

# THE US PRESIDENT SAID HE WAS NOT IN A HURRY TO SIGN THE DEAL

TEHRAN

Iran warned yesterday that while some progress had been made, it was not yet close to striking a deal with the US to end the Middle East war, as USA president Donald Trump also said he was in no hurry to sign.

World oil prices tumbled on renewed optimism about an agreement, after top USA diplomat Marco Rubio suggested a deal could be reached within the day – but Iran's foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei responded: "No one can make such a claim."

Trump, meanwhile, took to his social media platform Truth Social to declare: "The deal with Iran will either be a great and meaningful one, or there will be no deal."

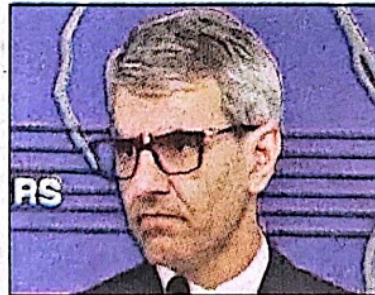
Pakistan's prime minister Shehbaz Sharif, whose government is spearheading efforts to mediate a negotiated agreement between the US and Iran, met China's president Xi Jinping in Beijing.

USA and Iranian forces have observed a ceasefire since April 8 while diplomats push for a negotiated settlement, although Iran has maintained controls on Gulf shipping through the Strait of Hormuz and the USA Navy has sought to blockade

## IRAN, TRUMP TALK DOWN HOPES OF IMMINENT PEACE DEAL



USA president Donald Trump



Iran spokesman Esmail Baqaei

Iran's ports.

"We thought we might have some news last night, maybe today," US secretary of state Rubio told reporters during a visit to New Delhi, referring to hopes for a deal.

"We have what I think is a pretty solid thing on the table in terms of their ability to open up the straits, get the straits open," he said.

"We are either going to have a good agreement or we're going to have to deal with it another way. We'd prefer to have a good agreement," he said.

However, Baqaei poured cold water on hopes for a quick final settlement.

### CHARGING STRAIT SERVICE FEES

"It is correct to say that we have reached a conclusion on a large

### NO URANIUM TALKS

Iranian officials have stressed that, despite the long-standing US demand for an end to its uranium enrichment, talks on the issue of Iran's contested nuclear programme have been deferred until after an initial agreement.

portion of the issues under discussion," he told a news briefing.

"But to say that this means the signing of an agreement is imminent – no one can make such a claim."

Baqaei stressed that Iran would continue to manage maritime traffic through the Strait of Hormuz by charging service fees – arguing that this did not amount to Tehran

"seeking to collect tolls".

Israel's prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Sunday that he and Trump had agreed that "any final agreement with Iran must eliminate the nuclear threat entirely."

Ali Vaez, the director of the Iran Project at independent monitor, the International Crisis Group, said Tehran may have weathered the USA assault and feel able to declare a victory, but it would need hundreds of billions of dollars to repair its shattered economy.

"For Iran, the stakes are existential, for the USA, they're short term," he said. The US, he added, has also spent a fortune of its own and might have to settle for some "vague and pretty generalised promises on the nuclear front with the focus being on reopening the Strait of Hormuz, which wasn't even closed at the beginning of the conflict".

"So, you have this situation in which basically, yes, both sides will get some of what they need in a memorandum of understanding, but this is coming at an astronomical cost for them and much better options were available to both sides without going through this devastating crisis," he said.

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