

# US-Iran deal could be finalised soon, mediator Pakistan says

US down multiple Iranian attack drones over Strait of Hormuz

- Pakistan reports major diplomatic progress
- Deal potentially near completion
- Signing timeline remains uncertain

AFP | Tehran

The United States and Iran could finalise an agreement to end the Middle East war within as little as 24 hours, mediator Pakistan said yesterday, after both sides expressed optimism about the chances of concluding a deal.

The apparent momentum came in spite of new skirmishes in the Strait of Hormuz, which has been at the centre of the months-long war that has roiled the region and the global economy.

Weeks of negotiations on a long-term peace agreement following an April 8 truce have so far been fruitless, with US President Donald Trump repeatedly insisting a deal was near only for the wrangling to drag on.

"We are closer to a peace deal than ever before," Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, whose country has played a crucial role in peace talks, wrote on X.

"With finalisation likely expected in the next 24 hours, Pakistan is preparing for the electronic signing of the peace deal immediately after, followed by technical level talks next week."

The schedule for the signing remains to be seen, however.



Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (R) shaking hands with Pakistan's Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi before their meeting in Tehran (file photo)

A Pakistani foreign ministry statement said it was planned for Sunday, while Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei yesterday said it was yet to be determined, "although it will not be tomorrow".

He nonetheless added: "The possibility of this happening in the coming days cannot be ruled out."

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi had likewise said on Friday that the deal could be signed "in the coming days", while a senior US official had put their confidence in finally reaching an agreement at "80 to 85 percent".

However, the warring parties

have released conflicting information about the contents of the deal, as each seeks to show it emerged from the war with the upper hand.

### Hormuz drones

Among other things, Tehran has insisted on its right to enrich uranium and maintain control over the Strait of Hormuz, both of which appear to be sharply at odds with Washington's long-standing red lines.

The strait is a key maritime trade route carrying oil and gas from the Gulf to markets worldwide, and Tehran has blockaded the waterway since the outbreak of the war.

It has insisted vessels obtain permission from its armed forces before transiting, and has established a new body to oversee and collect tolls in the strait.

The US has responded with its own blockade of Iranian ports in an attempt to choke off the country's energy exports.

Earlier yesterday, the United States said it downed multiple Iranian drones over the strait.

The US military's Central Command posted on X that Iran had "launched multiple one-way attack drones in an attempt to strike commercial ships transiting the Strait".

It added that "US forces have downed all of them in recent

**24** hours is the timeframe Pakistan said a US-Iran peace deal could be finalised after weeks of fruitless negotiations

hours".

### Diverging terms

Trump on Friday denied that the peace deal favoured Tehran after Iranian media outlets published a purported breakdown that clashed with Washington's description.

The reports, Trump said in a social media post, "have NOTHING to do with the terms that were agreed to, in writing".

Araghchi provided some details on the deal in an interview with state television, saying it called for the lifting of the US naval blockade and unspecified changes to the administration of the Strait of Hormuz.

He also said the only way to deal with Iran's enriched uranium "is to dilute it inside Iran".

Trump, who has justified the war as necessary to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons, had previously said the US would take control of the uranium.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel -- which launched the war in tandem with the US in February -- said Trump had promised him any agreement would include the removal of Tehran's enriched nuclear material.

Iran has long insisted its nuclear programme is peaceful.



TOP 4 TWEETS

01



On 16th and 17th June I will be in Evian to participate in the G7 Summit. I will be interacting with various world leaders and discussing a wide range of subjects. India will always focus on giving voice to the aspirations of the Global South. @G7

@narendramodi

02



Spoke to US Secretary of State Marco Rubio this evening. I reiterated India's strong protest at the attacks by the US Navy in the Gulf that killed three Indian mariners. Such lethal actions against commercial shipping are not justified.

@DrJaishankar

03



If I were ever abducted by Aliens, the first thing I'd ask is whether they came from a planet where people also deny science.

@neiltyson

04



Canada and France share history, values, and increasingly, the same interests.

@MarkJCarney

## Trooping the Colour marks King's official birthday

TDI | Agencies

Crowds have gathered for the annual Trooping the Colour to mark King Charles III's official birthday.

The parade set off from Buckingham Palace, with King Charles and Queen Camilla making their way in a carriage along The Mall to Horseguard's Parade.

As royal colonels, the Prince of Wales, the Princess Royal and the Duke of Edinburgh rode on horseback, while other attendees included the Princess of Wales and her three children while the Duchess of Edinburgh travelled by carriage.

The celebrations culminated with a Red Arrows flypast, watched by the Royal Family from the balcony at Buckingham Palace. Cooper has also issued a temporary block on Trump's demand to close the Kennedy Center for two years of renovations, which was due to start in July.



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