

GAIL AND RCF SIGN MOU FOR SETTING UP GAS-BASED FERTILIZER PROJECT IN MAHARASHTRA



GAIL (India) Limited (GAIL) and Rashtriya Chemicals and Fertilizers Limited (RCF) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to jointly establish a gas-based fertilizer project in the state of Maharashtra through a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV).

The proposed urea production facility, with a planned capacity of 1.27 Million Metric Tonnes Per Annum (MMTPA), is envisaged to be established in the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra along GAIL's Mumbai-Nagpur-Jharsuguda Natural Gas Pipeline (MNJPL). To facilitate the implementation of the project, GAIL has entered a strategic partnership with RCF, with both organizations working collaboratively to take the project from conceptualization to successful implementation.

The MoU was signed by Shri Sanjay Agarwal, ED (BD & Start-up) of GAIL and Ms. Jyoti Patil, Executive Director (Project, Corporate & Co-ordination) of RCF, in the august presence of Shri Deepak Gupta, CMD, GAIL and Shri S. Shivakumar, CMD, RCF.

Senior management from both the companies, Shri R.K. Singhal, Director (BD), GAIL, Ms. Nazhat J. Shaikh, Director (Finance), RCF and Ms. Ritu Goswami, Director (Technical), RCF, were present during the MoU signing ceremony.

Speaking on the occasion Shri Deepak Gupta, CMD, GAIL (India) Limited, said: "The proposed fertilizer project aligns with GAIL's strategy of creating long-term value through natural gas utilization and contributing to India's energy security objectives. We are pleased to partner with RCF, a leading fertilizer company with proven expertise in the sector. This collaboration combines GAIL's strengths in the natural gas value chain with RCF's rich experience in fertilizer manufacturing and project execution."

Urea plant on cards

GAIL (India) Limited (GAIL) and Rashtriya Chemicals and Fertilizers Limited (RCF) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to jointly establish a gas-based fertiliser project in the state of Maharashtra through a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV). The proposed urea production facility, with a planned capacity of

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GAIL (India) Limited enters FTSE4Good Index Series



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

■ New Delhi

GAIL (India) Limited, India's integrated energy major, has entered the globally recognised FTSE4Good Index Series. The company has been awarded the FTSE4Good Index Certificate of Membership, following the June 2026 review by FTSE Russell.

The recognition underscores GAIL's unwavering commitment to maintaining high standards of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) performance. It reflects the company's continued focus on environmental stewardship, social responsibility

and robust corporate governance, while aligning its sustainability initiatives with globally accepted ESG benchmarks.

The FTSE4Good Index Series is a leading global sustainable investment index that identifies companies demonstrating strong ESG practices based on internationally recognised standards.

FTSE Russell is a trading name of FTSE International Limited, Frank Russell Company, Refinitiv Benchmark Services (UK) Limited and their respective group undertakings, all of which are members of the London Stock Exchange Group (LSEG).



GAIL enters prestigious FTSE4Good Index Series

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MPOST

US Russia oil bill may hit India

The US move to pass a bipartisan bill that would allow President Donald Trump to impose tariffs on the five biggest importers of Russian energy brings further disquiet to the India-US relationship that has suffered from unprecedented chill after decades marked by a degree of amity. What the bill will do is to arm the President who has shown preference for using tariffs over sanctions as an economic weapon against America's foes and friends alike.

Having seen the US Supreme Court strike down his earlier tariff regime, the administration is preparing to restore that power of pursuing a protectionist agenda though many in the US have pointed out that it is the American businesses and, ultimately, the consumer who pays the tariff. It may take time for the bill to pass in the House of Representatives but, given the bipartisan support in the Senate, it is likely that the Act will be in force by September.

As a buyer of Russian and Iranian oil, India and China will be the worst affected if Mr Trump goes through with his threat to use the additional tariffs to hit Asia's two biggest economies. True, Mr Trump may alternatively use threats and actual tariffs, as he did with a 100 per cent sanction on India for buying Russian oil only to withdraw it later because it proved ineffective, to demonstrate flexibility in negotiations.

What effect Mr Trump's oft-repeated claims of being the mediator who ended India-Pakistan hostilities in May 2025 and his tariff tantrums have had on the overhyped India-US trade deal, which is still on the anvil, makes clear how India's relationship with the US has gone south in his second term in office. His occasional charm offensive on Prime Minister Narendra Modi may have done little to assuage the hurt to ties and if the Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act of 2026 becomes law and is used against India, any vestige of hope that it will be business as usual with the US would be stamped out.

India's diversification policy after oil from the Gulf was clouded by the Iran war proved successful enough to withstand the energy crisis far better than many nations that lie further east. But it will still be tested if its reliance on Russian oil is clipped as it has been serving a substantial portion of crude imports. The proposed law and its use could be the last straw.

PM Modi chairs fourth CCS meeting on West Asia conflict

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, 30 July

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday chaired the fourth special meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security to review the evolving situation arising from the ongoing conflict in West Asia. He directed the government to adopt a unified and coordinated approach to safeguard Indian citizens, the diaspora, energy security and essential supplies.

The meeting reviewed the measures taken by various ministries and departments in response to the geopolitical crisis, with the Prime Minister calling for regular monitoring of developments to ensure the swift implementation of steps necessary to protect national interests.

According to an official statement, the Cabinet Secretary briefed the CCS on the prevailing geopolitical situation and outlined the initiatives undertaken to maintain adequate supplies of petroleum



Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired a special meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) in New Delhi on 1 April 2026, to review the impact of the ongoing West Asia conflict, with a focus on energy security, LPG and PNG supplies, and fertiliser availability. AGENCIES

products, including LNG, LPG and fertilisers.

The committee also assessed fertiliser requirements for the forthcoming Rabi season and reviewed alternate sources of procurement in view of the conflict.

The Prime Minister directed that all measures be taken for ensuring uninterrupted supply of fertilisers.

The meeting also focused on the safety and welfare of Indian seafarers serving on domestic as well as foreign-

flagged vessels operating in conflict zones.

Mr Modi directed officials to establish "a mechanism to provide timely information, emergency assistance and counselling to seafarers and their families."

Reiterating the government's commitment to protecting Indians overseas, the Prime Minister said: "All efforts must be made to safeguard the citizens as well as the Indian Diaspora from the impact of this conflict."

Modi announces support system for Indian seafarers amid rising maritime security threats

Shishir Sinha
New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday directed the establishment of a mechanism to facilitate timely information and emergency assistance to seafarers and their families. He also called for a unified and coordinated mechanism for regular monitoring of all developments to ensure expeditious implementation of measures safeguarding citizens' interests.

These and other issues were deliberated upon during the meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security, chaired by Modi. Other members of the committee include Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Home Minister Amit Shah, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar.

According to an official statement, the situation of seafarers serving on domestic as well as foreign-flagged vessels in conflict zones was also deliberated.

TIMELY INFO

"Prime Minister directed to establish a mechanism to provide timely information, emergency assistance and



CREW WELFARE. The situation of seafarers serving on domestic as well as foreign-flagged vessels in conflict zones was also deliberated REUTERS

counselling to seafarers and their families," the statement said.

Further Modi said that all efforts must be made to safeguard the citizens as well as the Indian diaspora from the impact of this conflict.

This development has come at a time, when ships steered by Indian seafarers are being attacked in the war zone and there are casualties.

It may be noted that India has emerged as the world's second-largest supplier of seafarers, contributing 311,936 maritime professionals to the global shipping industry.

According to the BIMCO-ICS Seafarer Workforce Report 2026, India now ac-

counts for 12.16 per cent of the global seafaring workforce, ranking behind only the Philippines and ahead of China, the Russian Federation and Indonesia.

Meanwhile, during the meeting, Cabinet Secretary

TV Somnathan briefed about the present geo-political situation. He spoke about the initiatives taken to ensure adequate supply of petroleum products, including LNG/LPG and fertilizers.

ADEQUATE STOCK

He said that sources for procurement of LPG have already been diversified and the overall stock and supply position of major petroleum products remain adequate.

"Availability of adequate crude oil has enabled Central Public Sector Enterprise refineries to operate at utilisation levels exceeding 100 per cent, ensuring continued production of petrol, diesel and other petroleum products," the statement said.

Russian oil could hit record 3 million barrels per day in India's import basket if disruptions persist: Report

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, 30 July

India's crude oil imports from Russia could climb to a record 3 million barrels per day (bpd) if supply disruptions through the Strait of Hormuz and the Red Sea continue, according to a new analysis by global commodities intelligence firm Kpler.

The report said Russian crude remains India's most important supply buffer during periods of geopolitical uncertainty, despite the country's efforts to diversify its crude import basket over the past few years.

According to Kpler, Indian

refiners have built greater flexibility into their sourcing strategy by increasing purchases from Russia, Venezuela, Africa and other Atlantic Basin producers. This diversified procurement strategy has helped reduce the risk of severe supply disruptions.

However, the outlook could change if security conditions in the Red Sea deteriorate further. While Saudi Arabia's East-West (Yanbu) pipeline has recently supplied between 300,000 and 500,000 barrels per day (bpd) of crude to India, allowing cargoes to bypass vulnerable shipping routes, prolonged disruptions could



force refiners to seek alternative supplies.

Kpler said that if Red Sea shipments are affected in August, Indian refiners are expected to increase

purchases of Russian crude, secure additional spot cargoes from West Africa wherever available and draw down commercial crude inventories to bridge any

short-term supply gap.

The analysis noted that Russia remains India's most effective hedge against supply shocks, provided it can maintain export

availability. Under favourable market conditions, Russian shipments to India could rise to around 3 million bpd or even higher, offsetting potential disruptions from other regions.

Even so, Kpler cautioned that Russia's ability to raise exports is not guaranteed. The country's upstream and downstream energy infrastructure continues to face attacks linked to the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, while Russian crude exports in July were estimated to be around 400,000 bpd lower than the previous month.

Saudi Arabia, meanwhile, remains an important supplier but on a much

smaller scale. Its crude exports to India have averaged roughly 400,000 bpd in recent months—well below volumes imported from Russia. As a result, any interruption to Saudi shipments through the Red Sea is likely to have a more limited impact on India's overall crude supply than a prolonged disruption to Russian exports.

Kpler's Lead Crude Analyst, Sumit Ritolia, noted that while cargoes moving through the Red Sea can often be rerouted via the East-West pipeline, the SUMED pipeline, the Suez Canal or around the Cape of Good Hope, export routes from Russia's Black Sea are

far less flexible.

He added that the Novorossiysk export terminal plays a critical role not only in shipping Russian Urals crude to India but also in exporting Kazakhstan's CPC crude to Europe. Any prolonged disruption at the Black Sea port could tighten global crude supplies, reshape trade flows and directly affect India's largest source of imported oil.

Despite the geopolitical risks, Kpler believes India's diversified sourcing strategy and strong dependence on Russian crude should help refiners manage supply challenges without triggering a severe shortage in the near term.



Natural gas' supply share stood at 7.12% in FY25

New Delhi: The share of natural gas in India's primary energy supply has risen, albeit marginally, to 7.12 per cent on a provisional basis in FY25, as per Energy Statistics 2026 released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Minister of State for Petroleum & Natural Gas Suresh Gopi said in a written response in the Lok Sabha. The share of natural gas was 7 per cent in FY24 and it was 6.7 per cent in FY23. The demand is projected to grow to 260-300 million standard cubic meters per day by 2030 under the base case scenario, he said.

OUR BUREAU

Fertilisers, seafarer safety discussed as PM chairs 4th CCS meet on West Asia crisis

ADITI TANDON
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, JULY 30

The availability of fertilisers for the ensuing rabi sowing season and the safety of Indian seafarers came up prominently at a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the Parliament House complex today.

The meeting was called to take stock of the situation in view of the West Asia conflict and discuss measures to deal with the challenge. It was the fourth special CCS meeting on the issue.

An official statement said the meeting assessed requirements

for fertilisers for the ensuing rabi season and alternate sources of procurement. "All measures should be taken for ensuring uninterrupted supply of fertilisers for farmers," the PM instructed the leaders.

The meeting also discussed the safety of seafarers serving on domestic as well as foreign-flagged vessels in conflict zones. "The PM has directed to establish a mechanism to provide timely information, emergency assistance and counselling to seafarers and their families," the officials said.

The meeting began with Cabinet Secretary TV Somanathan briefing the CCS about the

present geopolitical situation. He gave the details of initiatives taken to ensure adequate supply of petroleum products, including LNG, LPG and fertilisers, and said sources for procurement of LPG had already been diversified and the overall stock and supply position of major petroleum products remained adequate.

"The availability of adequate crude oil has enabled Central Public Sector Enterprise refineries to operate at utilisation levels exceeding 100 per cent, ensuring continued production of petrol, diesel and other petroleum products.

Initiatives have been taken

to expand piped natural gas (PNG) connections which have resulted in substantial increase in PNG connections," the Cabinet secretariat said.

After the presentation, the PM said all efforts must be made to safeguard the citizens as well as the Indian diaspora from the impact of this conflict. Stressing energy independence, the PM instructed that emphasis should be on renewable energy sources, including solar energy and other non-fossil fuel based sources. The PM reiterated whole of government approach to be adopted to tackle the challenges arising due to the crisis.



PM reviews W Asia situation, orders steady fertiliser supply

ARCHIS MOHAN

New Delhi, 30 July

At a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) to review challenges posed by the conflict in West Asia, Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi on Thursday directed government departments to take all measures to ensure uninterrupted supply of fertilisers for the ensuing rabi season.

The PM also instructed that a mechanism to provide timely information, emergency assistance, and counselling to seafarers and their families be set up. He said that a unified coordinated mechanism be put in place for regular monitoring of all the developments to ensure expeditious implementation of appropriate measures to safeguard the interests of the citizens, the Press Information Bureau said in a press release.

Chaired by the PM, this was the CCS' fourth special meeting on evaluating the



Prime Minister Narendra Modi has asked for a mechanism to provide aid to seafarers and their kin

challenges that the conflict in West Asia has posed to India's energy security and also to the safety and security of the country's seafarers, several of whom have lost their lives.

Cabinet Secretary T V Somanathan briefed the CCS about the initiatives taken to ensure adequate supply of petroleum products, including liquefied natural gas

(LNG), liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), and fertilisers. He said that sources for procurement of LPG have already been diversified, and the overall stock and supply position of major petroleum products remain adequate. Somanathan said the availability of adequate crude oil has enabled Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE) refineries to operate at utilisation levels exceeding 100 per cent, ensuring continued production of petrol, diesel and other petroleum products, a government press statement said.

Initiatives have also been taken to expand piped natural gas (PNG) connections. The government is also facilitating industrial substitution of LPG through expansion of the National Gas Grid, augmentation of LNG import and regasification infrastructure, expansion of city gas distribution networks, and time-bound pipeline and last-mile

connectivity approvals under the Pipeline Infrastructure Order, 2026, Somanathan said.

During the meeting, requirements for fertilisers for the ensuing rabi season was assessed and alternative sources discussed. The PM said that all measures should be taken for ensuring uninterrupted supply of fertilisers.

The situation of seafarers serving on domestic as well as foreign-flagged vessels in conflict zones was deliberated upon. The PM said all efforts must be made to safeguard the citizens as well as the Indian diaspora from the impact of this conflict. He said that in order to ensure energy independence, emphasis should be placed on renewable energy sources, including solar and other non-fossil fuels. He said that the whole-of-government approach should be continued to be adopted to tackle the challenges arising from the crisis.

PM reviews safety of seafarers, supply chain constraints

New Delhi: Amid the deepening West Asia crisis, PM Narendra Modi Thursday chaired what was the fourth special meeting of the cabinet committee on security (CCS) and directed establishment of a mechanism to provide timely information, emergency assistance and counselling to seafarers, serving on both domestic and foreign-flagged vessels, and their families.



“The PM said all efforts must be made to safeguard citizens as well as the Indian diaspora from the impact of this conflict,” an official statement said. It added that Modi also addressed issues related to fertilisers, energy and safety of Indian diaspora and seafarers, while calling for a whole-of-govt approach to tackle the challenges.

The release said the mee-

India raises attacks with Ukraine minister

Foreign minister S Jaishankar discussed attacks on commercial shipping and Indian seafarers in the Black Sea with his Ukrainian counterpart, Andrii Sybiha, underscoring India’s position that such attacks by any party are unacceptable and India condemns them. **P 8**

ting also assessed the fertiliser requirement for the ensuing rabi season and discussed alternative sources of fertilisers. “PM said that all measures be taken for ensuring uninterrupted supply of fertilisers,” it said.

People familiar with the discussion said fertiliser stock was 30-35% higher than last year and there was no reason for any concern. **TNN**

► Pushes renewables, P 12

PM urges energy independence amid W Asia crisis

► Continued from P 1

Similarly, in the case of gas as well as crude oil, supplies were more than adequate, with cabinet secretary T V Somanathan in a presentation underlining that govt’s strategy to diversify the sources had helped mitigate the risk.

“Availability of adequate crude oil has enabled central public sector enterprise refineries to operate at utilisation levels exceeding 100%, ensuring continued production of petrol, diesel and other petroleum products. Initiatives have also been taken to expand PNG connections which have resulted in substantial increase in PNG connections,” it said.

Besides, it said, govt was also facilitating industrial substitution of LPG through expansion of the National Gas Grid, augmentation of LNG import and regasification infrastructure, expansion of city gas distribution networks, faster approvals for expansion of the pipeline infrastructure.

PM stressed to ensure energy independence, emphasis should be made on renew-

“Availability of adequate crude oil has enabled central public sector enterprise refineries to operate at utilisation levels exceeding 100%, ensuring continued production of petrol, diesel and other petroleum products

OFFICIAL STATEMENT

able energy sources, including solar energy and other non-fossil-fuel based sources. The meeting took place amid escalation on multiple fronts in the West Asia region, including fresh US-Iran strikes and maritime and energy disruptions.

“PM said a whole of govt approach be continued to be adopted to tackle the challenges arising due to the crisis. He said that a unified co-ordinated mechanism be put in place for regular monitoring of all the developments to ensure expeditious implementation of appropriate measures to safeguard the interests of the citizens.”

MAKE UP 55% OF JULY BASKET AMID WEST ASIA CRISIS

Russian oil imports reach all-time high

SAURAV ANAND
New Delhi, July 30

INDIA'S IMPORTS OF Russian crude rose to a record high of 2.78 million barrels per day (mbd) in July, accounting for 55.3% of the country's total purchases of 5.03 mbd till July 29. Strong supplies of Russian Urals crude helped refiners navigate continuing volatility in West Asia, even as Moscow sharply cut discounts to \$2-3 a barrel recently.

"India's crude imports have remained resilient, reaching a seasonal five-year high, supported by ample availability of Russian crude," Nikhil Dubey, lead analyst for oil markets at Kpler, said.

"Ukrainian drone strikes on Russian refining infrastructure left more crude available for export, while cargoes stranded in the Persian Gulf were released during the brief US-Iran ceasefire, further supporting supplies for Indian buyers," Dubey said.

The conflict in West Asia also triggered extreme swings in the price of Russia's flagship Urals grade. Crude that had been available to Indian refiners at modest discounts before hostilities rose to a premium of \$15-20 a barrel over benchmark Brent when fears of a supply squeeze peaked.

Continued on Page 6

URALS SHARE ON THE RISE



Russian oil imports reach all-time high

THE BRIEFCEASEFIRE reversed the move, widening Urals discounts to \$8-10 a barrel before prices tightened towards parity after fighting resumed. Cargoes for late-August and early-September delivery were offered in India at discounts of \$2-3 a barrel late this month.

Russian inflows increased 1.8% from 2.73 mbd in June, while India's overall imports edged up just 0.1% from 5.02 mbd. Moscow's share rose from 54.4%, cementing its position as India's dominant supplier. It has more than doubled from 23.4% in January, illustrating how rapidly the country's crude basket has changed during the conflict.

West Asian barrels returned during July, but their recovery did not dislodge Russia. UAE was a distant second, supplying 488,900 bpd, or 9.7% of India's crude basket. Its shipments declined 4.6% from June, widening the gap with Russia.

Combined shipments from Saudi Arabia, UAE, Iraq, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait and the Saudi-Kuwaiti Neutral Zone rose 15.8% month-on-month to nearly 1.2 mbd. Their share climbed to 23.8% from 20.6% in June.

Saudi Arabia recorded the sharpest increase among major suppliers, with volumes jumping 55% to 453,500 bpd and its share rising to 9% from 5.8%. The rebound, however, may be difficult to sustain if disruptions in the Red Sea and around the Babel-Mandeb Strait delay Asia-bound cargoes and raise shipping risks.

The UAE remained India's second-largest supplier at 488,900 bpd, although shipments declined 4.6% and its



share slipped to 9.7%. Oman's flows surged 45% to 183,900 bpd, lifting its share to 3.7%, while Iraqi supplies rose 4.9% to 70,400 bpd, or 1.4% of the basket.

The sourcing mix shifted away from several Atlantic suppliers. Venezuelan shipments fell 14.8% to 239,300 bpd, reducing its share to 4.8%. Brazil declined 16.4% to 192,100 bpd, or 3.8%, while US supplies dropped 18.2% to 128,400 bpd, accounting for 2.6%.

Nigeria was an exception, with inflows rising 28.4% to 88,700 bpd and its share reaching 1.8%. Angolan supplies fell 47.2% to 33,900 bpd.

The availability of feedstock also lifted India's refined-product trade. "Ample crude availability, coupled with an exceptionally strong refining margin environment and seasonally weak domestic demand during the monsoon, supported India's product exports, which reached a seasonal five-year high," Dubey said.

"The completion of maintenance at Nayara Energy and Reliance Industries in previous months boosted refinery runs and further supported export volumes," he added.

Combined shipments from Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Iraq, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait and the Saudi-Kuwaiti Neutral Zone rose 15.8% M-o-M to nearly 1.2 mbd

Wasia back on boil, Modi takes stock

MUKESH RANJAN @ New Delhi

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday chaired the fourth special meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) to review the evolving situation arising from the ongoing conflict in West Asia and assess the preparedness of various ministries to mitigate its impact.

Cabinet Secretary T V Somanathan briefed the committee on the geopolitical situation and outlined measures taken to safeguard the country's energy security and ensure uninterrupted supplies of petroleum products, including LNG, LPG and fertilisers.

Somanathan said the government has diversified sources for LPG procurement, while overall stocks and supplies of

Two tankers with Saudi crude headed for India

Two tankers carrying Saudi crude for India exited the Red Sea through the Bab el-Mandeb Strait by sailing "dark" after Houthis in Yemen announced a blockade on Saudi shipments, a Reuters report said. Tankers Amazon and Rodos loaded with 17 lakh barrels of crude switched off their transponders, the report said | P9

major petroleum products remain adequate. "Sufficient availability of crude oil has enabled state-owned refineries to operate at 100% capacity, ensuring continued production of petrol, diesel and other essential fuels," he said.

The CCS was briefed on steps to reduce dependence on LPG through the expansion of the piped natural gas network. "The government is accelerating the rollout of the National

Gas Grid, augmenting LNG import and regasification capacity, expanding City Gas

Distribution networks and fast-tracking pipeline and last-mile connectivity approvals," a statement said.

The committee also reviewed fertiliser availability ahead of the upcoming Rabi season, with discussions focusing on meeting projected demand and identifying alternative sourcing options.



The welfare of Indian seafarers serving on both domestic and foreign-flagged vessels operating in conflict zones also figured in the deliberations. Modi directed officials to establish a dedicated mechanism for providing timely information, emergency assistance and counselling to affected seafarers and their families.

Emphasising the need to safeguard Indian citizens and the diaspora from the fallout of the conflict, the PM called for sustained coordination across ministries and agencies. He further directed that a unified and coordinated monitoring mechanism should be put in place to track developments in West Asia on a regular basis and ensure swift implementation of measures to protect national interest.

AMID REELING IMPACT OF WEST ASIA CONFLICT

Modi Holds CCS Meet, Focuses on Citizen Safety & Energy Security

Our Political Bureau

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday directed ministers to take all measures to safeguard Indian citizens and the diaspora from the impact of the West Asia conflict, establish a dedicated assistance mechanism for seafarers and their families, and accelerate the shift towards renewable energy, including solar and other non-fossil fuel sources.

He said this after he chaired a high-level meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) to review India's preparedness on the conflict.

Home minister Amit Shah, defence minister Rajnath Singh, external affairs minister S Jaishankar and finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman attended the meeting, along with National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, petroleum minister Hardeep Singh Puri, commerce minister Piyush Goyal and ports, shipping and waterways minister Sarbananda Sonowal.

Cabinet secretary TV Somanathan briefed the CCS on the evolving geopolitical situation and the measures taken by various ministries to ensure



PM Modi interacts with MPs from Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland in the presence of Union minister Kiren Rijiju in the wake of flood situation – PTI

Attacks on Seafarers Unacceptable: EAM to Ukraine FM

New Delhi: S Jaishankar on Thursday conveyed to Ukrainian FM Andrii Sybiha that attacks on commercial vessels and Indian seafarers in the Black Sea are absolutely unacceptable. "Glad to connect again with FM @andrii_sybiha of Ukraine, after our respective travels.

Discussed attacks on commercial shipping and Indian seafarers in Black Sea. Such attacks by any party are absolutely unacceptable and India condemns them unequivocally," Jaishankar wrote on X. – OPB

adequate availability of petroleum products, including LNG and LPG, and fertilisers. He informed the committee that LPG procurement sources have already been diversified and that the overall stock and supply position of major petroleum products remains

adequate, the Prime Minister's Office said in an official statement.

The cabinet secretary said sufficient crude oil availability has enabled public sector refineries to operate at utilisation levels exceeding 100%, ensuring continued produc-

tion of petrol, diesel and other petroleum products. He also outlined measures to expand PNG connections, strengthen the National Gas Grid, augment LNG import and regasification infrastructure, expand City Gas Distribution networks, and expedite pipeline and last-mile connectivity approvals under the Pipeline Infrastructure Order, 2026.

The situation of Indian seafarers serving on domestic and foreign-flagged vessels in conflict zones also came up for discussion. **Modi directed the government to establish a mechanism to provide timely information, emergency assistance and counselling to seafarers and their families**, the statement reads. He also stressed that every effort must be made to safeguard Indian citizens and the diaspora from the impact of the conflict, while underlining the need to strengthen India's long-term energy security through greater reliance on renewable energy, including solar and other non-fossil fuel-based sources, according to the statement.

The meeting underscored the Centre's continued whole-of-government approach to the West Asia crisis.

PM CALLS FOR UNINTERRUPTED FUEL SUPPLIES



PRIME
MINISTER
NARENDRA
Modi on
Thursday
directed the

government to establish a unified mechanism for regular monitoring of the West Asia conflict as India stepped up measures to protect petroleum, cooking gas and fertiliser supplies and assist seafarers and citizens exposed to the crisis.

"Availability of adequate crude oil has enabled Central Public Sector Enterprise refineries to operate at utilisation levels exceeding 100%, ensuring continued production of petrol, diesel and other petroleum products," the government statement said. "All measures be taken for ensuring uninterrupted supply of fertilisers," PM said. The review assumes significance as the conflict threatens energy flows from West Asia, a key sourcing region for India.



India is the world's third-largest crude importer. REUTERS

Crude sways around \$90 amid West Asia war volatility

Rituraj Baruah
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NEW DELHI

In a day of volatile trade, Brent crude oil prices breached \$93 a barrel intraday on Thursday amid further escalation between the US and Iran and renewed fears of supply disruptions in West Asia.

After hitting a high of \$93.31 a barrel, the September contract on the Intercontinental Exchange, eased to \$89.50 at around 10.30pm, 1.4% lower than the previous close on reports of talks between Iran and Oman on reopening of the crucial Strait of Hormuz.

Prices had surged nearly 8% in the previous session to an intraday high of \$90.8 a barrel, before settling at \$90.74.

Prices rocketed amid US strikes on Iran in retaliation of Tehran's attacks on American military assets in Jordan, heightening fears that the conflict could spill over into the region's energy infrastructure.

Al Jazeera reported that US forces bombed Iran, striking a residential building on Qeshm Island and killing a couple and their two-year-old child. Explosions were also heard on Kish Island, in Bushehr and at four locations in Khuzestan province, the hub of Iran's oil industry, it reported.

Separately, Israel's chief of staff Eyal Zamir said on Wednesday that Israeli troops would not withdraw from occupied territory in southern Lebanon until the country's security is assured.

Taken together, the US strikes, attacks involving Iran-backed groups in Iraq and Israel's stance on southern Lebanon suggest regional tensions are unlikely to ease soon.

For India, the concern extends beyond market volatility. As the world's third-largest oil importer, sustained high prices threaten to widen the import bill, fuel inflation and complicate the macroeconomic outlook.

A sustained \$1-a-barrel rise in crude oil prices over a year could add ₹18,000 crore to its import bill, according to Bank of Baroda's estimates.

PM reviews impact of West Asia conflict in CCS meet

Saurabh Trivedi

NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday chaired the fourth special meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) to review the evolving situation arising from the conflict in West Asia and assess the preparedness of various Ministries and departments to mitigate its impact on India.

According to sources, the Prime Minister was concerned over the safety and welfare of Indian seafarers in conflict zones. Mr. Modi directed the establishment of a dedicated mechanism to provide timely information, emergency assistance and counselling to seafarers and their families.

Emphasising the need to protect Indian citizens, the Prime Minister instructed all agencies to continue efforts to safeguard them from the consequences of the regional conflict.

The Cabinet Secretary briefed the CCS on the pre-



Narendra Modi

ailing geopolitical situation and outlined measures taken to ensure uninterrupted supplies of petroleum products, including crude oil, LNG, LPG and fertilizers.

LPG, PNG and fertilizer

According to the government, India has diversified its LPG import sources, while the overall stock and supply position of major petroleum products remains adequate.

Adequate crude oil availability has enabled Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE) refineries to operate at utilisation levels exceeding 100%, ensuring uninterrupted pro-

duction of petrol, diesel and other petroleum products.

The CCS was informed that the government has significantly expanded Piped Natural Gas (PNG) connections. The Centre is also promoting industrial substitution of LPG through the expansion of the National Gas Grid, augmentation of LNG import and regasification infrastructure, expansion of City Gas Distribution networks, and time-bound approvals for pipelines and last-mile connectivity under the Pipeline Infrastructure Order, 2026.

The meeting also reviewed fertilizer availability for the upcoming Rabi season. Alternative fertilizer sources were discussed, and the Prime Minister directed all concerned ministries to ensure uninterrupted availability for farmers.

Mr. Modi also stressed the importance of accelerating India's energy independence by increasing the adoption of renewable energy, particularly non-fossil fuel-based sources.

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Two tankers carrying Saudi Arabian oil for India exit Red Sea route by going 'dark'

Reuters

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NEW DELHI: Two tankers carrying Saudi crude for Indian refiners have exited the Red Sea through the Bab el-Mandeb Strait by sailing "dark" after Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthis announced a blockade on Saudi shipments, two sources with direct knowledge of the matter said.

The Suezmax tanker Amazon, chartered by Indian Oil Corp, loaded 1 million barrels of oil and Aframax Rodos lifted 700,000 barrels of crude for Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd (MRPL) at Saudi Arabia's Yanbu port around July 20 and briefly turned north towards the Suez Canal.

However, the Amazon and

Rodos then switched off their Automatic Identification System transponders around July 22, preventing public tracking of their moves, and headed south to exit the Red Sea through the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, the sources said.

The tankers are the first evidence of vessels carrying Saudi crude for India going dark by turning off their transponders, which the sources said is normal practice in war zone areas, since the blockade began. "The owner had shut the transponders on the vessels for safety purposes, and the vessels are now heading to India," one of the sources told Reuters.

The Rodos is expected to arrive at India's Mangalore port on August 1, while the Amazon is

QATAR LNG TANKER EXITS HORMUZ FOR 1ST TIME IN NEARLY 3 WEEKS

SINGAPORE: A QatarEnergy-controlled LNG tanker has exited the Strait of Hormuz, the first such vessel leaving the waterway since July 11, data from analytics firms Kpler and LSEG showed on Thursday. The Al Areesh, which loaded LNG at Qatar's Ras Laffan terminal around July 4-6, sailed on July 29 from the strait blockaded in Iran war. It is heading to Port Qasim in Pakistan and estimated to arrive on Friday.

REUTERS

..... scheduled to reach Chennai in early August, both sources said.

Both vessels are managed by Greece-based Dynacom Tankers. India's foreign ministry, Indian

Oil and MRPL did not respond to emails seeking comment.

The vessels switched off their transponders after two other Dynacom ships, Malta-flagged Panamax-sized tanker Kavomaleas and Liberian-flagged VLCC Acheloos, were hit by projectiles.

Indian refiners have switched to cargoes from the Middle East on a delivered basis since the Houthi attacks on several Saudi tankers.

MRPL said in its latest tender it will only buy oil shipped on routes avoiding the Red Sea and Strait of Hormuz.

It was not immediately clear if the Indian government talked to the Houthis or Iranian authorities to gain safe passage for the vessels after refiners in India approached it for help.