



## 1. Kirit Parikh panel for gas pricing freedom



### KIRIT PARIKH TO CNBC-TV18

- About 25% increase in capacity for LNG is coming up
- Another 20% increase in capacity will come the year after
- Import prices coming down will impact domestic producers
- Looking at giving complete freedom on pricing
- We have given a timeframe of 3-4 years to account for volatility

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### Topic: Economy

**In News:** The Kirit Parikh panel to review natural gas prices in India has submitted its recommendations recently.

### More on the Topic

- The panel was set up in September to review India's gas pricing formula to ensure **fair prices to consumers** after state-set prices of gas from old fields and a ceiling price for output from difficult blocks rose to a record high.
- Currently **there are multiple gas pricing mechanism** including administered gas price mechanism and non administered gas price mechanism.
- The two sets of prices - tied to global benchmarks, including Henry Hub, Alberta gas, NBP and Russian gas - are annually revised.

### Recommendations:

- **Completely free and market-determined pricing for natural gas** extracted from legacy fields and remove all caps by January 1, 2027.
- Legacy or old fields are given to ONGC and OIL on a nomination basis without any condition of sharing profits and therefore government controls its price.
- **Linking the price of gas produced by the state-owned firms with the imported crude oil prices** rather than benchmarking them to gas rates in international markets.



- **Including natural gas in the GST regime** by subsuming excise duty charged by the central government and varying rates of VAT levied by state governments.
- **Price escalation for the old fields**, with an increase of \$0.5 per metric million British thermal units (mmBtu) **annually with no change in pricing for the first two years** or a \$0.25 per mmBtu escalation for five years.

#### **Gas Based Economy:**

- The government of India proposed in 2018 to increase natural gas's primary energy mix contribution from its current level of 6% to 15% by 2030. India has implemented the following steps to achieve this:
- **Policy for Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing (HELP):** HELP calls for a standard licencing scheme that will apply to all hydrocarbons, including coal bed methane, gas, and oil. It uses the revenue-sharing concept and allows for flexible marketing and pricing.
- **SATAT Plan:** A sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation is known as SATAT. This initiative invites **expressions of interest from potential entrepreneurs with the goal of establishing compressed bio-gas production facilities** and making them available on the market for use in vehicle fuels.
- The Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) has authorised about a **33,500 km natural gas pipeline network throughout the nation in an effort to establish a national gas grid.**
- **The Indian Gas Exchange (IGX)**, India's first gas exchange, was established in June 2020. The exchange is anticipated to make natural gas price discovery more transparent.
- **Pradhan Mantri Urj Ganga Project and North East Gas Grid:** Connected eastern and north eastern parts with gas grid.

**Source: Indian Express**

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## 2. Climate Investment Opportunities in India's Cooling Sector - World Bank Report



### Topic: Report and Indices

**In News:** The World bank has released Climate Investment Opportunities in India's Cooling Sector report recently.

### More on the Topic:

- As temperatures steadily rise in India due to climate change, keeping spaces cool using alternative and innovative energy efficient technologies can open an investment opportunity of \$1.6 trillion by 2040.
- This also has the potential **to reduce greenhouse gas emissions significantly and create nearly 3.7 million jobs.**



- India's cooling strategy **can help save lives and livelihoods, reduce carbon emissions and simultaneously position India as a global hub for green cooling manufacturing.**
- India is experiencing higher temperatures every year. **By 2030, over 160-200 million people across the country could be exposed to lethal heat waves annually.**
- **Around 34 million people in India will face job losses** due to heat stress related productivity decline.
- By 2037, the demand for cooling is likely to be **eight times more than current levels. This means there will be a demand for a new air-conditioner every 15 seconds,** leading to an expected rise of 435 percent in annual greenhouse gas emissions over the next two decades.

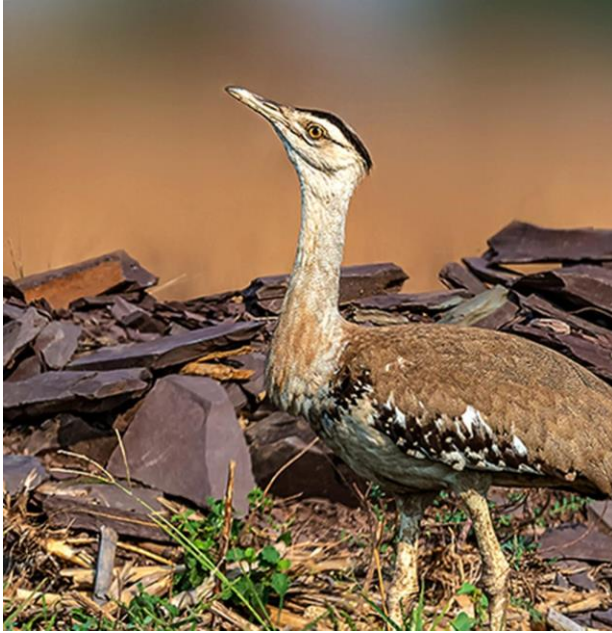
#### **Recommendations:**

- There is need for **private investments in district cooling technologies.** These generate chilled water in a central plant which is then distributed to multiple buildings via underground insulated pipes.
- This brings down the cost for providing cooling to individual buildings and can reduce energy bills by 20-30 per cent compared to the most efficient conventional cooling solution.
- **To minimise rising food and pharmaceutical wastage** during transport due to higher temperatures, the report recommended **fixing gaps in cold chain distribution networks.**
- Investing in pre-cooling and refrigerated transport can help decrease food loss by about 76 per cent and reduce carbon emissions by 16 per cent.
- **Space cooling interventions across India will need to prioritise "thermal comfort for all"** while facilitating cooling access for 1.4 billion people and reducing the impact on an already overburdened electricity system.
- Improvements in servicing, maintenance and disposal of equipment that use **hydrochlorofluorocarbons** is needed.

**Source: PIB**

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### 3. 'Project Great Indian Bustard'



#### Topic: Environment and Ecology

**In News:** The Supreme Court has asked if a 'Project GIB' could be launched to protect the endangered bird Great Indian Bustard.

#### More on the Topic:

- This large bird, found mainly in Rajasthan and Gujarat, has been **categorised as critically endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)**.
- While the GIBs' historic range included much of the Indian sub-continent, it has now shrunk to just 10 per cent of that.
- Among the heaviest birds with flight, **GIBs prefer grasslands as their habitats**.
- The terrestrial birds spend most of their time on the ground, feeding on insects, lizards, grass seeds, etc.
- GIBs are **considered the flagship bird species of grassland** and hence barometers of the health of grassland ecosystems.

#### Why is the Great Indian Bustard endangered?

- Among the biggest threats to the GIBs are **overhead power transmission lines**. Due to their poor frontal vision, the birds can't spot the power lines from a distance, and are too heavy to change course when close. Thus, they collide with the cables and die.



- According to the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), in Rajasthan, 18 GIBs die every year after colliding with overhead power lines.

#### **Great Indian Bustard: Conservation efforts:**

- The Supreme Court in April 2021 ordered that all overhead power transmission lines in core and potential GIB habitats in Rajasthan and Gujarat should be made underground.
- The SC also directed the installation of bird diverters (reflector-like structures strung on power cables) in priority areas.
- The Centre had launched the **GIB species recovery programme**. Under this, the WII and Rajasthan forest department jointly set up **breeding centres where GIB eggs harvested from the wild were incubated artificially**.

Source: Hindu

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## **4. United Nations Security Council**



### **Topic: International Relations**

**In News:** India has assumed Presidency of UN Security Council for month of December.

#### **More on the Topic:**

- **Countering terrorism and reformed multilateralism** will be among the key priorities for India during its UNSC presidency that will culminate in the completion of its two-year tenure as non-permanent member of the 15-nation UNSC.

#### **About United Nations Security Council:**

- The Security Council is the United Nations' **principal crisis-management body**.
- It is empowered to impose binding obligations on the 193 UN member states to maintain peace.
- The UN Security Council is composed of 15 members, including **five permanent member states** – China, France, Russian Federation, the United States, and the United Kingdom –

and 10 **non-permanent member states**, which are elected by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)

- Ten non-permanent members are elected to the UNSC every year for a **two-year term**
- **The 10 non-permanent seats are distributed among the regions of the world:** five seats for African and Asian countries (three are for Africa and two for Asia), one for Eastern European countries, two for Latin American and Caribbean countries, and the remaining two for Western European and other countries.
- The Africa and Asia Pacific group takes turns every two years to put up an Arab candidate.

**Source: Indian Express**

## 5.Horticulture Cluster Development Program

### Topic: Government Programs



**In News:** A meeting was held by the Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare for the **Horticulture Cluster Development Programme (CDP)**.

#### More on the Topic:

- **It is a program, by Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, to enhance global competitiveness of horticulture sector.**
- National Horticulture Board is the Nodal Agency for its implementation.
- 55 clusters have been identified.
- Financial Assistance will be provided by National Horticulture Board to the Implementing Agencies through CDAs appointed for the respective Clusters.

- The Clusters have been divided into three different categories – Mega, Midi, and Mini depending upon the area covered in the Cluster.
- The program will leverage **geographical specialisation of horticulture clusters and promote integrated and market-led development of pre-production, production, post-harvest, logistics, branding etc.**


Source: Business Standard

## 6. Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR)

**Maternal mortality ratio:**  
the number of maternal  
deaths per *live births*

**Numerator:** Maternal deaths

**Denominator:** Live births



Population Research Institute: pop.org

### Topic: Reports and Indices

**In News:** In a new milestone, there has been a significant decline in the Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) in the country.

#### More on the Topic:

- As per the Special Bulletin on MMR released by the Registrar General of India (RGI), the Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) of India has improved further by a spectacular 6 points and now stands at 97/ lakh live births.
- The Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) is defined as the number of maternal deaths during a given time period per 100,000 live births.
- Upon achieving this, India has accomplished the National Health Policy (NHP) target for MMR of less than 100/lakh live births and is on the right track to achieve the SDG target of MMR less than 70/ lakh live births by 2030.



- The outstanding progress made in terms of the number of states which have achieved Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target, the number has now risen from six to eight leading with Kerala (19), followed by Maharashtra (33), then Telangana (43) and Andhra Pradesh (45), subsequently Tamil Nadu (54), Jharkhand (56), Gujarat (57) and lastly Karnataka (69).

#### Government Efforts to Tackle Maternal Mortality:

- Since 2014, under the **National Health Mission (NHM)**, India has made a concerted effort to provide accessible quality maternal and newborn health services and minimize preventable maternal deaths.
- **The National Health Mission** has made significant investments to ensure provision of healthcare services, particularly for effective implementation of the maternal health programs to accomplish the specified MMR targets.
- Government schemes such as “**Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram**” and “**Janani Suraksha Yojana**” have been modified and upgraded to more assured and respectful service delivery initiatives like Surakshit Matritva Aashwasan’ (SUMAN).
- **Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan (PMSMA)** is particularly lauded for its focus on identifying high-risk pregnancies and facilitating their appropriate management.
- This had a significant impact on mitigating preventable mortality. **LaQshya and Midwifery initiatives** concentrate on promoting quality care in a respectful and dignified manner ensuring choice of birthing to all pregnant women.

Source: Business Standard

## 7. 30X30 Goal



**Topic: Environment and Ecology**



**In News:** Asia is not likely to meet the ambitious 30X30 goal proposed under the Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), according to a new research released recently.

**More on the Topic:**

- 30X30 aims to protect and conserve 30% of world's terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems.
- 30x30 target aims to halt the accelerating loss of species, and protect vital ecosystems that are source of economic security.
- It was first floated in 2019 and presently more than 100 countries (including India) are part of it.

**Source: Business Standard**

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