



Inter-Ministerial Briefing on Recent Developments in West Asia

Government dismisses rumours of Lockdown

**Citizens advised to beware of Fake News & Misinformation;
Adequate supplies of petrol and diesel are available and
supply chains remain fully operational**

**Government Reduces Excise Duty on Petrol and Diesel; Aims
to ensure Energy Security for the Country amid Global
Uncertainty**

**Government to Continuously Monitor and Review Situation
on a Fortnightly Basis**

**Domestic refiners mandated to supply 50% of exported
petrol and 30% of exported diesel to the domestic market**

**Government of India approves additional 20% allocation of
commercial LPG, taking total allocation to 70% of pre-crisis
levels**

**10,568 PNG connections (new and gas-in) reported/issued
across 110 geographical areas yesterday**

**Enforcement drives continue against Black Marketing and
Hoarding**

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

**External Affairs Minister exchanges views with participating
countries on sidelines of G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting being
held on 26–27 March 2026**

Government Closely Monitoring Situation in Gulf and West Asia; Safety of Indian Community Remains Top Priority

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Continuing its outreach to keep the media informed on the evolving situation in West Asia, the Government of India held its regular interaction at the National Media Centre today. During the interaction, representatives from the Ministries of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Ports, Shipping and Waterways, External Affairs, and Information and Broadcasting shared updates on fuel availability, maritime operations, assistance to Indian nationals in the region, and steps being taken to ensure stability across these sectors. Senior Officers from the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) also participated and provided updates on recent decisions relating to excise duty.

Tax and Duty-Related Updates

Recent tax and duty measures were highlighted, aimed at supporting supply stability. It was stated that:

- The ongoing crisis in West Asia has implications for the Indian economy, particularly due to disruptions in supplies of petroleum products.
- Following the crisis, there has been a significant surge in international crude oil prices. International prices of petrol, diesel and aviation turbine fuel (ATF) have also increased sharply.
- The prevailing market situation creates incentives for refineries to export petroleum products at higher international prices.
- The Government has responded with calibrated measures to address the situation.
- Export duties have been imposed in the form of Special Additional Excise Duty (SAED) and/or Road and Infrastructure Cess. These duties have been imposed on the export of diesel and aviation turbine fuel (ATF) produced in India.
- As per the notified rates:
 - Ø Export duty on diesel: Rs 21.50 per litre
 - Ø Export duty on ATF: Rs 29.50 per litre
 - Ø Export duty on petrol is nil at present based on prevailing crack margins.
- The rates will be reviewed on a fortnightly basis.
- These measures aim to prioritize domestic availability of diesel and ATF.
- The steps are also intended to ensure energy security for the country amid global uncertainty. These uncertainties have been exacerbated by disruptions in supply chains and volatility in international markets in terms of both availability and price.
- Apart from export-related measures, changes have also been made in excise duties on petrol and diesel for domestic consumption.
- The changes involve a reduction of Rs 10 per litre in the domestic special additional excise duty component on both petrol and diesel.
- These steps are intended to ensure that there is no increase in retail prices of petrol and diesel for consumers during the ongoing crisis.

- The situation is being closely monitored. The department will review developments periodically and take further measures as necessary.

Energy Supply and Fuel Availability

An update on the prevailing fuel supply situation was shared, highlighting the steps being taken to ensure uninterrupted availability of petroleum products and LPG in the context of the Strait of Hormuz closure. It was noted that:

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 40%** to support domestic consumption.

Retail Outlets

- All retail outlets are operating normally across the country.
- In view of the increase in crude prices due to the Middle East crisis, the Government of **India has reduced excise duty on petrol and diesel by ₹10 per litre to protect consumers.**
- **The Government has also imposed a levy of ₹21.5 per litre on export of diesel and ₹29.5 per litre on export of aviation turbine fuel (ATF) to ensure adequate domestic availability.**
- The Government has mandated domestic refiners to supply 50% of exported petrol and 30% of exported diesel to the domestic market.
- Panic buying was reported in some areas due to rumours, resulting in unusually high sales and crowding at retail outlets. However, adequate stocks of petrol and diesel are available across all petrol pumps in the country.
- The Government has reiterated its advice to the public not to believe rumours.

Natural Gas

- Priority allocation continues with 100% supply to domestic PNG and CNG transport, while supply to industrial and commercial consumers connected to the grid is being maintained at around 80% of average consumption.
- City Gas Distribution (CGD) entities have been advised to prioritise PNG connections for commercial establishments such as restaurants, hotels and canteens.
- CGD companies including IGL, MGL, GAIL Gas and BPCL are offering incentives for domestic and commercial PNG connections.
- The Government of India has requested States/UTs and Central Ministries to expedite approvals required for expansion of CGD networks.
- The Government of India vide letter dated 18.03.2026 has offered additional 10% allocation of commercial LPG to States/UTs linked to transition from LPG to PNG, and additional allocations have been recommended for States undertaking reforms.
- Several States have introduced measures to facilitate faster PNG rollout, including streamlined Right of User/Right of Way permissions, extended working hours and rationalisation of charges.
- Petroleum and Explosive Safety Organisation (PESO) has advised its offices to dispose of CGD applications on priority within 10 days.

- Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) vide its order dated 23.03.2026 has directed CGD entities to prioritise PNG connections for residential schools, colleges, hostels, community kitchens and anganwadi kitchens within five days, wherever feasible.
- Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has adopted an accelerated approval framework with reduced timelines for CGD infrastructure for a period of three months.
- The Government of India vide Gazette dated 24.03.2026 has notified the Natural Gas and Petroleum Products Distribution Order, 2026, providing a streamlined and time-bound framework for expansion of pipeline infrastructure and enhancing last-mile connectivity.
- CGD entities reported 10,568 PNG connections (new and gas-in) across 110 geographical areas on the previous day.

LPG

- Supply of LPG continues to be affected due to the prevailing geopolitical situation.
- No dry-outs have been reported at LPG distributorships.
- Delivery of domestic LPG cylinders continues as normal.
- The Government had already restored partial commercial LPG supply (20%) to consumers, with an additional 10% allocation linked to PNG reforms.
- The Government of India vide letter dated 21.03.2026 has allowed another 20% allocation, taking the total allocation to 50%, with priority to key sectors like restaurants, dhabas, hotels, industrial canteens, food processing/dairy, subsidised canteens/outlets run by State Govt. or local bodies for food, community kitchens, 5 Kg FTL for migrant labourers.
- The Government of India vide letter dated 27.03.2026 has approved an additional 20% allocation of commercial LPG, **taking total allocation to 70% of pre-crisis levels**, with priority to steel, automobile, textile, dye, chemicals and plastics. Among this, priority shall be given to process industries or those requiring LPG for specialised heating purposes that cannot be substituted by natural gas.
- More than 40,000 - 5 Kg Free Trade LPG cylinders were sold on the previous day.
- 28 States/UTs have issued allocation orders for non-domestic LPG, while PSU Oil Marketing Companies are supplying in remaining areas.
- Around 29,656 MT of commercial LPG has been uplifted since 14 March 2026.

Kerosene

- An additional allocation of 48,000 KL of kerosene has been made to all States/UTs over and above regular allocation.
- States/UTs have been requested to identify district-level distribution points.
- 17 States/UTs have issued SKO allocation orders, while Himachal Pradesh and Ladakh have indicated no requirement.

Role of State Governments / UTs

- Under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 and LPG Control Order, 2000, State Governments are empowered to act against hoarding and black marketing and play a primary role in regulating supply of essential commodities.
- The Government of India has requested all States/UTs to:

- Ø Institutionalise daily press briefings and issue regular public advisories.
- Ø Set up dedicated control rooms and helplines.
- Ø Actively monitor and counter misinformation on social media.
- Ø Intensify enforcement drives and conduct regular raids and inspections.
- Ø Issue commercial LPG and SKO allocation orders.
- Ø Fast-track CGD expansion, including RoW/RoU approvals.
- Ø Promote PNG adoption and alternate fuels.
- Ø Nominate senior nodal officers for coordination with the Ministry.
- 14 States/UTs are conducting daily press briefings, while others have been requested to do so.

Enforcement action

- Enforcement drives are ongoing across States/UTs, with more than 3,000 raids conducted and over 1,500 LPG cylinders seized.
- PSU Oil Marketing Companies conducted more than 1,500 surprise inspections at retail outlets and LPG distributorships across the country.
- More than 350 show cause notices have been issued to LPG distributorships.

Other Government Measures

- The Government continues to prioritise domestic LPG and PNG supply, along with essential sectors such as hospitals and educational institutions.
- Measures include enhanced refinery production, revised booking intervals and prioritised allocation of supplies.
- Alternate fuels such as kerosene and coal are being promoted to ease LPG demand.
- Ministry of Coal has directed Coal India and Singareni Collieries to increase supply to States for distribution to small and medium consumers.
- States have been advised to facilitate new PNG connections for domestic and commercial consumers.

Public Advisory

- The Government is making all efforts to ensure availability of petrol, diesel and LPG, and citizens are advised to avoid panic purchases.
- Citizens are advised to rely only on official sources and not believe rumours.
- For LPG, consumers are requested to:
 - Ø Use digital modes for booking.
 - Ø Avoid visiting LPG distributors unnecessarily.
- Citizens are encouraged to use alternate fuels such as PNG and electric or induction cooktops.
- All citizens are requested to conserve energy in their daily usage.

Maritime Safety and Shipping Operations

The current maritime situation in the Persian Gulf, along with measures being undertaken to safeguard Indian vessels and crew, was also briefed. It was stated that:

- All Indian seafarers currently present in the region are safe and no shipping incident involving Indian-flagged vessels has been reported in the past 24 hours.
- 20 Indian-flagged vessels with around 540 Indian seafarers remain in the western Persian Gulf region. The Directorate General of Shipping (DG Shipping) continues close monitoring in coordination with ship owners, RPSL agencies and Indian Missions.
- The DG Shipping Control Room remains operational 24×7 and has handled 4,326 calls and 8,556 emails since activation, including 98 calls and 335 emails in the past 24 hours, and 218 calls and 647 emails over the last 48 hours.
- DG Shipping has facilitated the safe repatriation of more than 699 Indian seafarers so far, including 25 in the past 24 hours and 64 over the last 48 hours, from airports and various 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, Keralam, Andhra Pradesh and Puducherry.
- The Ministry continues to coordinate with the Ministry of External Affairs, Indian Missions and maritime stakeholders to ensure the welfare of Indian seafarers and uninterrupted maritime operations.
- The Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways continues to closely monitor shipping movements, port operations, safety of Indian seafarers and continuity of maritime trade in view of the evolving situation in West Asia.

Safety of Indian Nationals in the Region

Recent developments in the region, including assistance through Indian Missions, were shared during the briefing. It was informed that:

- The External Affairs Minister is visiting France to participate in the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting being held on 26–27 March 2026.
- On the sidelines of the meeting, the External Affairs Minister held discussions with his counterparts from participating countries, where in addition to bilateral issues, he also exchanged views on the evolving situation in West Asia.
- The External Affairs Minister met the Foreign Ministers of France, Canada, South Korea, Japan, Brazil, the United Kingdom and Germany during these engagements.
- The External Affairs Minister addressed the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting session with invited partners on reform of global governance on 26 March 2026.
- During his address, he highlighted the urgency of reforms in the United Nations Security Council, the need for streamlining peacekeeping operations and strengthening humanitarian supply chains.
- He also raised concerns of the Global South, particularly in relation to energy challenges, fertiliser supplies and food security.
- At the second session of the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting on 26 March 2026, the External Affairs Minister conveyed that uncertainties arising from the conflicts in West Asia underscore the need for more resilient trade corridors and supply chains.

- The Ministry of External Affairs continues to closely monitor developments in the Gulf and West Asia region, with the safety, security and welfare of the Indian community remaining the highest priority.
- A dedicated special control room remains operational to assist Indian nationals and their families, with continuous coordination being maintained with State Governments and Union Territories.
- Indian Missions and Posts across the region are functioning round the clock with 24×7 helplines, issuing regular advisories and maintaining close engagement with Indian community organisations and local authorities.
- Missions continue to proactively assist seafarers, stranded Indian nationals and short-term visitors with visa facilitation, consular services and logistical support.
- The Government is according high priority to the welfare of Indian students in the Gulf region and is making efforts to ensure that their academic year is not impacted.
- Missions are coordinating with local authorities, Indian schools and education boards including CBSE, ICSE and Kerala Board.
- CBSE and ICSE Boards have cancelled Grade X and XII examinations in the region, while the Kerala Board has postponed examinations and will review the situation on 6 April.
- The National Testing Agency has issued an advisory regarding the conduct of competitive examinations, including JEE (Main) 2026, for candidates registered from Kuwait, Dubai and Bahrain.
- Since 28 February, around 4,75,000 passengers have returned from the region to India.
- In the UAE, airlines continue to operate limited non-scheduled flights based on operational considerations, with around 80 flights expected to operate today to India.
- Flights are operating from various airports in Saudi Arabia and Oman to destinations in India.
- With Qatar airspace partially open, Qatar Airways is expected to operate around 10 flights to India today.
- Kuwait and Bahrain airspaces remain closed. Jazeera Airways and Gulf Air are operating flights from Dammam Airport in Saudi Arabia to various destinations in India.
- Due to flight restrictions and airspace closures, Indian nationals are being facilitated for travel via alternate routes including:
 - Ø From Iran through Armenia and Azerbaijan
 - Ø From Israel through Jordan
 - Ø From Iraq through Jordan and Saudi Arabia
 - Ø From Kuwait and Bahrain through Saudi Arabia
- An Indian national lost his life in an attack in Abu Dhabi. The Government has expressed condolences to the family, and the Mission is coordinating with local authorities for early repatriation of mortal remains.
- Another Indian national sustained minor injuries in the incident and has been discharged from hospital.

· A total of 7 Indian nationals have lost their lives and 1 remains missing in various incidents. Missions in Oman, Iraq and the UAE are in touch with authorities for tracing the missing individual and facilitating repatriation of mortal remains.

Public Communication

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting noted that:

- The Government of India appeals to all citizens not to believe rumours like those of lockdown and to remain cautious about fake news and misinformation being circulated on social media and other platforms.
- Earlier, rumours were being spread regarding shortage of LPG cylinders, which had led to panic booking in some areas.
- With the support of the media and the outreach efforts undertaken by the Government, panic booking of cylinders had subsequently subsided.
- In the last few days, similar rumours are being circulated regarding shortages of petrol and diesel.
- It is clarified that there is no shortage of petrol and diesel supplies in the country.
- Citizens are requested not to rush to petrol pumps or engage in panic buying.
- Adequate supplies of petrol and diesel are available and supply chains remain fully operational.
- Attempts are being made in certain quarters to spread rumours and create unnecessary panic among citizens. The Government urges people not to believe or circulate such misinformation.
- The State Governments have also been requested to take appropriate action against those spreading fake news and misinformation.
- Strict action should also be taken against any attempts at hoarding or black marketing of petrol, diesel or LPG cylinders.
- The Government reiterates that there is no shortage of petroleum products or LPG cylinders, and citizens need not panic or rush to petrol pumps or distributors.

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