



Inter-Ministerial Briefing on Recent Developments in West Asia

Panic bookings decline to around 57 lakhs

CGD entities advised to prioritize PNG connections for commercial establishments

States and UTs encouraged to take forward reforms to accelerate CGD network expansion

Govt. of India urged States/UTs to maintain strict vigilance to curb hoarding, black marketing and other malpractices

All District Collectors and FC&S officials requested to conduct regular enforcement actions

All States/UTs requested to conduct daily press briefings

Enforcement actions continue across States; Over 6,000 raids conducted and more than 11,000 cylinders seized.

Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways continues to monitor shipping movements, port operations, safety of seafarers and continuity of maritime trade

Ministry of External Affairs continues to closely monitor developments in Gulf and West Asia region

Safety, security and welfare of Indian community remain the highest priority

Government approves 'RELIEF' to support exporters amid West Asia logistics disruptions

Consumers advised to beware of Cyber Frauds: Advised not to download or install any suspicious files or applications

Posted On: 19 MAR 2026 5:26PM by PIB Delhi

As part of the Government's ongoing effort to keep the media regularly informed about developments in West Asia, another inter-ministerial briefing was held today (19 March 2026) at the National Media Centre. Senior officials from the Ministries of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Ports, Shipping and Waterways, External Affairs, and Information and Broadcasting shared updates on key areas including fuel supply, maritime activities, and assistance being extended to Indian nationals in the region.

Energy Supply and Fuel Availability

An update on the fuel supply scenario and the measures being taken to ensure continued availability of petroleum products and LPG was shared during the briefing, in view of the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas. The Ministry stated:

Crude and Refineries

- All refineries are operating at high capacity with adequate crude inventories, and sufficient stocks of petrol and diesel are being maintained.

Retail Outlets

- **No cases of fuel dry-outs** have been reported at retail outlets, 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 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.
- **City Gas Distribution (CGD)** entities have been **advised to prioritize PNG connections for commercial establishments** such as hotels, restaurants and canteens, and commercial establishments can obtain connections from authorized CGD entities.
- CGD companies including IGL, MGL, GAIL Gas and BPCL are offering incentives for PNG connections, and timelines for connections are being reduced to encourage wider adoption along with mass awareness initiatives.
- As part of PNG Drive CGD entities have been advised by PNGRB to pursue mass awareness initiatives.
- 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.**
- Commercial LPG consumers in urban areas are being encouraged to shift to PNG, with over 5,600 consumers already switching in recent days. These measures are expected to reduce pressure on LPG demand.

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 84% to 94%**, while **Delivery Authentication Code coverage has expanded to 83%** to prevent diversion.
- **Panic bookings have declined to around 57 lakh**, and domestic LPG cylinder deliveries continue as normal.
- 17 States and UTs 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, with identification of distribution points underway.
- 15 States and UTs have issued SKO allocation orders, while some States have indicated no requirement.

Meetings conducted by State Governments

- State Governments and UTs are monitoring supply under the Essential Commodities Act and LPG Control Order and have been advised to conduct coordinated inspections and surprise checks.
- Govt. of India vide Letter dated 13.03.2026 has requested the Chief Secretaries of all States/UTs to direct DMs/Collectors and other enforcement agencies to conduct coordinated inspections and surprise checks at Petrol Pumps, LPG distributorships, storage points etc. to curb any malpractices.
- Govt. of India vide letter dated 18.03.2026 has requested all States/UTs -
 - ▶ To maintain strict vigilance so as to curb hoarding, black marketing, diversion of domestic LPG and other malpractices.
 - ▶ Stringent action may be taken against violators under the provisions of Essential Commodities Act, 1955, Petroleum Act, 1934, Petroleum Rules 2002, Motor Spirit and HSD order 2005 and other applicable laws.
 - ▶ Adequate administrative and logistical measures incl. smooth and uninterrupted movement of LPG tankers and cylinders etc.
 - ▶ To evolve appropriate distribution methodologies for commercial LPG, keeping in view local priorities and requirements.
 - ▶ Public advisories may be issued to prevent panic buying, encourage judicious use of LPG and dissemination of accurate information.
- All District Collectors and FC&S officials are requested to conduct regular enforcement actions on daily basis.
- Further, all States/UTs are requested to conduct daily press briefings to help disseminate the correct information.

- All States/UTs are requested to establish helpline numbers and ensure their wide publicity at regular intervals.
- 31 States/UTs have setup control rooms to monitor situation. Some of the States/UTs are doing daily press briefs also.
- 25 States/UTs 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, with over 6,000 raids conducted and more than 11,000 cylinders seized.
- Significant actions have been reported in States including Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Telangana, involving seizures, FIRs and arrests.
- All the States/UTs govt. to conduct regular raids so that black marketing and hoardings can be arrested.
- PSU Oil Marketing Companies are conducting over 2,000 daily surprise inspections at retail outlets and LPG distributorships to ensure smooth supply and prevent irregularities.

Government Measures

- The Government continues to prioritise uninterrupted LPG supply and PNG expansion, particularly for households and priority sectors such as hospitals and educational institutions.
- Measures include enhanced refinery production, revised booking intervals of 25 days in urban areas and up to 45 days in rural areas, and prioritised allocation.
- Alternate fuel options like Kerosene and coal have been offered to ease pressure on LPG demand. MoEFCC has already advised State Pollution Control Board for permitting the use of kerosene and coal as alternate fuel.
- Ministry of Coal has already issued order to Coal India and Singareni Coalleries to allot higher quantities to States for distributing coal to small, medium and other consumers.
- States have been advised to facilitate the new PNG connections for both domestic and commercial consumers. A proposal for 10% additional allocation of commercial LPG has been made to the States facilitating and expediting the process.
- Under Section-3 of Essential Commodities Act, 1955, Govt. vide Gazette notification dated 18.03.2026 has designated Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC) as the nodal agency for collection, compilation, maintenance and analysis of information. All the concerned entities engaged in production, processing, refining, storage, transportation, import and export, marketing, distribution or consumption of petroleum products or natural gas has been directed to furnish information to PPAC.

Public Advisory

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

Maritime Safety and Shipping Operations

Information on the prevailing maritime situation in the Persian Gulf and the steps being taken to ensure the safety of Indian vessels and crew was shared during the briefing 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 DG Shipping continuing close monitoring in coordination with ship owners, RPSL agencies and Indian Missions.
- Crude oil vessel Jag Laadki arrived at Mundra Port on 18 March at 0600 hrs and is currently discharging cargo, expected to complete on 19 March.
- The DG Shipping Control Room continues to operate 24×7 and has handled 3,425 calls and 6,539 emails since activation, including 150 calls and 215 emails in the past 24 hours.
- DG Shipping has facilitated the safe repatriation of more than 488 Indian seafarers, including 16 in the past 24 hours, from airports and regional locations.
- India's maritime sector continues to operate smoothly with no congestion reported across ports, as confirmed by State Maritime Boards including Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Puducherry.
- Ports are closely monitoring vessel movements and cargo operations and have created additional storage capacity, including measures at Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority (JNPA), V.O.Chidambaranar Port (VOCPA), Visakhapatnam Port and Mundra.
- Deendayal Port Authority has created additional storage capacity including allocation of around 54 acres of land, along with waivers on charges and operational support measures, and has provided a 50% discount on harbour mobile crane charges for port users.
- 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 Prime Minister spoke with HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, Crown Prince of Kuwait, and conveyed greetings on the upcoming festival of Eid.
- The two leaders exchanged views on the evolving situation in West Asia and expressed concern over recent developments. The Prime Minister reiterated India's condemnation of attacks on Kuwait's sovereignty and territorial integrity.
- The Prime Minister underlined the importance of ensuring safe and free navigation through the Strait of Hormuz.
- Both leaders agreed that sustained diplomatic engagement remains essential for ensuring regional peace and stability.
- The Prime Minister thanked the Crown Prince for continued support towards the safety and well-being of the Indian community in Kuwait.
- The Ministry of External Affairs continues to closely monitor developments in the Gulf and wider West Asia region, with the safety, security and welfare of the Indian community remaining the highest priority.
- A dedicated MEA Special Control Room remains operational round the clock, with coordination ongoing with State Governments and Union Territories for effective information sharing and response.
- Indian Missions and Posts across the region continue to function 24×7, issuing regular advisories and maintaining close contact with local authorities.
- Missions are proactively assisting seafarers, students, stranded Indian nationals and short-term visitors, including support for visas, consular services and logistical arrangements.

- Since 28 February, around 2,80,000 passengers have returned from the region to India.
- Flight operations are gradually improving, with additional services being introduced despite temporary operational closures in some countries.
- In the UAE, limited non-scheduled flights continue to operate, with around 75 flights on 18 March and about 90 flights expected today from various airports to India.
- Flights continue to operate from Oman and Saudi Arabia to India.
- Qatar airspace remains partially open, with Qatar Airways operating non-scheduled flights, including nine flights to India today.
- Kuwait airspace remains closed since 28 February 2026; special non-scheduled flights by Jazeera Airways are being operated from Al-Qaisumah Airport in Saudi Arabia, with the first flight to Cochin scheduled tomorrow.
- Bahrain airspace remains closed, with Gulf Air operating special flights from Dammam in Saudi Arabia and additional services expected.
- For Indian nationals in Kuwait, Bahrain and Iraq, where airspace remains restricted, transit through Saudi Arabia continues to be facilitated, particularly for emergency cases.
- The 15 Indian crew members of MT Safesea Vishnu who were safely rescued have departed Iraq and are expected to return to India shortly.
- The Mission remains in contact with the crew and Iraqi authorities to facilitate their return and to expedite repatriation of the mortal remains of the deceased Indian national.

Public Communication

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting informed that:

- The Ministry of Commerce and Industry held a press conference announcing a new relief package for exporters in view of global supply chain and logistics disruptions.
- The package titled RELIEF (Resilience and Logistic Intervention for Export Facilitation) has been approved under the Export Promotion Mission.
- The objective of the RELIEF package is to support exporters and facilitate trade amid ongoing external disruptions.
- The approval reflects the Government's swift response to emerging challenges in international trade.
- An Inter-Ministerial Group (IMG) on Supply Chain Resilience has been constituted and operationalized from 3 March 2026.
- The IMG has been closely monitoring the evolving situation, holding daily review meetings and coordinating facilitation measures. The RELIEF package has been formulated based on continuous assessments and inter-ministerial consultations.
- The RELIEF package has a total financial outlay of ₹497 crore. It will be implemented under the framework of the Export Promotion Mission. The package includes multiple components aimed at export facilitation and logistics support.
- Instances of cyber fraud related to LPG bookings have been reported from some States. Fraudsters are attempting to exploit the situation by sending malicious files such as "GAS BILL UPDATE APK" via messaging platforms such as WhatsApp to mislead consumers.
- Users are advised not to download or install any suspicious files or applications received through messages, as these may enable unauthorized access to personal data and bank accounts. Citizens are urged to rely only on official platforms for LPG bookings.
- States and Union Territories have been advised to further strengthen administrative and logistical arrangements to ensure uninterrupted LPG distribution.
- Authorities are ensuring close monitoring of LPG supply at the district level and facilitating smooth movement of LPG tankers and cylinders without disruption.

- States and UTs have been advised to issue and widely disseminate public advisories to prevent panic buying, promote judicious use of LPG and ensure dissemination of accurate information.
- Instructions of the Government of India are being communicated to all concerned authorities for immediate implementation.

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