

# ‘India for long-term partnership with Iran’

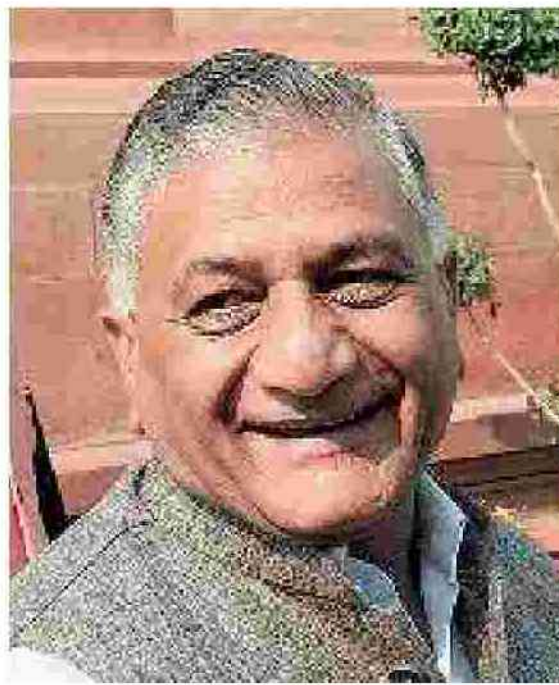
Ties not dependent on third country, V.K. Singh tells LS

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE  
NEW DELHI

India is engaged with Iran for a “long-term partnership” on energy trade, and for operating the port of Chabahar, Minister of State for External Affairs General (Retd.) V. K. Singh informed the Lok Sabha on Wednesday.

Speaking in response to a question on the impact of U.S.-Iran tensions over India, the Minister said that the Iranian nuclear issue should be resolved peacefully and that India’s ties with Tehran are not dependent on a third country.

“High-level exchanges, including the State visit by the Prime Minister to Iran in May 2016 and that of the Iranian President to India in February 2018, have taken place. In keeping with the understanding reached during these visits, both sides are engaged in developing a



V.K. Singh

long-term partnership in energy; deepening of trade and investment cooperation; and early and full operation of the Shahid Beheshti Port at Chabahar,” declared Mr. Singh.

### No third-party pressure

Mr. Singh also clarified that India’s ties with Iran would not be subjected to restrictions imposed by a third country.

“India’s bilateral relations

with Iran stand on their own and are not influenced by India’s relations with any third country,” he informed the Lok Sabha, indicating that India intends to continue all aspects of bilateral ties with Iran, despite pressure from the U.S.

### High-level talks

The declaration of India’s “long-term partnership” with Iran over energy and infrastructure building activities came a day after U.S. Assistant Secretary for Terrorist Financing Marshall Billingslea met Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale in New Delhi.

The U.S. official also met representatives from the Ministry of Finance to discuss India’s energy requirements, among other issues. India also hosted Iran’s Deputy Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi of Iran on Monday.