



## News Analysis (23 Nov, 2018)

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### Kartarpur Corridor

The Union cabinet has approved the construction of a 'corridor' **linking India with the historic Kartarpur gurdwara on the banks of the Ravi river**, in Pakistan.

- Kartarpur gurudwara is the **revered shrine** across the border where **Guru Nanak Dev**, the founder of Sikhism **spent the last 18 years of his life**.
- The corridor will connect the holy shrines of **Dera Baba Nanak Sahib in Gurdaspur** district of Punjab in **India** with **Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Kartarpur in Pakistan**.
- The length of the corridor is about 4 km (2 km on either side of the international border).
- The Pakistan government has also decided to open the corridor.
- The corridor will **commemorate the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev**.
- Pilgrimages between India and Pakistan are governed by the **1974 Protocol on Visits to Religious Shrines**, which includes a list of shrines in Pakistan and India open for visitors from the other country, and for which **visas are required**.
- The Kartarpur Corridor, which will **provide visa-free access to the shrine** when it becomes ready on both sides, may need a separate treaty.

### Significance

- The Kartarpur Sahib corridor was **first proposed in 1999** when Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee took a bus ride to Lahore.
- The Kartarpur corridor will be implemented as an **integrated development project with Government of India funding**. The development comes ahead of the 550th Prakash Purab or **550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak in 2019**.
- It will allow Indian devotees to visit Kartarpur shrine located 2 km inside Pakistan in Narowal district.
- Until now, most Indian devotees have had to contend with a darshan using binoculars installed at Dera Baba Nanak Sahib.

- India has also asked Pakistan to develop the corridor with suitable facilities in its territory from the International Border to facilitate easier access of Indian pilgrims.
- The forward movement on the Kartarpur corridor can be considered a **big development since despite the India-Pakistan deadlock in talks**, both New Delhi and Islamabad have been able to form a **consensus on the issue**.

### Additional Information

- Guru Nanak Dev Jayanti is observed on the full-moon day in the month of Katak to celebrate the birth of Guru Nanak Dev (1469-1539), who is the first of the 10 Sikh Gurus and the founder of Sikhism.
- He advocated the '**Nirguna**' form of bhakti.
- He rejected sacrifices, ritual baths, image worship, austerities and the scriptures of both Hindus and Muslims.
- He organised his followers into a **community**. He set up rules for **congregational worship** (sangat) involving **collective recitation**.
- He appointed one of his disciples, **Angad**, to succeed him as the preceptor (guru), and this practice was followed for nearly 200 years.
- The fifth preceptor, **Guru Arjan**, **compiled Baba Guru Nanak's hymns** along with those of his four successors and other religious poets like **Baba Farid**, **Ravidas** (also known as Raidas) and **Kabir** in the **Adi Granth Sahib**.
- These hymns, called '**Gurbani**', are composed in many languages.
- In the late seventeenth century the tenth preceptor, **Guru Gobind Singh**, included the compositions of the ninth guru, **Guru Tegh Bahadur**, and this scripture was called the **Guru Granth Sahib**.
- **Guru Gobind Singh** also laid the foundation of the **Khalsa Panth (army of the pure)** and defined its five symbols: uncut hair, a dagger, a pair of shorts, a comb and a steel bangle. Under him, the community got consolidated as a **socio-religious and military force**.

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## City Gas Distribution Scheme

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Prime Minister laid the foundation stone to mark the commencement of work for 9th round of City Gas Distribution(CGD).

- Government of India is pushing to promote the usage of environment friendly clean fuel i.e. natural gas as a fuel/feedstock across the country to move towards a **gas based economy**.
- Presently the **share of gas in the country's energy mix is just over 6%** and the aim is to reach the 15% figure, while the **world average is 24%**.

- Purpose for development of CGD networks is to **increase the availability of cleaner cooking fuel** (i.e. Piped Natural Gas) and **transportation fuel** (i.e. Compressed Natural Gas) in the country.
- The Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) has also initiated the process of new CGD bidding round covering 124 districts in 14 States to increase the potential coverage to about 53% of the country's area covering 70% of country's population.

### Government's clean energy initiatives

- CGD will help in supporting governments various clean energy initiatives of the Union Government like **Ethanol Blending, Compressed Biogas plants, increased LPG coverage and introduction of BS-6 fuels for automobiles.**
- CGD will support **Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana** as number of cylinders will be vacated for delivery in rural areas, from the cities which will get piped gas deliveries

### Significance of the Scheme

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Being an environment friendly, safer and cheaper, natural gas is a superior fuel as compared with coal and other liquid fuels.

- **Reducing Air Pollution:** India made a commitment in COP21 Paris Convention in December 2015 that by 2030 that it **would reduce carbon emission by 33% of 2005 levels.** Natural gas, as domestic kitchen fuel, as fuel for transport sector as well as a fuel for industries and commercial units, can play a significant role in reducing carbon emission.
  - As per WHO database released in May 2018, India has 14 out of 15 world's most polluted cities in terms of PM 2.5 concentration. Large number of industries also consume polluting fuels like pet coke and furnace oil which emit polluting CO<sub>2</sub>. Natural Gas is most viable alternative to coal and other liquid fuels in order to curb air pollution.
  - The expansion of CGD network will also benefit to industrial and commercial units by ensuring the uninterrupted supply of natural gas.
- **Natural Gas is cheaper:** Natural Gas in the form of CNG is 60% cheaper as compared to petrol and 45% cheaper as compared to diesel.
 

Also, natural gas in the form of PNG is 40% cheaper as compared with market price LPG and price of PNG almost matches with that of subsidised LPG based on prices in Delhi.
- **Employment Generation:** Gas networks in cities will create a new ecosystem which will enable gas based industries, generates employment to youth.

- **Address constraints of cylindered gas supply:** Natural Gas supplied through pipelines is just like water from the tap. There is no need to store cylinders in the kitchen and thus saves space.  
Also, delivering gas through cylinders is energy intensive exercise have many layers including gas agency, distributors. Piped supply is more efficient and helps in maintaining continuous supply.

## Challenges

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- **Meeting Demands of Gas:** Transition towards a gas based economy can suffer due to supply-side constraints.
- **Pricing Issue:** Imported gas should be available at affordable prices to all category of consumers be it domestic, commercial or industrial. Price should not be a hurdle in creating a gas-based economy.
- **Infrastructure:** Infrastructure requirement is a challenge as it requires both funding and acquisition of land.  
Creating a gas-based economy will require infrastructure at various levels like LNG terminals at port, technology for re-gasification of LNG, right of way for pipelines on land and CNG stations to distribute gas to consumers in cities.

## Way Forward

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- Reasonable long term contract for LNG with natural gas exporting nations can help in addressing the issue of demand-supply constraints.
- The government should **enhance the LNG terminal capacity, renegotiate Indo-Qatar Gas deal** to increase the supply of Gas.
- It is also necessary to promote production of gas through domestic ways **through agro-wastes and other products** and including the same into the CGD network.
- 100% electrification, making efficient cook stoves, relying on other renewable sources like solar can help in reducing dependence on imported gas and also save on foreign exchange.

## The Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB)

- The Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) was constituted under the Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board Act, 2006 .
- The objective of PNGRB is to protect the interests of consumers and entities engaged in specified activities relating to petroleum, petroleum products and natural gas and to promote competitive markets and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.
- PNGRB authorises the CGD networks, natural gas and petroleum product pipelines, determines tariff, lays down the technical and safety standards etc.

# UN Environment Award for India

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Nine institutions and individuals from across Asia have been recognized by the United Nations, USAID, Interpol, and the Freeland Foundation for outstanding work in preventing transboundary environmental crime in an annual award ceremony in Bangkok.

- United Nation Environment has awarded **Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB), Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change** with **Asia Environment Enforcement Awards, 2018** for excellent work done by the Bureau in combating **transboundary environmental crime**.
- The Asia Environment Enforcement Awards publicly recognize and celebrate excellence in enforcement by government officials and institutions/teams combating transboundary environmental crime in Asia.
- The awards are given to outstanding individuals and/or government organizations/teams that demonstrate excellence and leadership in enforcement of national laws to combat transboundary environmental crime in one of the following eligibility criteria areas: **collaboration; impact; innovation; integrity and gender leadership**.
- **WCCB has been conferred this award in Innovation category.**
- WCCB has adopted innovative enforcement techniques like an online Wildlife Crime Database Management System to get real time data in order to help analyze trends in crime and devise effective measures to prevent and detect wildlife crimes across India.
- This system has been successfully used to analyse trends and for successfully carrying out operations such as:
  - **Operation SAVE KURMA:** species specific operation on turtles
  - **THUNDERBIRD:** it is code-name for INTERPOL's multi-national and multi-species enforcement operation
  - **WILDNET:** to curb illegal trade of wild animals and parts through online platforms
  - **LESKNOW:** to check illegal trade of lesser-known species of animals

## Environmental crimes

- Environmental crimes, which include **illegal trade in wildlife, illicit trade in forests and forestry products, illegal dumping of waste including chemicals, smuggling of ozone depleting substances and illegal mining**, estimated at up to \$258 billion per year.
  - It is now the fourth largest illegal crime after drug smuggling, counterfeiting and human trafficking.
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## Important Facts for Prelims (23rd November 2018)

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### Atmosphere & Climate Research-Modelling Observing Systems & Services (ACROSS)

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- The Government has approved continuation of **the nine sub-schemes of the umbrella scheme "Atmosphere & Climate Research-Modelling Observing Systems & Services (ACROSS)" during 2017-2020.**
  - The scheme will provide improved weather, climate and ocean forecast and services. This would include warnings for cyclones, storm surges, heat waves and thunderstorms.
  - It will be **implemented by the Ministry of Earth Sciences** through its institutes namely India Meteorological Department (IMD), Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), National Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting (NCMRWF), and Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Service (INCOIS).
  - It has also approved establishment of **National Facility for Airborne Research (NFAR)** which will serve the purpose of airborne measurements in respect of Aerosol sampling, measurement of cloud properties, cloud physics, Convective Tropical Convergence Zone (CTCZ), atmospheric chemistry, etc. to address all relevant scientific issues.
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