



MINISTÈRE
DE L'ÉCONOMIE,
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REVUE DE PRESSE SECTORIELLE ENERGIE ET DEVELOPPEMENT DURABLE

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G En bref

Infrastructure :

- Après les inondations meurtrières en Uttarakhand, l'Inde accueille un groupement d'experts sur les barrages
- Le Premier ministre Narendra Modi annonce des investissements de 82 Mds USD pour le secteur portuaire

Ferroviaire :

- Malgré la pandémie, les *Indian Railways* ont augmenté le volume de fret transporté par rapport à l'année précédente
- Les *Western Railways* subissent une perte annuelle de 560 M€ en raison de la pandémie de la Covid-19

Développement et transports urbains :

- Le gouvernement de l'Uttar Pradesh prévoit un budget 133 M€ pour le développement de métros à Kanpur, Agra et Varanasi
- Le *Chief Minister* du Penjab inaugure une série de projets touchant à l'approvisionnement en eau et au réseau routier, pour un montant de 123 M€

Pétrole, gaz et biocarburants :

- Le *Secretary* du ministère du pétrole et gaz naturel annonce la subvention de 10 000 000 de connexions supplémentaires au réseau de gaz
- L'Inde ouvre un "Bureau de l'énergie" à Moscou pour développer ses investissements et partenariats avec la Russie
- Le Premier ministre avance de 2030 à 2025 les objectifs indiens d'intégration de 20% d'éthanol dans les carburants
- L'entreprise minière nationale, *Coal India Limited* (CIL), approuve 32 nouveaux projets d'extraction de charbon pour 2020-2021, pour un montant de 5,3 Mds €

- Le Premier ministre **Modi réaffirme son souhait d'augmenter la part du gaz dans le mix énergétique indien**

Electricité et énergies renouvelables :

- Le Conseil des ministres **approuve l'accord de coopération sur les énergies renouvelables signé entre la France et l'Inde en janvier 2021**
- Le montant des impayés des sociétés de distribution aux producteurs d'électricité a atteint **15,4 Mds €** en décembre 2020, soit une hausse de près de 24% par rapport à décembre 2019
- **Le Ministère de l'Electricité réduit les pénalités de retard de paiement des sociétés de distribution d'électricité en les indexant au taux d'intérêt de la Banque Centrale indienne**
- Selon le Ministre des PME, la capacité de panneaux photovoltaïques en toiture installée par les PME **pourrait atteindre 16 GW d'ici fin 2022**
- Adani Green Energy met en service une ferme éolienne de 100 MW dans le Gujarat
- **La capacité installée de production d'énergie solaire a augmenté de 3,2 GW en 2020, sa plus faible hausse en 5 ans**
- Un groupe de parlementaires enjoint le MNRE à renforcer son accompagnement des agences **dans la mise en œuvre de l'objectif de 175 GW d'énergie renouvelable d'ici 2022**
- Le gouvernement publie une liste de producteurs domestiques de modules photovoltaïques **auprès desquels devront s'approvisionner les développeurs de projets solaires gouvernementaux**
- **Le gouvernement annonce la mise en place de taxes à l'importation sur les cellules et modules photovoltaïques à compter d'avril 2022**

Mobilité électrique :

- Le gouvernement de Delhi met en place de fortes incitations pour le développement de la mobilité électrique

Environnement **et qualité de l'air** :

- Le gouvernement central soumet une nouvelle proposition en matière **d'interdiction des plastiques à usage unique d'ici la fin de l'année 2022**
- **Les industriels s'inquiètent des conséquences du projet d'interdiction des plastiques à usage unique, et demandent une mise en œuvre uniforme à l'échelle du pays**

Revue de presse

1. Infrastructure

India hosting global dam experts meet in backdrop of Uttarakhand flash floods

Mint, 26/02/2021

India is hosting a high-level meeting of the Paris-headquartered International Commission on Large Dams (ICOLD). This symposium of experts on dams, to end tomorrow, comes in the backdrop of one of the worst human and ecological tragedy following a glacier burst and flash floods in Uttarakhand.

The incident earlier this month has renewed concerns over hydropower projects in the ecologically fragile and earthquake-prone Himalayan region.

Hydropower has long been a subject of controversy in states such as Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Arunachal Pradesh. These concerns come in the backdrop of the Sikkim earthquake in September 2011, the Uttarakhand floods in 2013 and ecological concerns such as further endangering black-necked crane (*Grus nigricollis*), red panda, the Himalayan black bear, the musk deer, and medicinal plants and rare orchids in Arunachal Pradesh.

With 45.69 giga watt (GW), hydropower accounts for more than a tenth or 12.23% of India's installed power generation capacity of 373.43 GW. Also, India plans to add 45 GW of hydropower capacity to its energy basket.

This meeting on "Sustainable Development of Dams and River Basins", has been organised in collaboration with India's Central Water Commission (CWC), Dam Rehabilitation Improvement Project (DRIP) and National Hydrology Project (NHP).

The cabinet committee on economic affairs recently approved the second and third phases of Rs10,211 crore Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP) to improve the safety and operational performance of 736 dams across the country.

"The achievement of flagship programmes of Ministry of Jal Shakti namely Dam Rehabilitation Improvement Project (DRIP) to improve the safety and operational performance of large dams and its appurtenances structures in addition to institutional strengthening and National Hydrology Project (NHP) with the World Bank assistance will be the presented to the Global Dam Community who are keen and looking forward to India's development and successful implementation of DRIP as well as NHP," India's power ministry said in a recent statement.

"In addition, the Dam Safety Bill which has been approved by Lok Sabha, in order to put regulatory mechanism in place, to provide for proper surveillance, inspection, operation and maintenance of all dams in India, which has been enacted will be publicised," the statement added.

As ecological concerns rise, developing hydropower projects has increasingly become difficult, with large multilateral lenders being averse to such projects. Also, apart from high tariffs that has resulted in around 100GW of electricity potential in India's rivers lying untapped, hydropower project construction is time-consuming and tedious. However, it does carry a strategic imperative, wherein the control on river water flow acts as a force-multiplier during times of aggression.

India is also working on a North East Water Management Authority (NEWMA) to evolve a consolidated strategy for management of the region's water resources. The apex authority for developing all projects related to hydropower,

agriculture, biodiversity conservation, flood control, inland water transport, forestry, fishery, and eco-tourism in the region will spearhead India's efforts to establish prior user rights on water from the rivers that originate in China.

PM Modi says \$82 billion being invested in ports

The Hindu, 02/03/2021

India will invest \$82 billion in port projects by 2035, raise share of clean renewable energy source in maritime sector, develop waterways and boost tourism around lighthouses as part of port-led development, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Tuesday.

Speaking at the Maritime India Summit, he invited global investors to invest in Indian ports, shipyards and waterways. More than 574 projects costing \$82 billion or ₹6 lakh crore have been identified for implementation between 2015 and 2035 under the Sagarmala Project, he said.

The government, he said, is looking to operationalise 23 waterways by 2030. "Ours is a government that is investing in waterways in a way that was never seen before. Domestic waterways are found to be cost effective and environment friendly ways of transporting freight," he said.

Also, plans have been drawn for developing tourism on land adjacent to 78 out of 189 lighthouses on Indian coastline. "This with the objective of enhancing development of the existing lighthouses and its surrounding areas into unique maritime tourism landmarks," he said adding the government has also initiated holistic development of islands.

Alongside, the usage of clean renewable energy in the maritime sector is being raised.

"We are in the process of installing solar and wind based power systems in all the major ports across the country. We aim to increase usage of renewable energy to more than 60 per cent of all energy by 2030 in three phases across Indian ports," he said.

Mr. Modi said Indian ports have reduced waiting time for inbound and outbound cargo. "India is very serious about growing in the maritime sector and emerging as a leading Blue Economy of the world," he said.

2. Ferroviaire

Despite COVID-19 challenges, Indian Railways surpasses last year's freight loading for same period

Financial Express, 02/03/2021

Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the freight loading of Indian Railways, this financial year till February 28 has surpassed the figures of last year for the same period. According to the Railway Ministry, Indian Railways' cumulative freight loading, as on 28 February 2021, was 1102.17 million tonnes for this year. The figure is higher compared to last year's figure for the same period, which was 1102.1 million tonnes. Up to 28 February 2021, on a month-to-month basis, the loading of Indian Railways was 112.25 million tonnes, which is about 10 per cent higher compared to the loading up to February 28 of last year. While on a day-to-day basis, the freight loading on 28 February 2021 was 5.23 million tonnes, which is 36 per cent higher compared to last year's freight loading for the same date.

In the month of February 2021, freight trains' average speed was 46.09 km per hour, which is more than double as compared to last year for the same month (23.01 km per hour). The average speed of freight trains, on 28 February 2021, was

47.51 km per hour compared to the speed of 23.17 km per hour last year for the same date which is also more than double. Also, Rs 11096.89 crores was earned by Indian Railways from freight loading in the month of February 2021, which is 7.7 per cent higher compared to last year's earnings for the same period. The national transporter earned Rs 509.44 crores from freight loading on 28 February 2021, which is 34 per cent higher compared to last year's earnings for the same day. The Railway Ministry further stated that many concessions/discounts are being given in Indian Railways to make the movement of goods attractive. Besides, faster speed, constant dialogue with the industry and logistics service providers, strong emergence of Business Development Units (BDUs) in Indian Railways' zones as well as divisions, etc., are adding to the robust growth of Indian Railways' freight business, it added.

**Massive loss due to COVID-19 pandemic!
Indian Railways' western zone suffers Rs 5,000 crore annual loss**

Financial Express, 24/02/2021

The Western Railway zone of Indian Railways is facing an annual revenue loss of around Rs 5,000 crore due to the COVID-19 pandemic. General Manager of Western Railways, Alok Kansal was recently quoted in a PTI report saying that many people are still reluctant to travel by train due to fear of novel coronavirus. The zonal railway is incurring an annual revenue loss of Rs 5,000 crore in the passenger trains segment due to the coronavirus pandemic, which affected passenger train services and led to a drop in the number of railway travellers. Among the passenger trains that are currently being operated by Western Railways, some of the trains are running with only 10 per cent occupancy, the GM said.

According to Kansal, before the COVID-19 outbreak, the Western Railway zone used to operate about 300 passenger trains. But to prevent the spread of novel coronavirus, the government stopped passenger train operations across the country in March last year. He further said now the operation of passenger trains is coming back on track and this is likely to improve the zone's revenue. Western Railways, during the last 11 months, has gradually restarted 145 trains out of its 300 passenger trains. Thus, about 50 per cent of the zonal railways' passenger trains have been resumed, he said.

The Western Railway zone is going to restart six more passenger trains in the next seven days, in the state of Madhya Pradesh, the GM said. He further clarified that at present, Western Railways is running its passenger trains as special trains in view of the COVID-19 pandemic guidelines, and only those carrying reserved train tickets are allowed to travel. Last year, during the COVID-19 lockdown, the Western Railway zone ran as many as 1,234 Shramik Special trains services from May 1 to 31 to ferry nearly 19 lakh people to their destinations in various states, the GM added.

3. Développement et transports urbains

Metro trains to run in Kanpur, Agra, Varanasi! UP govt make Rs 1,175 crore provision for metro rail projects

Financial Express, 23/02/2021

In the coming years, travelling in different cities of Uttar Pradesh to get a lot better and convenient as various metro rail projects are coming up in the state. On Monday, the state government of Uttar Pradesh has made a provision of Rs 1,175 crores in the state budget presented in the assembly for different metro rail projects, according to a PTI report. For the

Kanpur metro rail project, there is a provision of Rs 597 crore in the budget presented by Finance Minister Suresh Khanna. For the trial run commencement of the first section between IIT Kanpur and Moti Jheel, a target has been set from 31 July 2021 and the commercial run from 30 November 2021.

Apart from the Kanpur metro rail project, there is a provision of Rs 478 crore in the state budget for the Agra metro rail project. For starting the trial run of the project's first phase from Taj East gate to Jama Masjid, the target has been set for 31 July 2021, while its commercial run from 30 November 2021. Besides, an amount of Rs 100 crore has been earmarked in the budget for Gorakhpur, Varanasi and other metro rail projects. Also, for the construction of the Delhi – Ghaziabad – Meerut Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) corridor, the government has made a provision of Rs 1,326 crore in the budget, the report said.

The Kanpur metro rail project includes two corridors. One is 23.785 km long ITT to Naubasta corridor, which is partly elevated and partly underground. It covers 14 elevated stations and eight underground stations in total. The other corridor is 8.60 km long Agriculture University to Barra-8 corridor, comprising of four elevated stations and four underground stations. The Agra Metro rail project consists of two corridors with a total length of 29.4 km. The metro rail project will link major tourist attractions across the city like Agra Fort, Taj Mahal, Sikandra with bus stands and railway stations.

Infra boost in Punjab under Smart City & AMRUT schemes! Rs 1087 crore water supply, road projects inaugurated

Financial Express, 23/02/2021

A slew of projects worth Rs 1,087 crore were inaugurated by Punjab Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh on Monday. The minister

virtually laid foundation stones and inaugurated various projects for the holistic development of urban areas under the Smart City and AMRUT schemes. Moreover, as a tribute to Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur on his 400th Prakash Purab, he urged the Modi government to include the holy city of Anandpur Sahib under the Smart City scheme. Singh laid the foundation stone of the Rs 721 crore Surface Water Supply Scheme for Amritsar. He was quoted in an IE report saying that instead of the contaminated and fast depleting ground water, this scheme would ensure access to clean drinking water to the residents of the holy city.

According to the CM, 2,065 projects have already been started under the first phase of the Urban Infrastructure Improvement Program (UIIP), with majority of them being completed, at a cost of Rs 300 crore. Under the second phase of UIIP, another 4,227 number of projects have been approved and work on 1,300 of them has started already. On the progress of Smart City projects in Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Amritsar and Sultanpur Lodhi under his government, the CM said that of the Rs 3,000 crore total allocation, so far, works worth Rs 1,246 crore had been started or completed. Singh further said while tenders have been already issued for works worth Rs 918 crore, the process of issuing tenders for works worth Rs 802 crore were underway already.

He said under the AMRUT scheme his government had already allocated Rs 2,785 crore for 16 towns and work was underway on projects worth Rs 2,740 crore. According to Singh, the aim of this scheme is to provide 100% water supply and sewerage. So far 1,072 km of water supply and sewerage pipelines of 698 km length had been laid, other than the release of 69,304 household water supply as well as 43,611 household sewerage connections. For Barnala, the inaugurated projects included augmentation, rehabilitation of sewerage network as well as sewage treatment plant for 100% coverage, 20 MLD sewerage treatment plant, 74 km long sewerage line with 5,740 household sewerage connections, at a cost of Rs 105.63 crore.

For Amritsar, the minister inaugurated various development projects of Rs 20.50 crore including upgradation of fire fighting services, development of parks and open spaces as well as solid waste management facilities. While a 29 MLD capacity STP was inaugurated at Khanna at a cost of Rs 25.16 crore. Other than the Rs 721.85 crore 24x7 Surface Water Supply Scheme at the city of Amritsar, the CM virtually laid the foundation stones for development projects worth an amount of Rs 129.33 crore in Sultanpur Lodhi.

The minister also laid the foundation stones of various works like 15 MLD STP at Basti Peer Dad, waste processing plant at Gadaipur, upgradation of power line distribution system of Raunak Bazaar, improvement of Jalandhar railway station, a new road in Urban Estate Phase II as well as digitization of the existing Guru Nanak Dev Library were laid in the city of Jalandhar, at a cost of Rs 41 crore. For the city of Ludhiana, he laid the foundation stones for the establishment of Ludhiana Municipal Control Centre, an integrated command and surveillance centre as well as the beautification of the Mini Rose Garden. These projects cost Rs 40 crore in total and for them, tenders have already been invited.

4. Pétrole, gaz et biocarburants

1 cr more free LPG connections in 2 yrs, easier access to cooking gas planned:
Oil Secretary

The Economic Times, 28/02/2021

The free LPG connection scheme is one structural reform of the Modi government that has been internationally acclaimed for ridding indoor household pollution and improving women's health. And now, **the government plans to give one crore more free LPG connections to the needy over the next two years and make it easier to access cooking gas to achieve near 100 per cent penetration of the clean fuel in the country.**

Oil Secretary Tarun Kapoor said plans are in the works to provide LPG connection with bare-minimum identity documents and without insisting on residence proof of the place of availing the cooking gas.

Also, consumers would soon get a choice of getting a refill cylinder from three dealers in his or her neighbourhood instead of being tied to just one distributor, who may not be able to provide LPG on demand due to availability or other reasons.

In an interview, Kapoor said a **record-breaking 8 crore free LPG connections were provided to poor women households in just four years alongside the aggressive rollout of cooking gas, taking the number of LPG users in the country to about 29 crore.**

The Union Budget earlier this month announced a plan to give out one crore more free cooking gas connections under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala (PMUY) scheme.

"Our plan is to complete these additional one crore connections in two years," he said.

While no separate allocation for this has been made in the Budget for 2021-22, the general fuel subsidy allocation should be enough to cover the expense of about Rs 1,600 per connection, he said.

"We have done a preliminary estimate of the people who are now left out. The number comes to 1 crore," he said. "After the successful Ujjwala scheme, households without LPG are very less in India. We have around 29 crore households with LPG connections. With the one crore connections, we will be close to 100 per cent LPG penetration."

He, however, hastened to add that one crore unserved population was a dynamic number and there may be more families that may need LPG connections as they move to cities or other places for employment and other reasons.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's signature Ujjwala scheme for providing a free cooking gas connection to the poor had been lauded by the WHO in 2018 and by the International Energy

Agency (IEA) in the following year as one that reduced indoor household pollution by helping families switch to cleaner energy sources and improving the environment and health of women.

The carbon footprint of LPG is 50 per cent lower than coal. LPG helps reduce carbon dioxide and black carbon emissions, which are the second-largest contributors to global warming.

Before Ujjwala, India was the second-largest contributor to global mortality due to household and ambient air pollution.

"We want to connect everyone in the country to the LPG network," Kapoor said. "Besides Ujjwala, we are also easing out the procedure for getting LPG connections."

While theoretically, the current rule is that everyone is eligible to get a cooking gas connection, practically it is difficult to get one due to requirements such as proof of residence of the place, where the connection is being sought.

"We have asked our oil companies that those kinds of complaints should be eliminated. A person who is even shifting from one city to another, even temporarily, should also be able to get an LPG connection without hassles. We want to move to a stage where with very basic documents, just some proof of identity, one can get an LPG connection," he said.

As a step towards that, a unified software for all the three fuel marketing companies - Indian Oil, Bharat Petroleum and Hindustan Petroleum - is being prepared.

"We are getting a common information technology-based system in place. Right now, the three companies have their separate IT-based systems. We also want to popularise the mobile applications that our companies have so that no one has to keep a physical booklet," he said.

Through this software, inter-company migration will become very easy, he said, adding in cities a person would have a choice of seeking an LPG

refill from three distributors of the same company.

The Ujjwala Yojana was launched in May 2016 with a target to give free LPG connections to 5 crore mostly rural women members of below the poverty line (BPL) households. The list was later expanded to include all SC/ST households and forest dwellers, among others.

In 2018, the scheme was extended to all poor households and the target raised to 8 crore connections.

Under the scheme, the government provides a subsidy of Rs 1,600 to state-owned fuel retailers for every free LPG gas connection that they give to poor households. This subsidy is intended to cover the security fee for the cylinder and the fitting charges.

The beneficiary has to buy her own cooking stove. To reduce the burden, the scheme allows beneficiaries to pay for the stove and the first refill in monthly instalments. However, the cost of all subsequent refills has to be borne by the beneficiary household.

India opens Energy Office in Moscow to expand investments and procurement

The Economic Times, 04/03/2021

India on Tuesday opened India Energy Office (IEO) in Russia with a goal to push an already burgeoning energy partnership between the two strategic partners.

The IEO in Moscow was inaugurated by Tarun Kapoor, Secretary, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, in the presence of Pavel Sorokin, Deputy Minister of Energy of Russia and D. B. Venkatesh Varma, Ambassador of India to Russia.

The IEO will cover five top Indian entities -- Oil India Limited, ONGC Limited, Videsh Limited, GAIL (India) Limited, Indian Oil Corporation Limited, and Engineers India Limited. The announcement to set up IEC

was made by the Foreign Secretary during his recent trip to Moscow.

IEO has been opened for promoting the interest of Indian oil and gas PSUs in Russia and of Russian companies in India in the energy sector. **The key objectives of IEO is to make all-out efforts for supporting the current assets, finding new business opportunities, involved in capacity building, trying for new technologies for skill development, import & export of petroleum products and services.**

Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to India this year for the annual summit could witness new arrangements in the already burgeoning energy sector partnership.

Besides, defence, space and nuclear energy, oil & gas is a key pillar of Indo-Russian strategic partnership. **To date, Indian oil and gas companies have acquired stakes in 5 Russian companies/projects at a value of about \$15 bn. India wants to invest in the energy assets in the Russian Far-East besides the Arctic under the Russian jurisdiction.** India is keen to explore a new sea route to source crude oil and LNG from Russian Arctic. The route has the potential to cut cost and time for transporting LNG from Russia to India.

In October 2016, Russia's Rosneft and a consortium led by Trafigura entered into a deal with the Essar group to acquire Essar Oil's refining and retail assets for \$10.9 billion and also acquire Vadinar port and related infrastructure for another \$2 billion.

The majority stake in Essar Oil was acquired by Rosneft and a consortium led by Trafigura and UCP in August 2017. The company was subsequently rebranded as Nayara Energy. **It operates India's second largest single-site refinery, with eight per**

cent of the country's total capacity in the segment.

India has begun negotiations with Russia on long-term assured supplies of crude oil, **especially from Russia's Far East, and has also invited Russian companies, particularly in gas business, gas infrastructure and petrochemicals, to invest in India. Beginning 2018, Russia has started supplying LNG to India under a contract for two decades. GAIL has contracted 2.5 million tonnes per annum of LNG from Russia's Gazprom for 20 years.**

India has advanced the target for increasing ethanol blending levels

Business Standard, 08/03/2021

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said **India has advanced the target for increasing the ethanol blending levels from 2030 to 2025.** He said this while delivering the keynote address at the CERAWeek 2021 through video conference. Modi was also awarded the CERAWeek Global Energy and Environment Leadership Award.

"There is growing acceptance of ethanol across India. Based on people's response, we have decided to advance the target of 20 per cent blending of ethanol in petrol to 2025 from the earlier target of 2030." Modi said that 5,000 compressed biogas plants will be set up by 2024 with a production target of 15 million tonnes.

The PM also talked about the growing share of non-fossil sources in India's installed capacity of electricity, rising to 38 per cent, and about the adoption of Bharat VI emission norms — equivalent to Euro6 fuel.

He said India is working to increase the share of natural gas from the current 6 per cent to 15 per cent by 2030. LNG is being promoted as a fuel.

He lauded the recently launched National Hydrogen Mission and PM KUSUM schemes.

Coal India approves 32 mining projects worth Rs 47,000 cr this fiscal year

Business Standard, 08/03/2021

National miner, Coal India limited (CIL), said it has approved 32 new coal mining projects in the ongoing financial year with an estimated cost of Rs 47,000 crore.

Of the 32, twenty-four are expansion of existing projects and the remaining eight are greenfield. The combined incremental peak capacity of these projects is projected at 193 million tonnes per annum (MTPA). This will be in addition to the already sanctioned capacity of 303.5 MTPA, said the company.

The incremental production by FY'24 from the approved 32 expansion and the new greenfield projects would be to the tune of around 81 MTPA.

CIL said this is a record capacity addition in its history. "Such high number, either in terms of projects or capacity addition, has not been cleared in a single financial year so far" said a senior official of the company.

CIL Board and Boards of the respective subsidiary companies have given their nod for the move, CIL said in a statement.

The company said the record capacity addition is in line with its efforts to replace coal imports in the country.

Of the 193 MTPA capacity of 32 projects, the three subsidiaries of CIL, South Eastern Coalfields Limited (SECL), Central Coalfields Limited (CCL) and Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL) at 167 MTPA between them form the bulk at 86.5 per cent.

SECL with 6 projects at an estimated incremental investment of Rs 18,657 crore accounts for 63.5 MTPA followed by CCL at an investment of Rs 7,520 crore for 10 projects of 56.6 MTPA. MCL with 3 project would add up to 47 MTPA at an investment of Rs 14,057 crore. Balance 26 MTPA would be met through ECL, NCL and WCL with the remaining investment between them.

"Concurrently, in tandem with production the company is also strengthening the rail evacuation infrastructure through setting up rail lines, sidings and first mile connectivity projects in the companies from where the majority of the output is expected" CIL said.

Govt puts the foot on gas infra: Here's why it could be the next big theme to watch

CNBC TV18, 10/03/2021

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been vocal about improving the contribution of gas in India's energy mix from the current 6 percent to 15 percent by 2030. To do that, the government has taken a number of policy measures to boost the supply of gas at affordable rates in remote parts of the country. The foremost proposal is to expand the gas grid from the current 16,200km to 27,000km covering a large part of the country. Furthermore, there has been a focus on ensuring a transparent price discovery and ease of transactions.

For starters, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the budget 2021 announced the setting up of a transport system operator to auction the gas pipeline capacity. It is aimed at easing access to transport infra, deepen the local gas market and meet the longstanding industry demand to separate content and carriage. The operator will manage a transparent digital system of booking pipeline capacity for suppliers and customers.

Kochi-Mangaluru pipeline: Game changer for South India

Weeks before the budget announcement came the inauguration of the landmark Kochi-Mangaluru pipeline in early January after protests, delays and cost escalation. Launched in 2009, the 444-km long gas pipeline was laid by the Gas Authority of India Ltd (GAIL) and sourced from a terminal in Kochi built by Petronet LNG. With 2,750 existing domestic gas connections, the Kochi-Mangaluru pipeline already supplies 3.8 million cubic metres of gas per day to industrial and residential customers in Kochi. With work already underway to expand in more areas, the daily supply is expected to increase to around 4 million cubic metres in the coming years. Overall, the pipeline has connected a large part of Southern India to the gas grid and is a major addition to the gas pie.

The new pricing formula and challenges

Another key initiative of the government has been the unified tariff regime that came into effect in November and is aimed at bringing together nearly all key interstate pipelines and make all customers pay a unified tariff.

Earlier, tariffs for transportation of gas were set by PNGRB for each pipeline based on assumptions of gas volume to be transported over its operating life, so as to ensure a 12 percent post-tax return to the operator. The tariffs for pipeline usage are divided into zones of 300km, with the tariff increasing for zones further away from the point from where gas is injected.

Further, if a buyer needs multiple pipelines even from the same operator, the transport tariff would increase. This tariff structure results in a higher cost for buyers located at a distance from the point of gas injection. All of India's imported natural gas arrives at terminals on the west coast, so the cost is steep for users on the east coast—by as much as \$2-3 per million British thermal units.

The new regulation will fix tariff prices within an integrated pipeline network such as that of GAIL. Now, the tariff will be divided into two zones: Zone 1 tariff will be 40 percent of the Zone 2 tariff. Zone 1 is the first 300km of each of the respective pipelines and the Blended unified tariff using current volume will end up being close to Rs 57/mmbtu.

While experts are of the view that this would increase costs for some players and there could be some legal challenges, the stakeholders have not come back with any comments on the same.

Simultaneously, the regulator also announced the open access regulations for the city gas distribution companies. Earlier, the fear was that city gas distribution companies will have to let go of 20 percent of their volumes to other players in order to get in more competition in the sector. The PNGRB in its notification, however, did not allow the existing compressed natural gas (CNG) outlets of state-run oil marketing companies (OMCs) in CGD areas to sell the fuel through the open access route, implying that CNG sales volume of existing CGD players like Indraprastha Gas Ltd (IGL) and Mahanagar Gas (MGL) will not decline immediately.

A section of the industry, however, notes that competition is imminent and profitability would be challenged eventually. IGL has filed a case with the Delhi High court challenging the concept of "exclusivity" and the matter is still sub-judice.

The government has also launched the Indian gas exchange, which is a subsidiary of the Indian Energy Exchange. Already, major players like GAIL, ONGC, Adani Total Gas, Torrent Gas have acquired a stake in the exchange and looking to increase it.

PNGRB has also come out with a draft LNG policy where the government targets to convert 10 percent of long-haul heavy-duty trucks to ply on LNG and incentivise automotive companies towards manufacturing LNG-based heavy

vehicles. This would be done by creating ancillary manufacturing units through tax exemptions and green certifications. There is also a plan to create enabling infrastructure for the operation of a virtual gas pipeline for transporting LNG through railways and trucks and the policy envisages the promotion of dedicated highways with extensive LNG infrastructure.

Gas under GST?

Another big trigger could be the government's focus on getting gas under the goods and services tax (GST) regime. A lot has been said about the same and industry is closely watching out for further developments on the same.

But a lot of investment in research and development needs to be undertaken to achieve the ambition of a gas-based economy. High demand for gas will need a commensurate rise in infrastructure as well and the government is focusing on that as well by organising bids for city gas distribution in different regions and promoting LNG infrastructure as well.

5. Electricité et énergies renouvelables

Cabinet approves MoU with France on renewable energy cooperation

The Economic Times, 04/03/2021

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday gave ex post facto approval to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and France on renewable energy cooperation. "The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi was apprised of the signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and French Republic in the field of renewable energy cooperation. The MoU was signed in January 2021," a statement said.

The objective of the MoU is to establish the basis for promotion of bilateral cooperation in the field of new and renewable energy on the basis of mutual benefit, equality and reciprocity. It covers technologies relating to solar, wind, hydrogen and biomass energy.

The MoU entails exchange and training of scientific and technical personnel; exchange of scientific and technological information and data; organisation of workshops and seminars; transfer of equipment, know-how and technology; development of joint research and technological projects.

This MoU will help in the development of technological know-how in the field of Renewable Energy and thereby aid the process of attaining the ambitious target of 450 GW of installed Renewable Energy capacity by 2030.

Discoms' outstanding dues to power producers rise nearly 24% to Rs 1.36 lakh crore in Dec

The Economic Times, 04/03/2021

Total dues owed by electricity distribution companies to power producers rose nearly 24 per cent to Rs 1,36,966 crore in December 2020 compared to the same month a year ago, reflecting stress in the sector. The distribution companies (discoms) owed a total of Rs 1,10,660 crore to power generation firms in December 2019, according to portal PRAAPTI (Payment Ratication And Analysis in Power procurement for bringing Transparency in Invoicing of generators). The portal was launched in May 2018 to bring in transparency in power purchase transactions between the generators and discoms.

In December 2020, the total overdue amount, which was not cleared even after 45 days of grace period offered by generators, stood at Rs 1,27,498 crore as against Rs 97,835 crore in the year-ago period. According to the latest data on

the portal, total outstanding dues in December dipped on a month-on-month basis. In November 2020, the total outstanding dues of discoms stood at Rs 1,40,741 crore. The overdue amount in December 2020 has decreased from Rs 1,27,539 crore in November 2020. Power producers give 45 days to discoms to pay bills for electricity supply. After that, outstanding dues become overdue and generators charge penal interest on that in most cases. To give relief to power generation companies (gencos), the Centre enforced a payment security mechanism from August 1, 2019. Under this mechanism, discoms are required to open letters of credit for getting power supply. The central government had also given some breathers to discoms for paying dues to power generating companies in view of the COVID-19-induced lockdown. The government had also waived penal charges for late payment of dues in the directive.

In May, the government announced Rs 90,000 crore liquidity infusion for discoms under which these utilities would get loans at economical rates from Power Finance Corporation NSE 0.34 % (PFC) and REC Ltd. This was a government initiative to help gencos to remain afloat. Later, the liquidity infusion package was increased to Rs 1.2 lakh crore. Discoms in Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Haryana and Tamil Nadu account for the major portion of dues to power gencos, the data showed.

Overdue of independent power producers amount to 32.14 per cent of the total overdue of Rs 1,27,498 crore of discoms in December. The proportion of central PSU gencos in the overdue was 33.57 per cent. Among the central public sector power generators, NTPC alone has an overdue amount of Rs 17,946.97 crore on discoms, followed by Damodar Valley Corporation at Rs 6,682.61 crore, NLC India at Rs 6,123.78 crore, NHPC at Rs 3,141.43 crore and THDC India at Rs 2,022.23 crore. Among private

generators, discoms owe the highest overdue of Rs 16,878.25 crore to Adani Power NSE 9.94 % followed by Bajaj Group-owned Lalitpur Power Generation Company Ltd at Rs 4,462.10 crore, SEMB (Sembcorp) at Rs 2,735.62 crore and GMR at Rs 2,195.12 crore. The overdue of non-conventional energy producers like solar and wind stood at Rs 12,117.78 crore in December.

Power Ministry reduces discom penalties to 5% over SBI lending rate

The Economic Times, 25/02/2021

The government has lowered the late payment fee chargeable by power and transmission developers from distribution companies by linking it to State Bank of India's lending rate against the current 18%. The Electricity (Late Payment Surcharge) Rules 2021 exclude existing power plants and transmission systems whose tariffs have been determined through competitive bidding.

The rules bar electricity distribution companies with any outstanding bills after seven months from due date from procuring power from power exchanges or grant of short-term open access. The rules came into force on Monday when they were notified. The gazette notification issued by the power ministry evoked mixed response from the industry as it supersedes regulations of the Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC) and also the power purchase/transmission agreements.

CERC chairperson P K Pujari had in October sent a statutory advice to the government against issuance of the rules citing jurisdictional overlap. The power distribution companies welcomed reduction in late payment fee while electricity generation plants and transmission companies with regulated tariffs said lowering of the penalty rates interest would discourage timely payments by states. Data available on Praapti portal showed that the overdue amount payable by

discoms to power plants at end of December 2020 stood at Rs 1,27,668 crore.

Industry officials said the government's interference in the legally binding contracts between developers and distribution companies sets a wrong precedent, particularly at a time when the Centre is dissuading states like Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat from reneging signed agreements. As per the rules issued on Monday, Late Payment Surcharge shall be payable cost of funds based lending rate for one year of the State Bank of India or any other arrangement notified by the Centre. Also, the rules provide that the rate shall increase by 0.5 percent for every month of delay to a maximum of 3 percent higher than base rate.

They also provide that if the period of default lies in two or more financial years, the base rate of Late Payment Surcharge shall be calculated separately. All payments by a distribution licensee to a generating company or a trading licensee for power procured or transmission access shall be first adjusted towards Late Payment Surcharge and thereafter, towards monthly charges, starting from the longest overdue bill, the rules said. The power ministry had during lockdown asked central power undertakings to forgo upto one-fourth of xed charges they collect from state distribution companies for the lockdown period. Upon the power ministry's directive, CERC had also reduced LPS payable by distribution companies to generation and transmission companies to 1% per month from the previous 1.5% per month during the lockdown period.

16 GW worth of solar rooftop capacity can be created from MSMEs by the end of 2022: Nitin Gadkari

The Economic Times, 03/03/2021

16 gigawatt (GW) worth of solar rooftop capacity can be created from micro, small and medium

enterprises (MSMEs) by the end of 2022, said Nitin Gadkari, union minister of MSMEs.

India has set a target of 175 GW of installed capacity by the end of 2022, out of which 40 GW is expected to come from solar rooftop projects.

"Of the 40 GW, four gigawatts to come from domestic solar rooftop, whereas 16 gigawatts potential can be harnessed from MSMEs," Gadkari said while speaking at a webinar organised by SBI and World Bank on accelerating adoption of rooftop solar by MSMEs. "MSME is the most critical sector for advancing the country's growth," he said.

India is lagging behind its intended target of 40 GW, and adoption by MSMEs might give it a much-needed impetus. Gadkari suggested cold-storage units as a viable sector that can adopt rooftop solar and utilise it for their own usage, as opposed to paying commercial rates for electricity that reach nearly 10 to 11 rupees per unit.

"We want to make a commitment to India. Whether it is in infrastructure or in MSME, we want to come in and reduce risks. Doing so will enable us to leverage money at several folds," said Junaid Ahmad, Country Director for the World Bank in India.

The share of installed rooftop solar projects has reached 6.4 GW, according to a recent report by consultancy firm Bridge to India. The overall installed capacity of renewable energy was 92.5 GW as of January 2021, according to the Central Electricity Authority (CEA).

In 2015, the National Institute of Solar Energy (NISE) had estimated a rooftop solar potential of 42.8 GW in India and accordingly, a target of 40 GW of installed capacity by 2022 has been set by the government.

Adani Green Energy arm commissions 100-MW wind power plant in Gujarat

Business Standard, 08/03/2021

Adani Green Energy on Monday said its arm Adani Wind Energy Kutch Three Limited (AWEKTL) has commissioned a 100 megawatt (MW) wind power plant located at Kutch, in Gujarat.

With the successful commissioning of this plant, the company has an operational wind generation capacity of 497 MW.

The commissioning was five months ahead of schedule, Adani Green Energy Limited (AGEL) said in a statement adding that this is the fifth project commissioned before schedule by the company over the past 12 months.

The plant has Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) with the Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) at Rs 2.82/kwh.

AGEL has a total renewable capacity of 14,815 MW including 11,470 MW that have been awarded and are at different stages of implementation.

With this project the company has added a total renewable capacity of 800 MW since the last 12 months despite COVID-19 challenges.

Like all its other assets, the newly commissioned plant would be managed by the Adani Group's 'Intelligent Energy Network Operation Centre' platform that gives AGEL complete centralized visibility and an ability to manage its renewables assets on a pan India basis.

AGEL, a part of India-based Adani Group, has one of the largest global renewable portfolios over 14,815 MW of operating, under-construction and awarded projects catering to investment-grade

counterparties. Listed in 2018, AGEL at present is a USD 25.03 billion market cap company.

India adds 3,2 GW solar capacity in 2020, lowest in 5 years

Business Standard, 23/02/2021

India added 3,239 megawatt (MW) solar capacity in 2020, down 56 per cent from the previous year, according to a report.

The adding of 3,239 MW of solar capacity was the lowest addition in five-years-time, Mercom India Research said in its report on Tuesday.

"India added 3.2 GW or 3,239 MW of solar capacity in 2020, a 56 per cent decline year-over-year (YoY) compared to 7,346 MW installed in 2019," it said adding the country's total solar installed capacity was at 39 GW gigawatt (GW) as of December 2020.

The large-scale solar projects accounted for 78 per cent of installations with 2,520 MW, registering a 60 per cent year-on-year (y-o-y) decline. The addition of the remaining 719 MW rooftop installations was also down 22 per cent compared to the installation in 2019.

Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Gujarat were the top three states for large-scale solar capacity additions, representing around 51 per cent of 2020 installations.

"India's solar installations in 2020 were the lowest in five years. While other top solar markets in the world have experienced positive growth, India, which had one of the most stringent lockdowns in response to the pandemic, took a while to get back up and running. However, we expect the industry to experience significant positive growth in 2021," said Raj Prabhu, Chief Executive Officer of Mercom Capital Group.

According to the report, besides COVID-19, another significant bottleneck in the market has been the difficulty facing government agencies to get distribution companies (DISCOMs) to sign power sale agreements (PSA). This has left about 17-18 GW of projects without a PSA.

Other short-term challenges included the rise in module prices, increased shipping and freight charges in the range of 500 per cent-800 per cent, and a surge in raw material costs.

"As a result, the average large-scale solar project costs increased slightly by 2 per cent quarter-over-quarter (q-o-q) in Q4 (October-November) 2020. However, project costs were 2.5 per cent lower compared to the same quarter in 2019," according to the report.

On its outlook for 2021, the report said it expects the industry to experience positive growth in 2021. Mercom India Research is forecasting over 10 GW of solar installations in 2021.

The rooftop solar market is experiencing a turnaround, with installations improving significantly over the second half of the year. Fourth-quarter was the strongest for rooftop installations, and the report predicts momentum to continue into Q1 (January-March) 2021.

Monitor, aid implementing agencies to achieve 175 GW renewable energy by 2022: Par panel to MNRE

The Economic Times, 08/03/2021

A parliamentary panel has asked the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) to monitor working of the implementing agencies on a realtime basis and aid them help achieve a target of having 175 gigawatts (GW) of renewable energy capacity by 2022. The panel's comments assume significance in view of India's ambitious target of having 175 GW of renewable energy 2022.

"The ministry (MNRE) should ensure continuous real-time monitoring of the working of the implementing agencies, support them vigorously in sorting out the glitches and take corrective action...so that the physical targets set for the FY22 under various heads of the grant are successfully achieved," the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Energy said in a report tabled in Parliament on Monday.

According to the report, the MNRE has continuously failed to achieve its yearly physical targets. "For the years 2018-19 and 2019-20, against the grid-connected renewable energy target of 15,355 MW (megawatts) and 11,852 MW, the ministry could achieve only 8,519.52 MW and 8,761.26 MW, respectively," it added. There was a shortfall of about 45 per cent and 26 per cent during these years, it noted. Similarly, it stated that during the year 2020-21 (up to January 2021), 5,473.08 MW could be installed against the target of 12,380 MW.

The committee feels that with continuous non-achievement of the assigned yearly physical targets, the ministry may find it difficult to achieve 175 GW by 2022, it also said. Against such gross under-achievement, the committee expect the ministry to significantly improve its target fulfillment in the financial year 2021-22. It observed that as on January 31, 2021, cumulative 92.54 GW of renewable energy capacity has been installed which is a little more than 50 per cent of the target. It means the remaining 82.46 GW capacity has to be installed in just one and a half year with gainful utilisation of funds, it noted. However, it stated that the past trends reect that the ministry has not been able to fully utilise its budgetary allocations during the previous years.

In such a situation, the committee is apprehensive that any laxity on the part of the ministry in achieving the assigned target may amount to renegeing on commitment, it stated. The panel recommend that the ministry should

not only scientifically plan the expenditure of their allocated budget but also take up the work on a mission mode so that the target of 175 GW is successfully achieved by the year 2022.

In a separate report of the panel on the power ministry tabled in Parliament on Monday, it has asked the ministry to be more serious about the threat of cybersecurity in view of switching to smart grid and smart metre gradually. "Since the country has decided to go ahead with the smart grid and smart metering technologies in a big way, the committee is of the view that such issues could wreak havoc in the energy sector, if we are not prepared with a foolproof plan to timely avert them," it stated.

The report added that as the committee believes that the matter of cybersecurity of the power system is critical, it would recommend that the ministry must take this issue more seriously and formulate effective and adequate safeguards in this regard.

Government issues list of modules & manufacturers eligible for its projects

The Economic Times, 11/03/2021

In yet another boost for India's domestic solar manufacturing industry, the government has issued an all-Indian list of modules and manufacturers to be used for its projects. This approved list of models and manufacturers (ALMM) released by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) on Wednesday comes a day after the announcement of the much-awaited basic customs duty on Chinese solar imports.

Only the 23 manufacturers and their vetted modules included in the list will be eligible for use in government and government-assisted projects, schemes, and programmes for projects

bid-out on or after April 10, 2021, the notification said.

The domestic manufacturing industry has long awaited such a provision. Back in June 2020, power and renewable energy minister R.K. Singh had said that the ALMM was set to be announced in September last year, and implementation would take place from October.

The basic customs duty (BCD) will be imposed on solar modules and cells, which will attract a 40 per cent and 25 per cent charge respectively. Already bid-out projects will not be exempted from the BCD, the ministry had clarified.

Steep import duty on solar cells, **modules from Apr'22**

Mint, 11/03/2021

The government has decided to impose 40% basic customs duty (BCD) on solar modules and 25% on solar cells from 1 April 2022, in a move that would make imports costlier and encourage local manufacturing.

According to a 9 March notification from the ministry of new and renewable energy, the idea is to emerge as a leading global supplier of these items, besides meeting India's requirements locally.

The two items, which currently do not attract BCD, will come under it at the specified rates from 1 April 2022. There will be no grandfathering of power projects that are already bid out, considering the one-year period is sufficient to help developers secure the required raw materials in time.

Mint earlier reported India's plans to impose new tariffs on imports of solar cells and modules from 1 April 2022, citing power and renewable energy minister Raj Kumar Singh.

"The ministry of finance has also advised that the customs notification in this regard shall be issued at the appropriate time," the notification said.

The customs duty will replace a 15% safeguard duty currently imposed on imports from China and Malaysia. The development follows the government announcing a production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme that offers manufacturers in 10 sectors, including those of high-efficiency solar modules, a total benefits of ₹1.97 trillion. The plan has gained traction with 15 companies considering total investments of around \$3 billion to build solar equipment manufacturing facilities here, as reported by Mint earlier.

"Presently, India's solar sector, just like in any other country, is reliant on imports of solar equipment. The government has also noted instances of certain countries dumping solar cells and modules to kill the nascent domestic industry because of which the government had to impose safeguard duties," the notification said.

The market for solar components is dominated by Chinese firms. India imported \$2.16 billion worth of solar photovoltaic (PV) cells, panels and modules in 2018-19. A surge in imports prompted the government to impose a safeguard duty from 30 July 2018 on solar cells and modules imported from China and Malaysia. The safeguard duty, which was set to expire on 29 July, has been extended by a year. "The covid-19 pandemic brought disruptions in international trade, including imports of solar modules and solar cells, affecting solar capacity additions. Considering India's huge solar targets and that electricity is a strategic sector of the economy, India needs to develop domestic solar manufacturing capacities and reduce its dependence on imports to avoid disruption," the notification added.

The move will make solar cells and modules imported from China expensive. Along with

leveraging its growing green energy market to boost manufacturing, India is looking to play a larger role in global supply chains.

"The Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative has geared up the country toward scaling up domestic manufacturing. Scaling up domestic solar manufacturing would also enable India to export solar cells/modules. This would also provide other countries with an alternative avenue for procuring solar cells/modules," the notification said.

India is running the world's largest clean energy programme to achieve 175 gigawatts (GW) of renewable capacity, including 100GW of solar power by 2022. According to the Central Electricity Authority, by 2030, the country's power requirement would be 817GW, more than half of which would be clean energy, and 280GW would be from solar energy alone. To achieve the target of 280GW, around 25GW of solar energy capacity is needed to be installed every year till 2030.

Earlier, the ministry of new and renewable energy was in favour of imposing BCD from 1 April 2021. As part of the plan, India was looking at grandfathering the previous bids that were awarded by allowing a pass-through in power tariffs for projects awarded before BCD was to be imposed to protect solar project developers. The plan was later dropped.

"In view of above, the undersigned is directed to inform all RE implementing agencies and other stakeholders, to take note of above trajectory and to include provisions in their bid documents, so that bidders take the trajectory into account while quoting tariffs, in all bids where the last date of bid submission is subsequent to this office memorandum. In all such bids, the imposition of BCD as per above trajectory shall not be considered as change-in-law," the notification said.

6. Mobilité électrique

Delhi to provide scrapping incentives under Delhi EV Policy, says Nitin Gadkari

Mint, 08/03/2021

The Centre on Monday informed the Parliament that the Arvind Kejriwal government in Delhi is providing scrapping incentives for old vehicles, including up to ₹7,500 per vehicle for auto and light commercial vehicle under Delhi Electric Vehicle Policy 2020.

The Delhi government notified the Delhi EV Policy 2020 on Aug 7, 2020, with an intention to promote the adoption of a clean mobility solution. The policy aims to establish the feasibility for large scale adoption of electric passenger four wheelers, through transitioning its entire government fleet to electric.

Union road transport, highways and MSMEs minister Nitin Gadkari informed the Rajya Sabha that "under the provision, all leased/hired cars used for commute of GNCTD officers shall be transitioned to electric within a period of twelve months from the date of issue of this policy."

Gadkari said Delhi government issued an order on February 25, 2021 in this regard mandates conversion of all vehicles owned/leased by the Government of NCT of Delhi to transition to electric by Aug 6, 2021.

"Under the Delhi EV Policy, 2020 —scrapping incentive is provided for the vehicles in lieu of scrapping a more polluting conventional vehicle. However, the scrapping incentive for vehicle is applicable on the evidence of matching contribution from the dealer or OEM, such that the Government of NCT of Delhi will provide incentive matching the contribution made by the OEM or dealer on the scrapping value of the vehicle, not exceeding ₹5,000 per vehicle for two-wheelers and ₹7,500 per vehicle for Auto

and Light Commercial Vehicle," the minister added.

Private and two-wheeler vehicles would also be included in this scheme, the minister said.

7. Environnement et qualité de l'air

Centre moots single-use plastic ban next year

Times of India, 13/03/2021

NEW DELHI: Seeking to make India single-use plastic-free by next year, the Centre has proposed a ban on use of such items in two phases beginning January 1, 2022 and issued a draft notification giving timelines of the staggered plan so that it doesn't affect small businesses and traders. In order to deal with the menace of huge uncollected plastic waste across the country, the Centre has also decided to increase thickness of polythene bags from 50 microns to 120 microns from September 30 this year. Currently, polythene bags of less than 50 microns are banned in the country. Manufacture, import, stocking, distribution, sale and use of all single-use plastic commodities will be prohibited under amended rules ahead of the celebration of 75 years of India's independence on August 15 next year.

Increase in thickness of carry-bags, made of virgin or recycled plastic, will substantially improve collection and recycling of used carry-bags. The move assumes significance as currently 40% of total plastic waste remains uncollected in the country every day. The uncollected plastic waste causes choking of drainage and river systems, soil and water contamination, littering of marine ecosystem, ingestion by stray animals, and its open air burning leads to adverse impact on human health and environment. The draft notification, issued in the gazette the by environment ministry on Thursday, also for the

first time defined 'single-use' plastic and identified such items which are to be banned in a staggered manner in two phases. "Notification is issued for stakeholders' comments. It will be taken into consideration by the central government after expiry of sixty days from the date of notification (March 11).

Though the draft has been prepared after adequate inter-ministerial deliberations, views of stakeholders and domain experts will be considered before issuing the amended rules to manage plastic waste," said an official. While use of certain items, including plastic flags, earbuds with plastic sticks, plastic sticks for balloons, candy sticks, icecream sticks and decoration material, will be prohibited from January 1, 2022, use of remaining ones such as plates, cups, glasses, cutlery such as forks, spoons, knives, straw, trays, wrapping/packing films around sweet boxes; invitation cards; cigarette packets and stirrers will be banned from July 1, 2022.

It will be the responsibility of urban local bodies and 'gram panchayats' to coordinate waste management system and for performing the associated functions such as ensuring segregation, collection, storage, transportation, processing and disposal of plastic waste. "The items which are to be phased out first (January 1, 2022) are those whose alternatives are easily available. The manufacturers and brand owners of remaining items will be given additional six months to work out their plan using compostable plastic or other alternatives," said the official. The provision of thickness will not be applicable to carry-bags made up of compostable plastic. The manufacturers or seller or brand owners of compostable plastic carry-bags will have to obtain a certificate from the Central Pollution Control Board before marketing/ selling such items including plastic packaging materials.

Industry raises concerns about single-use plastic ban proposals; asks for

uniform state-level implementation

The Economic Times, 14/03/2021

Executives from consumer-facing sectors directly impacted by the centre's proposals banning single-use plastic to curb the menace of plastic pollution, said they will write to the government expressing concerns on some of the proposals, inconsistent state-level regulations, and said some alternate options like wood may escalate packaging costs.

"Some of the amendments are likely to have serious ramifications for the industry, SMEs included, and may derail the ongoing efforts to get the economy back to track post the pandemic," said Rajesh Ramakrishnan, managing director at Perfetti Van Melle India which leads the Rs 12,000-crore domestic confectionery category. He said the company has begun exploring alternate packaging solutions for one of its biggest brands - Alpenliebe lollies which come with plastic sticks. Ramakrishna added the industry is "content that, as in the past, the government would consider the concerns expressed by the industry favourably".

Representatives from the packaging industry said a uniform central government notification needs to be followed by the entire country to avoid hurdles in implementation of the ban. "The single-use plastic ban process has been on for the last five years. However, every state thereafter notifies their own rules and items which are banned, which leads to the industry facing huge problems from state to state and at the mercy of different departments including pollution control, the municipal corporation and the police," said Vimal Kedia, managing director of Manjushree Technopack, one of the country's largest packaging companies.

The draft regulations have proposed banning the sale and use of single-use plastic candy sticks and ice-cream sticks starting January 1 2022, and ban

of single-use plastic plates, cups, glasses and cutlery, and wrapping of lms around sweet boxes and cigarette packets from July 1 next year. Organised ice-cream players, however, are unlikely to be impacted, since most brands now use wooden sticks and plastic ones are in use only among smaller unorganised players who operate on low margins and will need to make the switch.

RS Sodhi, managing director at Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF), which makes Amul ice cream and other dairy products, said: "We use only wooden ice cream sticks so there will be no change for us. We are actively engaged in recycling milk pouches in any case." The proposals come at a time when impulse purchase categories like confectionery are recovering after a 40-50% drop in business in urban markets mid last year. Perfetti, the domestic arm of the privately held Italian confectionery company which also makes Happydent, Big Babol and Centerfresh gums among other brands, for example, has introduced bigger packs for family home consumption and confectionery with immunity boosters.

The centre's proposals include increasing the thickness of polythene bags from 50 microns to 120 microns from September. "The exemption given to compostable plastics will undo all the progressive measures in the proposed ban because producers may just stamp thin carry bags as compostable and there won't be any way to verify these claims. Besides, compostable

plastics need to be segregated from the other stu which is an impossibility, and compostable plastics need dedicated industrial composting facilities which is non existent in India," Dr Vijay Habbu, technical advisor to PET industry associations such as the Packaging Association for Clean Environment (PACE) said. The centre has also proposed banning the sale, use, manufacturing, stocking, import and distribution of earbuds with plastic sticks, plastic sticks for balloons, plastic ags and polystyrene (thermocool) for decoration.

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