

Goyal talks to West Asia partners amid war risks

FE BUREAU
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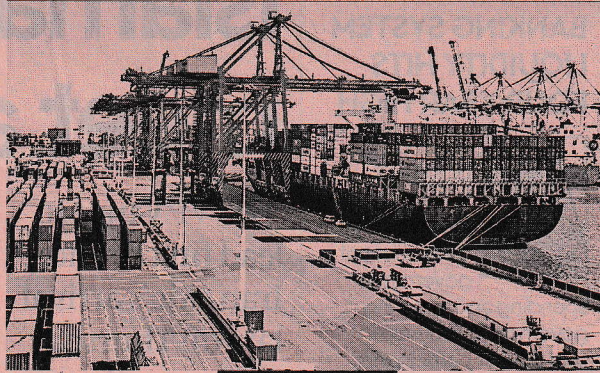
AS THE WAR in West Asia continues even after the announcement of ceasefire and negotiations, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal discussed trade-related matters with the key partners in the region.

Late Wednesday, the minister held a virtual interaction with the Minister of Foreign Trade of United Arab Emirates Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi. "We discussed opportunities to further strengthen India-UAE trade ties and expand avenues for deeper bilateral cooperation. I look forward to advancing our strategic partnership to new heights," Goyal posted on 'X'.

The UAE is the second biggest export market for India and shipments have suffered due to war-related disruptions in logistics. For high value items and perishables the air route is being used increasingly. For other items smaller ships and alternate ports of Fujairah and Khorfakkan are being used. In the past few days the buyers in UAE have approached India pharma companies to start sending goods again, people who are aware of the developments said. Other than the important market, UAE's port Jebel Ali is the important trans-shipment hub of India's exports to the West.

Goyal also held discussions with the Secretary General of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)

REGIONAL RESET



■ India steps up West Asia outreach despite fragile ceasefire, holding multiple high-level trade talks

■ War disruptions hit logistics; exporters pivot to air cargo for perishables

■ Jebel Ali Port remains critical node for India's westbound exports, underscoring UAE's supply-chain role

Jasem Mohamed AlBudaiwi. "We discussed strengthening India-GCC cooperation across various sectors and reaffirmed our shared commitment to enhancing economic and strategic ties," he posted on 'X'.

The minister also held a meeting with Minister of Commerce and Industry of Kuwait Osama Khaled Boodai. "Exchanged views on expanding bilateral trade relations and deepening collaboration across key sectors," Goyal said.

The Gulf and West Asia region as a whole is the biggest goods trade partner for India. With the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) that includes Saudi Arabia, UAE, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain and

Kuwait—the bilateral trade between two sides totalled \$ 178.56 billion in 2024-25 with India's exports at \$ 58.87 billion and imports at \$121.68 billion.

The biggest import by India from the region is petroleum crude and petroleum products which in April-February 2026 stood at \$ 61.7 billion. While India already has free trade agreements with UAE and Oman, it has started negotiations on another one with the GCC as a whole. Minister of External Affairs S Jaishankar will visit UAE on April 11-12 to review close cooperation and deepen the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between the two countries.