf, both of which remain critical for India's own energy security and commercial shipping.

At the same time, the crisis also intersects with the emerging politics of Eurasian connectivity. Iran continues to play an important role in India's plans for overland access to Central Asia and Russia through the International North–South Transport Corridor and India's investments in Chabahar Port.⁴ Türkiye, meanwhile, has been actively promoting alternative corridors across the South Caucasus linking Europe and Asia.⁵ Competition and cooperation between Ankara and Tehran across these routes will therefore influence the geography of Eurasian trade in ways that matter for India.

Against this backdrop, the article examines Türkiye's evolving position in the Iran crisis and assesses what it means for India's energy security, maritime trade routes, and connectivity ambitions across Eurasia.

Türkiye–Iran Relations: Between Rivalry and Pragmatic Cooperation

Relations between Türkiye and Iran are rooted in one of the most enduring geopolitical relationships in West Asia. Despite centuries of rivalry between their imperial predecessors — the Ottoman and Safavid empires — the two sides eventually settled into a pattern defined by a stable border and a rough balance of power. The boundary established under the Treaty of Zuhab in 1639 remains one of the oldest continuously recognised boundaries in the region, surviving the collapse of empires and the emergence of modern nation-states.⁶ This long history has produced a distinctive strategic reality, wherein both sides have learned to manage competition without allowing it to escalate into sustained direct conflict.

Over time, this relationship has evolved into what many analysts describe as a form of “*friendly competition*”.⁷ Ankara and Tehran have frequently found themselves on opposing sides of regional struggles while nevertheless maintaining channels of cooperation wherever their interests overlap. One recurring area of convergence has been the management of Kurdish militancy along their shared border.⁸ Both States have long been concerned about separatist movements among Kurdish populations straddling the border, which has periodically encouraged security cooperation despite broader political mistrust.

At the same time, their regional ambitions have often placed them in competition. The collapse of the erstwhile Soviet Union and the emergence of newly independent States in Central Asia

⁴ Dr Punit Gaur, “Chabahar Port Agreement: India's Stride Towards Central Asian Connectivity,” *Issue Brief*, 21 May 2024. https://www.icwa.in/show_content.php?lang=1&level=3&cls_id=10919&lid=6938

⁵ Hamzah Rifaat, “The Middle Corridor Matures in 2025: Is This Central Asia's Strategic Moment?” *TRENDS Research & Advisory*, 4 February 2026. <https://trendsresearch.org/insight/the-middle-corridor-matures-in-2025-is-this-central-asias-strategic-moment/>

⁶ Ayman, “Turkey and Iran: Between Friendly Competition and Fierce Rivalry.”

⁷ Ayman, “Turkey and Iran: Between Friendly Competition and Fierce Rivalry.”

⁸ Nigar Bayramli, “Iran, Türkiye Discuss Defense Cooperation, Border Security, Regional Issues,” *Caspian News*, 3 October 2025. <https://caspiannews.com/news-detail/iran-turkiye-discuss-defense-cooperation-border-security-regional-issues-2025-10-2-0/>

and the South Caucasus, opened new arenas where both Ankara and Tehran sought influence.⁹ Türkiye's close alignment with Azerbaijan, particularly in energy and transport initiatives linking the Caucasus to Europe, contrasted with Iran's more cautious approach aimed at preserving its own regional position and preventing geopolitical encirclement.¹⁰

Despite these rivalries, economic interdependence—particularly in energy—has acted as an important stabilising factor in the relationship.¹¹ Iran has long been an important supplier of hydrocarbons to Türkiye, and bilateral trade expanded significantly during the 2000s as Ankara sought to diversify its energy sources while deepening regional economic ties.¹² At the same time, political tensions have never fully disappeared. The two countries have supported different actors in conflicts in Syria and Iraq, reflecting their competing visions of regional order.¹³

Taken together, this mixture of cooperation and rivalry has produced a pragmatic but cautious relationship often summarised as one of “*occasional allies, enduring rivals*”.¹⁴ This historical pattern is crucial for understanding Türkiye's approach to the current crisis around Iran. Ankara's policies are shaped not only by contemporary geopolitical calculations but also by a long-standing recognition that stability along its eastern frontier is preferable to confrontation or collapse. This dynamic provides the context for examining how Türkiye is navigating the present crisis and why its choices may significantly influence the regional environment that countries such as India must navigate.

Türkiye's Calculus in the Iran Crisis

The current crisis surrounding Iran places Türkiye in a particularly complex position. While Ankara has frequently competed with Tehran for regional influence, it has little interest in the collapse of the Iranian State or in the emergence of a prolonged regional war. Instead, Türkiye's approach reflects a cautious balancing act—seeking to contain escalation while protecting its own security, economic, and geopolitical interests. Understanding this calculus is critical to assessing how the crisis may evolve and why Türkiye's position matters beyond the immediate theatre of conflict.

A central element shaping Ankara's response is its preference for Iranian State stability, even amidst deep political differences. Turkish policymakers have long viewed the preservation of functioning state structures in Iran as essential for maintaining stability along their eastern

⁹ Gareth H Jenkins, *Occasional Allies, Enduring Rivals: Turkey's Relations with Iran*, Silk Road Paper (Washington, DC: Central Asia–Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program, May 2012).

https://silkroadstudies.org/resources/pdf/SilkRoadPapers/2012_05_SRP_Jenkins_Turkey-Iran.pdf

¹⁰ Hamidreza Azizi and Daria Isachenko, “Turkey-Iran Rivalry in the Changing Geopolitics of the South Caucasus,” *German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP) Comment*, 27 September 2023. <https://www.swp-berlin.org/10.18449/2023C49/>

¹¹ Bayram Sinkaya, “Rationalization of Turkey-Iran Relations: Prospects and Limits,” *Insight Turkey* 14, no 2 (Spring 2012). <https://www.insightturkey.com/articles/rationalization-of-turkey-iran-relations-prospects-and-limits>

¹² Saud Alhasawi, *Turkey and Iran: Geopolitical Approaches in the Middle East*, Strategy Paper 24 (Washington, DC: Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies, 16 July 2021). <https://nesa-center.org/dev/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/2021-07-16-Strategy-Paper-24-Turkey-Iran-Geopolitical-Approaches-in-Middle-East.pdf> and Elin Kinnander, *The Turkish-Iranian Gas Relationship: Politically Successful, Commercially Problematic*, NG 38 (Oxford: Oxford Institute for Energy Studies, January 2010). <https://www.oxfordenergy.org/wpcms/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/NG38-TheTurkishIranianGasRelationship-ElinKinnander-2010.pdf>

¹³ Sinkaya, “Rationalization of Turkey-Iran Relations.”

¹⁴ Jenkins, *Occasional Allies, Enduring Rivals*.

border.¹⁵ A sudden weakening or fragmentation of the Iranian State could create ungoverned spaces similar to those that emerged in Iraq and Syria, potentially allowing militant groups and cross-border insurgencies to re-emerge. The Kurdish question is particularly important in this regard. Ankara fears that instability in Iran could empower armed groups such as the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and its Iranian affiliate Kurdistan Free Life Party (PJAK), which operate along the border regions.¹⁶ From Türkiye's perspective, therefore, a weakened but intact Iranian State is preferable to either regime collapse or uncontrolled fragmentation.

At the same time, Ankara is wary of a wider regional war triggered by the confrontation between Iran and Israel, particularly if it draws-in the United States. Turkish leaders have repeatedly warned that direct military escalation could destabilise the entire region.¹⁷ Türkiye has been among Israel's strongest critics over developments in Gaza¹⁸ and has condemned Israeli strikes on Iranian territory, yet it has also urged Tehran to avoid responses that might widen the conflict.¹⁹ This dual messaging reflects Ankara's attempt to criticise Israeli actions while simultaneously preventing the crisis from spiralling into a full-scale war that would threaten regional stability.

Another dimension of Türkiye's approach has been its effort to position itself as a diplomatic intermediary. Ankara has at times sought to facilitate communication channels between Tehran and Western actors, offering to host talks or relay messages aimed at reducing the risk of miscalculation.²⁰ Such initiatives align with Türkiye's broader ambition to translate geopolitical crises into diplomatic influence, enhancing its profile as a regional power capable of engaging multiple sides. At the same time, this role allows Ankara to hedge between its commitments as a member of NATO and its desire to maintain workable relations with neighbouring States.

The crisis also intersects with Türkiye's economic and energy interests. Iran remains both an energy supplier and a potential transit partner in Ankara's wider ambition to position itself as a regional hub linking Asia, the Caucasus, and Europe.²¹ Prolonged conflict or harsh sanctions could disrupt these flows and undermine Türkiye's connectivity ambitions. Conversely, a relatively stable Iran integrated into regional energy and transport networks would support Ankara's goal of expanding its role in Eurasian trade routes.

¹⁵ Jenkins, *Occasional Allies, Enduring Rivals*.

¹⁶ "Turkey Says It Is Closely Following Actions of Iranian Kurdish PJAK Militant Group," *Reuters*, 5 March 2026. <https://www.reuters.com/business/media-telecom/turkey-says-it-is-closely-following-actions-iranian-kurdish-pjak-militant-group-2026-03-05/>

¹⁷ Directorate of Communications, "Statement by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan on Iran and Developments in the Region," *Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye*, 28 February 2026.

<https://www.iletisim.gov.tr/english/haberler/detay/statement-by-president-recep-tayyip-erdogan-on-iran-and-developments-in-the-region> and "Turkey Warns over 'Dangerous' Bid to Stir Civil War in Iran," *Hindustan Times*, 8 March 2026. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/us-news/turkey-warns-over-dangerous-bid-to-stir-civil-war-in-iran-101772912062865.html>

¹⁸ Daniel C Kurtzer and Kayra Sener, "Whether It Puts Boots on the Ground or Not, Turkey Matters for Gaza's Stabilization," *Atlantic Council*, 25 November 2025. <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/whether-it-puts-boots-on-the-ground-or-not-turkey-matters-for-gazas-stabilization/>

¹⁹ "Türkiye's Ruling Party Condemns U.S.-Israeli Attacks on Iran as 'Unlawful'," *Xinhua*, 3 March 2026.

<https://english.news.cn/20260303/1d477f430ca2475c9fa9c30abd52950e/c.html>

²⁰ "Fidan: Iran's Strategy of Bombing All Gulf Countries Is 'Incredibly Wrong'," *Yeni Şafak*, 4 March 2026.

<https://en.yenisafak.com/turkiye/fidan-irans-strategy-of-bombing-all-gulf-countries-is-incredibly-wrong-3715359>

²¹ Henry Sagman, "Iran's Stability as a Turkish National Security Interest," *INSS Insight* no. 2097, 4 February 2026, Institute for National Security Studies (INSS). <https://www.inss.org.il/publication/turkey-iran-2026/>

Finally, the crisis unfolds against the backdrop of intensifying geopolitical competition in the South Caucasus, where Turkish and Iranian interests increasingly intersect. Following the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War in 2020, Türkiye significantly strengthened its partnership with Azerbaijan, emerging as Baku's key security supporter and an important gateway to Central Asia.²² One of the most contentious issues in this context is the proposed Zangezur Corridor, which would link Azerbaijan to its Nakhchivan exclave through southern Armenia and onward to Türkiye.²³ Ankara and Baku view the corridor as a major east–west connectivity route linking the so-called Middle Corridor to Central Asia, while Tehran fears that such arrangements could marginalise its own transit role and reduce its strategic relevance in regional trade.²⁴

Taken together, these factors explain why Türkiye has adopted a position of cautious neutrality during the current crisis. Ankara seeks to prevent escalation, preserve Iranian State stability, and simultaneously expand its own geopolitical and economic space across the region. This balancing act—between rivalry and cooperation with Iran, alliance commitments within NATO, and broader regional ambitions—will play an important role in shaping how the conflict evolves and how its consequences ripple across neighbouring regions, including those that matter directly to India.

An additional layer shaping Türkiye's approach relates to emerging debates in regional strategic discourse about whether Ankara could eventually occupy the geopolitical space historically associated with Iran. In recent months, some analysts and political figures—most notably former Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett—have argued that Türkiye may increasingly emerge as Israel's principal long-term regional rival, warning that “*Turkey is the new Iran*” in terms of its growing regional activism and political positioning.²⁵

This argument, however, reflects less a direct equivalence between the two States and more a shift in perceptions about regional power balances. Iran has historically been viewed as a revolutionary and sanctioned actor relying on proxy networks, whereas Türkiye remains deeply integrated into the global system as a NATO member, a major trading hub, and a participant in multiple Western and regional institutions. In this sense, the comparison captures a broader concern that as Iran's influence weakens or becomes constrained by conflict and sanctions, other regional powers—particularly Türkiye—could fill parts of that geopolitical space through military deployments, economic networks, and political influence across West Asia and its surrounding regions.

Yet precisely because such perceptions are emerging, Ankara has strong incentives to avoid being cast as a direct successor to Iran's role as the region's principal disruptive actor. Maintaining a functioning Iranian state therefore serves Türkiye's interests in multiple ways. A

²² Asia Research Unit, “The Clash of Corridors in the South Caucasus,” *Emirates Policy Center*, 2 January 2026. <https://www.epc.ae/en/details/featured/the-clash-of-corridors-in-the-south-caucasus>

²³ Alex Winston, “Why Iran Sees the Zangezur Corridor Between Armenia-Azerbaijan as an Existential Threat,” *The Jerusalem Post*, 11 August 2025. <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/iran-news/article-863925>

²⁴ Elahch Koolae and Ahmad Rashidi, “The Zangezur Corridor and Threats to the Interests of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the South Caucasus,” *Caucasus Analytical Digest*, no. 136 (2024): 3–6. https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/bitstream/handle/document/94111/94111_1.pdf;jsessionid=0E3C7E9872914A6924EC386B41B0A49B?sequence=1

²⁵ Gabriel Colodro, “The New Iran: Bennett Warns of Emerging Axis at Conference of Presidents,” *The Media Line*, 18 February 2026. <https://themedialine.org/headlines/the-new-iran-bennett-warns-of-emerging-axis-at-conference-of-presidents/>

stable Iran preserves a balance of power in West Asia and prevents the strategic vacuum that could otherwise push Türkiye into a more confrontational posture vis-à-vis Israel and other regional actors. It also helps Ankara avoid being drawn into the kind of geopolitical isolation and adversarial framing that has long shaped international attitudes toward Tehran.

For India, this dynamic carries a subtle strategic advantage. New Delhi today maintains relatively stable and historically rooted relations with Iran, particularly in areas such as connectivity, energy cooperation, and regional diplomacy.²⁶ At the same time, India's engagement with Türkiye remains more limited and occasionally complicated by political differences.²⁷ In this context, the continued presence of Iran as an independent regional pole helps preserve a multipolar balance in West Asia, preventing the emergence of sharper ideological or geopolitical blocs. A stable Iran therefore not only aligns with Türkiye's preference for regional equilibrium but also supports India's broader interest in maintaining diversified partnerships and avoiding rigid alignments across the region.

Corridor Competition: Eurasian Connectivity and the India Angle

Beyond the immediate security and diplomatic dimensions of the Iran crisis lies a deeper layer of geopolitical competition centred on Eurasian connectivity. Transport corridors, energy transit routes, and logistical networks linking Asia to Europe have become central to regional strategic thinking. In this evolving landscape, both Türkiye and Iran seek to position themselves as critical transit hubs.²⁸ Their respective connectivity strategies—sometimes overlapping and sometimes competing—carry implications not only for regional geopolitics but also for external actors such as India that depend on stable trade routes across Eurasia.

Türkiye's strategy has increasingly focused on the Middle Corridor, formally known as the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route.²⁹ This network links Türkiye to the Caucasus, the Caspian Sea, Central Asia, and ultimately China, bypassing both Russia to the north and Iran to the south.³⁰ Since the Russia–Ukraine conflict disrupted traditional northern routes, Ankara has accelerated investments in rail infrastructure, port development, and logistical integration with partners such as Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, seeking to position itself as a central gateway between Europe and Asia.³¹

The South Caucasus is central to this vision. Following the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War in 2020, Türkiye strengthened its strategic partnership with Azerbaijan, emerging as Baku's principal security and economic partner. Within this framework, as has already been mentioned above, the proposed Zangezur Corridor, linking mainland Azerbaijan to its Nakhchivan exclave through southern Armenia and onward to Türkiye, has become a particularly contentious issue.

²⁶ Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, *India–Iran Relations*, January 2025.

<https://www.mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/India-Iran-Jan-2025.pdf>

²⁷ Omair Anas, “Why Türkiye Chose to Side With Pakistan Over India,” *The Diplomat*, 28 May 2025.

<https://thediplomat.com/2025/05/why-turkiye-chose-to-side-with-pakistan-over-india/>

²⁸ Asia Research Unit, “Clash of Corridors in the South Caucasus.”

²⁹ Anadolu Agency, “Middle Corridor Emerging as Major Trade Link, Strengthening Türkiye's Role,” *Daily Sabah*, 14 December 2025. <https://www.dailysabah.com/business/transportation/middle-corridor-emerging-as-major-trade-link-strengthening-turkiyes-role>

³⁰ Anadolu Agency, “Middle Corridor Emerging as Major Trade Link.”

³¹ Rifaat, “Middle Corridor Matures in 2025.”

Ankara and Baku view the corridor as a transformative east–west route that could further strengthen the Middle Corridor and enhance connectivity with Central Asia.

It is reiterated that for Iran, such developments raise significant strategic concerns. Tehran has long relied on its geographic position as a bridge between the Persian Gulf, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. Tehran apprehends that new transit routes bypassing Iranian territory—particularly those linking Türkiye directly with Azerbaijan and Central Asia—could reduce its role in regional trade networks. As a result, Iran has opposed arrangements that might weaken its position as a transit State or alter existing regional connectivity patterns.³²

At the same time, Iran continues to promote its own connectivity vision centred upon north–south trade routes linking Russia, the Caucasus, Central Asia, and the Indian Ocean. The International North–South Transport Corridor (INSTC), which connects India with Russia and Europe through Iran and the Caspian region, represents a key pillar of this strategy.³³ For Tehran, the corridor offers both economic opportunities and a means of mitigating the effects of Western sanctions by deepening trade with Asian partners.

For India, these competing corridor visions present both opportunities and strategic dilemmas. New Delhi has invested significant political and economic capital in connectivity projects that rely on Iran as a central transit partner, including the development of Chabahar Port and the broader INSTC framework designed to connect India with Central Asia and Eurasia while bypassing Pakistan.³⁴ At the same time, Türkiye’s expanding role in east–west corridors across the Caucasus and Central Asia suggests that Eurasian connectivity is increasingly being shaped by a competitive ecosystem of overlapping routes rather than a single dominant corridor.

The current Iran crisis therefore intersects with a broader contest over infrastructure, transit geography, and regional influence. Türkiye’s strategic choices—whether in managing relations with Tehran or advancing corridor projects in the South Caucasus—could influence the future configuration of Eurasian connectivity. The evolving dynamics between Türkiye and Iran carry implications that extend beyond West Asia, and this where New Delhi comes in, with India’s own trade and energy strategies being dependent upon reliable access to these routes.

Implications for India: Energy, Connectivity, and Strategic Flexibility

For India, understanding this evolving corridor competition is essential. The trajectory of the Iran crisis intersects directly with three key strategic priorities: energy security, Eurasian connectivity, and the need to preserve diplomatic flexibility in a volatile region.

First, the crisis highlights the dual challenge of energy security and the security of energy supplies. India remains heavily dependent on imported hydrocarbons, with a substantial share of

³² Koolae and Rashidi, “Zangezur Corridor and Threats to the Interests of Iran.”

³³ Ayjaz Wani, “INSTC Eastern Corridor: India’s Gateway to Central Asia,” *Observer Research Foundation*, 27 November 2025. <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/instc-eastern-corridor-india-s-gateway-to-central-asia>

³⁴ Huma Siddiqui, “Enhancing Connectivity: India-Iran Chabahar Port Pact Paves the Way; IPGL to Invest \$120 Million,” *The Financial Express*, 13 May 2024. <https://www.financialexpress.com/business/defence/enhancing-connectivity-india-iran-chabahar-port-pact-paves-the-way-nsipgl-to-invest-120-million/3486312/>

its crude oil and liquefied natural gas sourced from the Persian Gulf.³⁵ From an energy security perspective, instability involving Iran contributes to volatility in global oil markets and can significantly raise import costs. The ongoing conflict has already pushed crude prices upward, and a sustained conflict could intensify these pressures, translating into higher import bills, inflationary risks, and a widening current account deficit for India.³⁶

At the same time, the crisis underscores concerns regarding “security-of-energy” flows — the protection of the maritime routes through which these supplies reach global markets. A large portion of India’s oil imports transits through the Strait of Hormuz, making stability in this chokepoint critical.³⁷ Any disruption, whether through military escalation, threats to shipping, or attacks on regional energy infrastructure, would increase freight and insurance costs. Such “war premiums” raise the landed cost of energy imports even when physical supplies remain uninterrupted.

Second, India’s connectivity strategy across Eurasia relies significantly upon the stability of Iran as a transit partner. Initiatives such as the International North–South Transport Corridor (INSTC) and the development of Chabahar Port were designed to provide India with access to Central Asia, Russia, and parts of Europe while bypassing Pakistan. The viability of these projects depends heavily on Iran’s political stability and its continued integration into regional trade networks. The current conflict, however, has introduced significant uncertainty into these initiatives, complicating the operational environment surrounding Chabahar and slowing the momentum of India’s westward connectivity ambitions.³⁸

At the same time, India will need to monitor the evolution of competing connectivity routes across the Caucasus and Central Asia. Türkiye’s efforts to expand the Middle Corridor and strengthen transport links with Azerbaijan and Central Asian states could gradually reshape the geography of Eurasian trade. While these routes do not directly replace India’s north–south connectivity strategy, their expansion will certainly influence regional logistics patterns and economic alignments.

Several developments will therefore merit close attention. The future of the Iran–Türkiye natural gas agreement, expected to expire in 2026, may offer insights into the trajectory of Ankara–Tehran economic relations.³⁹ Progress in infrastructure linked to the INSTC and the operational status of Chabahar Port will indicate whether India’s connectivity strategy through Iran can maintain momentum. Equally important will be developments in the South Caucasus, where emerging transit arrangements involving Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Türkiye could reshape east–west trade routes.

³⁵ Biswas, “Fuel and Remittances: How Iran Conflict Hits India.”

³⁶ Biswas, “Fuel and Remittances: How Iran Conflict Hits India.”

³⁷ Soutik Biswas, “Fuel and Remittances: How Iran Conflict Hits India at Home,” *BBC News*, 6 March 2026. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cn71j8mlkk8o>

³⁸ Asit Manohar, “How US-Iran War May Impact India’s Stake in Chabahar Port, ₹15,000 Crore Bilateral Trade,” *Mint*, 8 March 2026. <https://www.livemint.com/market/stock-market-news/how-us-iran-war-may-impact-indias-stake-in-chabhar-port-rs-15-000-crore-bilateral-trade-11772944882844.html>

³⁹ Mühdan Sağlam, “Global Energy Geopolitics in the Grip of Hormuz and Turkey,” *bianet*, 2 March 2026. <https://bianet.org/yazi/global-energy-geopolitics-in-the-grip-of-hormuz-and-turkey-317245>

For India, closely monitoring these shifts will be essential to preserving strategic flexibility and adapting its energy and connectivity policies to a rapidly evolving Eurasian landscape.

Conclusion

The evolving crisis surrounding Iran highlights the growing strategic importance of Türkiye in shaping the regional balance across West Asia and the wider Eurasian space. Positioned at the intersection of NATO, West Asia, and the South Caucasus, Ankara occupies a unique geopolitical position that enables it to engage simultaneously with Western partners, regional actors, and competing connectivity initiatives. As a result, Türkiye's approach to Iran—marked by cautious balancing, mediation efforts, and strategic competition—carries implications that extend beyond bilateral dynamics.

For Türkiye, the challenge lies in managing a complex environment defined by security concerns along its eastern frontier, ambitions to expand its role as a hub for energy and transit routes, and the shifting geopolitics of the South Caucasus. These factors reinforce Ankara's interest in preventing escalation with Iran while simultaneously advancing its own connectivity and geopolitical objectives.

For India, the significance of these developments lies in their intersection with core strategic priorities: energy stability, access to Eurasian trade corridors, and the preservation of diplomatic flexibility in a volatile region. The future trajectory of initiatives such as the International North–South Transport Corridor and the development of Chabahar Port will depend not only on Iran's internal stability but also on the broader regional environment in which these projects operate.

Ultimately, the Iran crisis reflects a wider transformation in the strategic landscape of West Asia and Eurasia, where regional powers are increasingly shaping both security dynamics and the geography of trade corridors. In this evolving environment—defined by competing transit routes, shifting alignments, and overlapping connectivity initiatives—India will need to closely monitor emerging trends and adapt its engagement accordingly to safeguard its long-term strategic and economic interests.

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