



Inter-Ministerial Briefing on Recent Developments in West Asia

Centre offers additional 10% Commercial LPG allocation to States/UTs linked to reforms supporting transition towards PNG

CGD entities directed to expedite household gas connections and clearly communicate timelines to consumers to encourage adoption

Domestic LPG production increases by 40 percent

Priority sectors continue to receive protected gas supplies

India's maritime sector continues to operate smoothly with no congestion reported at ports

Indian Missions steps up support for Indian students in Gulf and Iran; Assistance being provided by Embassy

Flight situation continues to improve with additional flights operating

Posted On: 18 MAR 2026 5:37PM by PIB Delhi

Senior officials from the Ministries of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Ports, Shipping and Waterways, External Affairs briefed the media on the latest developments in West Asia today at the National Media Centre. Such interactions are being held on a regular basis to keep the citizens informed through media about the evolving situation. During today's briefing, updates were shared on fuel availability, maritime operations, and assistance to Indian nationals in the region.

Energy Supply and Fuel Availability

The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas provided an update on the fuel supply scenario and steps being taken to maintain steady availability of petroleum products and LPG, amid the closure of the Strait of Hormuz. The Ministry stated:

Crude and Refineries

- All refineries are operating at high capacity with adequate crude inventories. India has sufficient production of petrol and diesel and no imports are required to meet domestic demand.
- **Domestic LPG production from refineries has been increased by about 40 percent.**

Retail Outlets

- **No cases of fuel dry-outs** have been reported at retail outlets by Oil Marketing Companies, and supplies of petrol and diesel continue to be maintained regularly.
- Citizens are advised not to resort to panic buying as adequate stocks are available.

Natural Gas

- **Priority sectors continue to receive protected gas supplies, including 100 percent supply to domestic PNG and CNG transport**, while supplies to industrial and commercial consumers are being regulated at around 80 percent.
- Commercial LPG consumers are encouraged to switch to PNG, and establishments such as hotels, restaurants, hospitals and hostels can obtain PNG connections from authorized City Gas Distribution (CGD) entities.
- CGD companies including IGL, MGL, GAIL Gas and BPCL are offering incentives to promote domestic and commercial PNG connections.
- The Government is expanding the CGD network to promote clean and efficient PNG usage, and businesses are encouraged to approach authorised CGD entities for connections.
- CGD entities have been advised to ensure maximum gas supply to critical sectors such as seed drying units and cold storages.
- **Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) has directed CGD entities to reduce timelines between application and commencement of gas supply**, while clearly communicating timelines to consumers to encourage adoption.
- CGD entities have also been advised to undertake mass awareness initiatives under the PNG drive, including campaigns through print, radio, social media and public outreach activities involving stakeholders and influencers.
- The Government of India, vide letter dated 16 March 2026, has requested States and UTs to facilitate CGD expansion by issuing deemed permissions for pending applications, approving new permissions within 24 hours, waiving road restoration and permission charges, relaxing working hours and seasons, and appointing State nodal officers for coordination and faster implementation.
- The Government of India, vide letter dated 18 March 2026, has offered States and UTs **an additional 10 percent allocation of commercial LPG linked to reforms supporting transition from LPG to PNG**, including
 - 1% additional allocation for formation of State and district committees for approval of CGD applications and resolving grievances,
 - 2% additional allocation for issuing orders to granting deemed CGD permissions,
 - 3% additional allocation for introducing “Dig and restore scheme” for CGD entities and
 - 4% additional allocation for reducing the annual rental/ lease charges.
- States and UTs have been encouraged to **take forward these reforms to accelerate CGD network expansion and expedite PNG connections for domestic, commercial and industrial consumers.**
- These measures are expected to reduce pressure on LPG demand and facilitate transition of commercial consumers to PNG.

LPG

- LPG supply continues to be monitored in view of the prevailing geopolitical situation.
- **No dry-outs have been reported at distributorships.**
- **Online LPG bookings have increased from 83% to 93%.**

- **Delivery Authentication Code coverage has expanded from 53% (February 2026) to about 81%** to prevent diversion.
- Domestic LPG cylinder deliveries continue as normal.
- About 15 States/UTs like Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Manipur, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand and others, have issued orders for allocation of non-domestic LPG, and commercial LPG supply is being made available across the country.

Kerosene

- An additional allocation of 48,000 KL of kerosene has been provided to States and UTs, which have been requested to identify distribution points.
- Around 12 States like Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Manipur, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and others, have issued SKO allocation orders, while some States have indicated no requirement.

Meetings conducted by State Governments

- State Governments and UTs are monitoring supply of essential commodities under the Essential Commodities Act and LPG Control Order to take action against any hoarding and black marketing.
- The Government of India has advised States and UTs to conduct coordinated inspections and surprise checks to curb malpractices.
- 30 States and UTs have established control rooms and 22 have set up district-level monitoring committees, with others advised to do so on priority.
- 22 States/UTs like Rajasthan, Telangana, Goa, Himachal Pradesh, J&K, Maharashtra, Odisha, Tamil Nadu etc. have setup District Level Monitoring Committee.
- All those States/UTs who have not setup Control rooms and District Monitoring committees are requested to do so on urgent basis.

Enforcement action

- Enforcement actions continue across States to curb hoarding and black marketing of LPG.
- Recent cases include seizures of LPG cylinders in Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh, with joint operations conducted by enforcement agencies.
- PSU Oil Marketing Companies conducted over 2,300 surprise inspections at retail outlets and LPG distributorships to ensure smooth supply and prevent irregularities.

Other Government Measures

- The Government continues to prioritize uninterrupted LPG supply and PNG expansion, particularly for households and priority sectors such as hospitals and educational institutions.
- Supply and demand-side measures include enhanced refinery production, revised booking intervals of 25 days in urban areas and up to 45 days in rural areas, and prioritized allocation.
- Alternate fuels such as kerosene and coal have been made available to reduce pressure on LPG demand.
- PSU Oil Companies are promoting digital bookings and discouraging panic bookings, with improved adoption of online booking systems.
- Commercial LPG supply has been initiated in several States with support from State Governments.

Public Advisory

- Citizens are advised to rely on official sources and avoid rumours.
- Consumers are appealed to avoid panic bookings, use digital booking platforms and avoid unnecessary visits to LPG distributors.
- Citizens are encouraged to use alternate fuels such as PNG and electric or induction cooktops and to conserve energy.

Maritime Safety and Shipping Operations

During the briefing, information was shared on the current maritime situation in the Persian Gulf and the measures in place to ensure the safety of Indian vessels and crew by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways. The Ministry noted that:

- All Indian seafarers in the region are safe and no shipping incident involving Indian-flagged vessels has been reported in the past 24 hours.
- At present, 22 Indian-flagged vessels with 611 Indian seafarers remain in the western Persian Gulf region, with the Directorate General of Shipping continuing close monitoring in coordination with ship owners, RPSL agencies and Indian Missions.
- LPG carrier vessels Shivalik and Nanda Devi are currently discharging cargo as per schedule of oil handling companies.
- The DG Shipping Control Room continues to operate 24×7 and has handled 3,305 calls and 6,324 emails since activation, including 125 calls and 449 emails in the past 24 hours.
- DG Shipping has facilitated the safe repatriation of more than 472 Indian seafarers so far, including 25 in the past 24 hours, from airports and regional locations.
- **India's maritime sector continues to operate smoothly with no congestion reported at ports,** including confirmation from State Maritime Boards such as Gujarat and Maharashtra.
- Ports are closely monitoring vessel movements and cargo operations and have adequate spare capacity, with additional storage space created, including around 2,260 sq. meter at Visakhapatnam Port Authority.
- At JNPA, the situation remains normal with the number of stranded containers reducing further from about 1,000 to around 770.
- The Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways continues to monitor shipping movements, port operations, safety of seafarers and continuity of maritime trade in view of the evolving situation in West Asia.

Safety of Indian Nationals in the Region

The Ministry of External Affairs shared updates on recent developments in the region, including ongoing assistance and outreach through Indian Missions. The Ministry informed that:

- The Ministry of External Affairs continues to closely monitor developments in West Asia and the Gulf region, with the safety, security and welfare of the Indian community remaining the highest priority.
- The Prime Minister spoke with the President of the UAE, HH Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, and conveyed advance Eid greetings.
- The two leaders discussed the current situation in West Asia. The Prime Minister reiterated India's strong condemnation of attacks on the UAE resulting in loss of lives and damage to civilian infrastructure.
- Both leaders emphasized the importance of ensuring safe and free navigation through the Strait of Hormuz and agreed to continue working towards early restoration of peace, security and stability in the region.
- The Embassy of India in Tehran continues to assist Indian students in Iran, including those seeking to cross land borders into Azerbaijan.

- Indian nationals are advised to follow Embassy advisories to facilitate smooth land-border crossings into Armenia and Azerbaijan.
- A dedicated MEA control room remains operational to assist Indian nationals and their families, and coordination continues with State Governments and Union Territories.
- Indian Missions and Posts across the region are functioning round the clock, maintaining contact with community associations and organizations and issuing updated advisories. A decline in helpline queries indicates that many urgent issues of stranded nationals have been addressed.
- Missions remain in close contact with local authorities and continue to assist seafarers, stranded Indians and short-term visitors with visas, consular services and logistical support.
- **Special efforts are being made for Indian students in the region, with Missions coordinating with schools and education boards.**
- The CBSE X Standard exams were cancelled and, now the XII Standard boards also stand cancelled. ICSE and Kerala Board exams are also cancelled.
- The respective Boards would announce a formulation for the determination of marks in these cases in due course.
- In Iran, Indian students from Tehran, Isfahan and Shiraz have been relocated to safer locations, with all necessary assistance being provided by the Embassy.
- Since 28 February 2026, around 2,60,000 passengers have returned from the region to India.
- Flight operations are gradually improving with additional services being introduced across the region.
- In the UAE, around 70 flights operated on 17 March 2026 and about 75 flights are expected today to various destinations in India. Over 50 flights have been operating daily since 5 March 2026, indicating improving connectivity.
- Flights continue to operate from Saudi Arabia and Oman to India.
- Qatar airspace remains partially open, with 5 flights operated yesterday and services to 9 Indian destinations announced from today.
- Kuwait airspace remains closed since 28 February 2026. Special non-scheduled flights by Jazeera Airways are expected from Al Qaisumah Airport in Saudi Arabia.
- For Indian nationals in Kuwait, Bahrain and Iraq, where airspace remains restricted, transit through Saudi Arabia continues to be facilitated.

The Government emphasised that it remains alert and is maintaining close coordination among concerned Ministries, agencies, and State/UT Governments, with necessary measures being taken to safeguard key sectors and national interests.

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