



Inter-Ministerial Briefing on Recent Developments in West Asia

**Over 13,700 new PNG connections issued in recent days;
More than 7,300 consumers shifted from LPG to PNG**

**Panic bookings decline from 89 lakh on 13th March to around
55 lakhs yesterday**

**Ministry of Coal supports increased supplies of alternate
fuels to States**

**Enforcement actions continue across States to curb hoarding
and black marketing**

**Over 4,500 raids conducted and around 4,000 cylinders
seized in the past 24 hours**

**Citizens encouraged to use alternate fuels such as PNG and
electric or induction cooktops to conserve energy**

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

**Prime Minister speaks with leaders of Oman, Malaysia,
France, Jordan and Qatar, conveying India's position on the
ongoing situation in West Asia**

**PM emphasizes dialogue and diplomacy for de-escalation
and restoration of peace and stability**

Posted On: 20 MAR 2026 4:50PM by PIB Delhi

Today's inter-ministerial briefing on developments in West Asia was held today at the National Media Centre. Such briefings are being conducted regularly to keep the media updated on the evolving situation, with senior officials from the Ministries of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Ports, Shipping and Waterways,

and External Affairs, sharing updates on fuel supply, maritime operations, and assistance to Indian nationals in the region. During today's briefing, the latest situation and ongoing measures across these areas were shared with the media.

Energy Supply and Fuel Availability

Fuel supply and steps to ensure continued availability of petroleum products and LPG, in view of the Strait of Hormuz closure, were shared during the briefing 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.
- Domestic LPG production from refineries has been **increased by about 40 percent compared to pre-crisis production levels.**

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 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.
- The Secretary, Ministries of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoP&NG) chaired a review meeting with CGD entities to expedite PNG expansion and emphasized transition from LPG to PNG.
- CGD companies including IGL, MGL, GAIL Gas and BPCL are offering incentives.
- CGD entities have been directed by PNGRB to shorten the timeline between the submission of applications and the commencement of gas supply to consumer households and pursue mass awareness initiatives.
- The Government of India vide letter date 16.03.2026 has requested States and UTs have been requested to expedite approvals for CGD expansion.
- The Government of India vide letter dated 18.03.2026 has offered all States/UTs additional 10% allocation of commercial LPG to States provided they can help in long term transition from LPG to PNG.
- It is now on the States/UTs to take this reform forward and ensure expansion of CGD network and expedite issuance of connections to domestic and commercial/industrial PNG consumers in their areas.
- Ministry has received application from Govt. of Rajasthan vide letter 19.03.2026 has stated that the state Govt has taken significant steps w.r.t reforms for promoting CGD and transition to PNG and the proposal is under examination.

- Over 13,700 new PNG connections have been issued in recent days and more than 7,300 consumers have shifted from LPG to PNG, helping reduce pressure on LPG demand.

LPG

- Supply of LPG is still a concern in view of prevailing geopolitical situation and is being monitored.
- **No dry-outs have been reported at distributorships.**
- Panic bookings have **declined significantly from 89 lakh on 13 March to around 55 lakh** yesterday, while domestic LPG deliveries continue as normal.
- 18 States and UTs have issued orders for allocation of non-domestic LPG, with supply being made available across all States and UTs.
- Educational institutions and hospitals are being prioritized, receiving around 50% of commercial LPG allocation.
- Around 11,360 MT of commercial LPG has been uplifted in the past week.

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.
- 15 States and UTs have issued SKO allocation orders, while Himachal Pradesh and Ladakh have indicated no requirement and as on date, 17 States/UTs are yet to issue SKO allocation orders.

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 maintain vigilance, conduct inspections and ensure smooth LPG movement.
- Govt. of States/UTs have to play a primary role in monitoring and regulating supply situation of essential commodities including Petrol, Diesel and LPG.
- 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 -
 - Ø To maintain strict vigilance so as to curb hoarding, black marketing, diversion of domestic LPG and other malpractices.
 - Ø To take stringent action 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.
 - Ø To take adequate administrative and logistical measures incl. smooth and uninterrupted movement of LPG tankers and cylinders etc.
 - Ø To evolve appropriate distribution methodologies for commercial LPG, keeping in view local priorities and requirements.
 - Ø To issue public advisories 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.
- 32 States/UTs have setup control rooms. Many of the States/UTs are doing daily press briefs also.
- 31 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 4,500 raids conducted and around 4,000 cylinders seized in the past 24 hours.
- Significant actions have been reported in States including Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Keralam, Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan and Delhi.
- PSU Oil Marketing Companies have conducted over 1,800 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.
- 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, with support from the Ministry of Coal for increased supply to States.
- States have been advised to facilitate PNG connections, supported by incentives linked to additional LPG allocation.

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.
- The DG Shipping Control Room continues to operate 24×7 and has handled 3,550 calls and 6,748 emails since activation, including 125 calls and 209 emails in the past 24 hours.
- DG Shipping has facilitated the safe repatriation of more than 513 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 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, with additional capacity created at key ports such as Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority (JNPA), V.O. Chidambaranar Port Authority (VOCPA), Visakhapatnam Port, Mundra and Deendayal Port Authority to ensure smooth handling and ease congestion.
- At New Mangalore Port Authority (NMPA), measures have been undertaken to support stakeholders, including waiver of cargo-related charges for crude and LPG vessels from 14 March to 31 March 2026, waiver of ground rent and reefer charges for stranded export containers, and creation of additional storage capacity of about 3,500 sq. m. covered shed and 76,000 sq. m. open yard.
- 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 leaders of Oman, Malaysia, France, Jordan and Qatar, conveying India's position on the ongoing situation in West Asia and emphasizing dialogue and diplomacy for de-escalation and restoration of peace and stability.
- The Prime Minister strongly condemned attacks on energy infrastructure and reiterated the importance of ensuring safe and free navigation through the Strait of Hormuz.
- Oman: The Prime Minister spoke with Sultan Haitham bin Tariq, conveyed Eid greetings and reiterated India's condemnation of violations of Oman's sovereignty. He appreciated Oman's role in facilitating safe return of people, including Indian nationals.
- Malaysia: The Prime Minister spoke with Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim and exchanged views on the evolving situation in West Asia, conveying greetings on the occasion of Hari Raya Aidilfitri.
- France: The Prime Minister spoke with President Emmanuel Macron, and both leaders agreed to continue close coordination to promote peace and stability in the region and beyond.
- Jordan: The Prime Minister spoke with His Majesty King Abdullah II, conveyed Eid greetings and appreciated Jordan's efforts in facilitating the safe return of Indians. Both sides condemned attacks on energy infrastructure and supported unhindered transit of goods and energy.

- Qatar: The Prime Minister spoke with H.H. Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Amir of Qatar, conveyed Eid greetings and expressed solidarity with Qatar. Both sides condemned attacks on energy infrastructure and reaffirmed support for safe navigation through the Strait of Hormuz.
- 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 Indian Embassy in Iran has facilitated the movement of 913 Indian nationals from Iran to neighbouring countries, including 793 to Armenia and 120 to Azerbaijan.
- All 284 Indian pilgrims from Iran have returned to India safely.
- The MEA control room continues to assist Indian nationals, receiving 10 calls and 6 emails yesterday, mostly related to Indian nationals stranded on merchant vessels.
- A dedicated MEA control room remains operational, with coordination ongoing with State Governments and Union Territories.
- Indian Missions and Posts across the region are functioning round the clock, maintaining contact with local authorities and issuing regular advisories. Assistance continues for seafarers, students, stranded Indian nationals and short-term visitors, including visa, consular and logistical support.
- **Since 28 February, around 3,00,000 passengers have returned from the region to India, with overall flight operations showing steady improvement.**
- In the UAE, limited non-scheduled flights continue, with around 90 flights expected today to India.
- Flights continue to operate from Saudi Arabia and Oman to India.
- Qatar airspace remains partially open, with Qatar Airways expected to operate 10 non-scheduled flights to India today.
- Kuwait airspace remains closed, with Jazeera Airways commencing special flights from Al Qaisumah Airport in Saudi Arabia, including the first flight to Kochi today.
- Bahrain airspace remains closed, with Gulf Air operating special flights from Dammam in Saudi Arabia to India.
- Transit of Indian nationals continues to be facilitated via Saudi Arabia for those in Kuwait, Bahrain and Iraq.
- Indian nationals in Iran continue to be assisted for travel to India via Armenia and Azerbaijan.
- Indian nationals in Israel are being facilitated to travel to India via Jordan.
- An Indian national tragically lost his life in an attack in Riyadh on 18 March. The Government expresses condolences and the Mission is coordinating with local authorities for early repatriation of mortal remains.
- In total, six Indian nationals have lost their lives and one remains missing in recent incidents. Mortal remains of two Indian nationals have already been repatriated to India.
- Indian Missions in Saudi Arabia, Oman, Iraq and the UAE remain in contact with authorities for the missing individual and for repatriation of remaining mortal remains.
- 15 Indian crew members of MT Safesea Vishnu who were rescued have departed Iraq and are expected to return to India via Saudi Arabia.

· 24 rescued Indian seafarers, including 16 from MV MKD Vyom and 8 from MT Skylight, have already returned to India from Oman.

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