



MINISTÈRE  
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REVUE DE PRESSE SECTORIELLE

ENERGIE ET DEVELOPPEMENT DURABLE

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## En bref

### Infrastructures

- Le port de Deendayal (Gujarat) devient le premier port public à atteindre un trafic de plus de **100 MT sur l'année fiscale 2021-2022**.
- Une stratégie de verdissement du transport maritime est en cours de préparation par le gouvernement central.
- Le gouvernement central annonce la dérégulation des tarifs portuaires dans les projets de PPP **pour accroître l'attractivité des ports publics** aux investisseurs.

### Ferroviaire

- Les Indian Railways enregistrent leur premier accident mortel depuis 34 mois, qui a entraîné la mort de 9 personnes dans le Bengale Occidental **suite au déraillement d'un train**.
- La mise en service de la ligne à grande vitesse Mumbai-Ahmedabad devrait être reportée à 2027, **en raison de retards liés à l'acquisition foncière dans l'Etat du Maharashtra**.
- Les *Central Indian Railways* enregistrent un nouveau record de volume de fret transporté pour la période Avril – Décembre, à plus de 55 MT en hausse de 22% par rapport à 2020.

### Développement et transports urbains

- Delhi inaugure ses 100 premiers bus électriques, soit un tiers de la commande approuvée par le Gouvernement de Delhi en mars 2021 dans le cadre du plan FAME II.

- Delhi NCR publie son projet de stratégie 2041 pour la gestion des eaux qui prévoit l'étude d'acheminement d'eau de mer pour les usages non-potables et l'étude de transports fluviaux.
- L'Inde et la Banque Européenne d'Investissement (BEI) signent un contrat de 250 M EUR pour financer la première tranche du projet de métro à Agra.

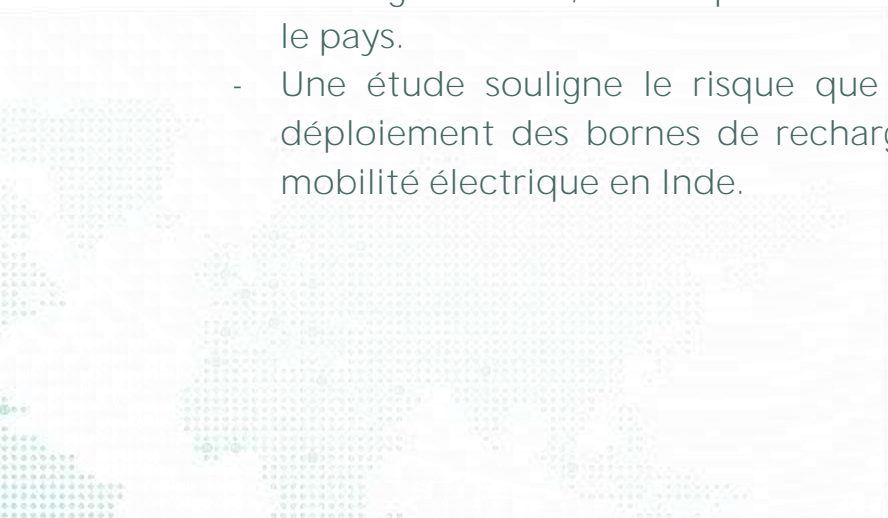
#### Energies fossiles et biocarburants

- La production de charbon de *Coal India*, entreprise publique qui produit 80% du charbon indien, a augmenté de 3,3% en décembre.
- Le gouvernement initie un nouveau processus de mise aux enchères pour 99 mines de charbon et rappelle la place cruciale que gardera le charbon dans le mix énergétique indien pendant les 30-40 prochaines années.

#### Electricité et énergies renouvelables

- Selon l'agence Icra, l'Inde devrait augmenter ses capacités renouvelables installées de 16 GW d'ici 2023.
- Le conglomérat Reliance a signé un MoU avec l'Etat du Gujarat, et devrait investir 80 Mds USD dans des projets liés à l'énergie verte d'ici 2035.
- Les impayés des compagnies de distribution d'électricité augmentent de 4,4% en janvier 2022, pour atteindre 1 210 Mds INR (14,3 Mds EUR).

#### Mobilités électriques

- L'agence publique CESL vise le déploiement de 900 bornes de recharge en 2022, en complément des 396 bornes déjà installées dans le pays.
  - Une étude souligne le risque que représente le faible rythme de déploiement des bornes de recharge pour le développement de la mobilité électrique en Inde.
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## Environnement et qualité de l'air

- Le nombre de villes indiennes connaissant des niveaux de pollution supérieurs aux standards nationaux est passé de 102 en 2019 (lancement du National Clean Air Program) à 132 en 2021. 90% de la population vit dans des zones au niveau de pollution supérieur aux **standards de l'OMS**.
- Le couvert arboré et forestier indien a augmenté de 2261 km<sup>2</sup> ces deux dernières années, selon les chiffres officiels.
- **Lors d'un entretien entre l'Ambassadeur de France et le Ministre de l'Environnement** tenu en prévision du One Ocean Summit, **l'Inde** confirme son engagement pour protéger les ressources et la biodiversité marine.



# Revue de presse

## 1. Infrastructure

Deendayal Port Crosses the 100 Million Mark

*Press Information Bureau, 11/01/2022*

Despite the constraints arising in international trade and shipping due to the ongoing Covid pandemic and the resulting constraints on the cargo handling front, Deendayal Port Trust under Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterway, has crossed the 100 MMT milestone on 10.01.2022, and in the process became the 1st Govt. Sector Major Port, to cross the mark in the year 2021-22. Incidentally, in the current fiscal year, DPT has crossed the milestone 4 weeks ahead in comparison of the last fiscal, i.e. FY 2020-21 during which DPT had reached the landmark on 09.02.2021.

Increase was seen in the Import cargoes such as POL, Edible Oils, Liquid Fertilizer Raw Materials like Phosphoric Acid and Ammonia, Chemicals, Rock Phosphate, Steel pipes, Iron ore, Coal, Timber logs and Crude Oil. Export cargoes such as Edible oil, Chemicals, Foodgrains like Wheat and Soya Bean Mill, Bentonite and POL products at Vadinar have also witnessed growth in cargo throughput during FY 2021-22 as compared to FY 2020-21.

The DPT's cargo throughput growth in the 3rd quarter of current fiscal was the highest among all Govt. Major Ports, with the Port registering 33.52 MMT traffic in the Oct-Dec21 quarter. In the month of December 2021 only, DPT had handled 11.32 MMT cargo

which had contributed to about 18% of the total cargo handled by all Major Ports. Shri S.K. Mehta, Chairman-DPT and Shri Nandeesh Shukla, Dy. Chairman-DPT congratulated the Trustees, Officials, Workers, Trade Unions of DPT, Port Users and Stakeholders for their efforts, initiatives and their continuous support behind reaching this important milestone. The Port's cargo handling is expected to cross 127 MMT by end of the current fiscal.

Centre explores plan to run ships fully on clean energy

*Mint, 12/01/2022*

India is exploring a unique plan to run ships 100% on green energy that may involve a hybrid energy model comprising of a mix of solar, sea water, wind, and hydrogen, said two government officials aware of the development. The plan is being explored by the ministries of ports, shipping and waterways and new and renewable energy (MNRE), the people said requesting anonymity.

The innovative strategy will not only help lower operating costs for cargo ships but also reduce their carbon emissions. This can be a potential game changer for the country's energy security as India imports 85% of its crude oil and 53% of gas requirements. Bunker or ship fuel accounts for the bulk of a ship's operating costs.

Maritime transport accounts for about 95% and 70% of India's trade by volume and value. Cargo traffic handled by the top domestic ports is expected to reach 1,695 million metric tonnes (mmt) this fiscal from 672.60 mmt last year.



Meanwhile, tapping eco-friendly fuel sources by Indian Navy ships will allow them to be at sea for longer without the need to either return to port or seek support vessels at high seas for refuelling. This also comes at a time **of India's quest for a blue water navy when the US is seeking a bigger role for India in stabilizing and maintaining the rule of law in the Indo-Pacific region, a large swathe of land and sea stretching all the way from the west coast of the US to the shores of east Africa.** Queries emailed to the ministries of ports, shipping and waterways and new and renewable energy on Friday evening remained unanswered till press time.

**The government's plan underscores the rapid strides made so far by India in solar and wind power generation.** The country is also considering a proposal to make it mandatory for fertilizer plants and oil refineries to buy green hydrogen, which is produced by splitting water into hydrogen and oxygen using an electrolyzer powered by renewable energy sources such as wind and solar.

In his Independence Day speech, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a National Hydrogen Mission. A solar hydrogen programme was launched during the International Solar Alliance (ISA) assembly to produce the emission-free fuel at \$2 per kg, which is much lower than the current \$5 per kg.

**The new plan comes against the backdrop of a ₹8 trillion investment envisaged under the Sagarmala programme till 2035. This would entail building more ports along the country's 7,517km coastline and establishing as many as 142 cargo terminals at 12 major ports. Modi has pledged at the COP26 summit in Glasgow in November to cut India's total projected carbon emission by 1 billion tonnes by 2030 and reduce the**

**carbon intensity of the nation's economy by less than 45% by the end of the decade and net-zero carbon emissions by 2070.**

India is also working on a multi-pronged approach to reduce carbon emissions, including a concerted push for electric mobility. In a first by a state government, Maharashtra aims to deregister internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles and not register any ICE vehicles starting 2030, as reported by Mint. The plans also involve registering only non-emission causing electric vehicles and those fuelled by other carbon emission-free next-generation fuel such as hydrogen starting 2030.

Govt moves towards deregulation of tariffs for PPP projects at major ports

*Mint, 22/12/2021*

In what the union government says is a major reform for the Port sector, Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Sarbananda Sonowal today announced the tariff Guidelines, 2021 for the PPP projects in major ports.

**The need for new guidelines arose consequent upon the new major port authority Act, 2021 coming in vogue with effect from 3 November.**

**In the new Act, the provision of the erstwhile Tariff Authority for Major Ports (TAMP) stands abolished. The guidelines also allow the concessionaires at Major Ports to set tariffs as per market dynamics.** Currently, **Major Port's PPP concessionaires handle around 50% of the total traffic handled by all the major ports in India.**

**The biggest benefit of transition to market linked tariff is that a level playing field will be**

provided to the PPP concessionaires at major ports to compete with private ports.

PPP concessionaires at major ports were constrained to operate under the stipulations of these guidelines (by TAMP) whereas private operators/PPP concessionaires at non-major ports were free to charge tariff as per market conditions. These new guidelines will be applicable for future PPP projects including the projects which are currently under the bidding stage.

Making the announcement, Sonowal said that government mandated concessions in tariff for trans-shipment and coastal shipping shall continue to apply to all PPP future Concessionaires.

"In fact, the government has gone a step further and made further concessions to promote transshipment and coastal shipping. The royalty payable for trans-shipment cargo will now be 1.0 times (from 1.5 times earlier) the normal container. Similarly, for the coastal cargo, the concessionaire has to pay only 40% of the royalty payable for foreign cargo (from 60% earlier) in accordance with coastal concession policy of the government. For transparency, the tariffs so fixed are to be hosted on the website of the concessionaire."

The minister added that these guidelines will usher in an era of market economy for the sector and go a long way in making the Major Ports competitive. He said, the announcement of the market linked tariff guidelines also comes at a time when the government is celebrating the current week as the 'Good Governance' week.

## 2. Ferroviaire

Railways report first passenger deaths in accident after gap of nearly 34 months

*Times of India, 14/01/2022*

The railways reported the first incident of passenger deaths in an accident on Thursday after a gap of nearly 34 months. At least five passengers on board were left dead and another 20 were injured as 12 bogies of the Guwahati-bound Bikaner Express derailed in West Bengal's Jalpaiguri district.

The last time passenger deaths were reported in an accident were in March 22, 2019. The news came as a shock to the rail ministry headquarters and shortly after the railway board ordered a high level investigation by the commissioner of railway safety. Railway board chairman V K Tripathi and the director general (safety) rushed to the spot.

Union railway minister Ashwini Vaishnaw also left for the site to take stock of the situation. Vaishnaw announced enhanced ex gratia relief of Rs 5 lakh for death, Rs 1 lakh for the grievously injured and Rs 25,000 for simply injured persons. Officials said the reason for the derailment was unclear and detailed investigation will reveal the exact cause of the fatal accident.

In February last year, then Union railways minister Piyush Goyal had informed the Rajya Sabha that not a single passenger death had occurred due to train accidents after March 22, 2019.

Vaishnaw had also informed the Rajya Sabha on July 30 last year that there was no railway passenger death during 2019-20 and 2020-21. Prior to that in 2018-19, railways had recorded 16 deaths, 28 deaths in 2017-18 and 195 deaths during 2016-17, according to the written reply by the minister.

Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail Corridor: 98.5% Gujarat land acquired, Maharashtra lags at 44%

*The Free Press Journal, 26/12/2021*

The National High Speed Rail Corporation Limited (NHSRCL) has set 2026 as the deadline for carrying out trials on the 50-km Billimora-Surat stretch of the much-touted Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail Corridor. However, officials said the trials might get extended to mid-2027.

More than 98.5 per cent of the land required in Gujarat has been procured; on the other hand, the progress in Maharashtra is slow but steady with 44 per cent land having been acquired, mainly in Palghar district. There is not much progress as far as land acquisition in Mumbai and Thane is concerned. There is no clear deadline either for starting the Bullet Train on the entire 508-km Mumbai-Ahmedabad route, as officials say it is difficult to give a definite timeline until all the land in Maharashtra and Gujarat has been acquired.

"We are waiting for acquisition of land in Maharashtra to be over and are currently in talks with the state government," said NHSRCL's Managing Director Satish Agnihotri.

As per the current update on land acquired for India's first Bullet Train project, the

NHSRCL has acquired close to 44 per cent of the land in three districts of Maharashtra – Mumbai, Thane and Palghar. Sources said that in Palghar 287 hectares needs to be acquired in all. Of this, 116 hectares remains to be acquired.

Meanwhile, the quantum of land needed in Mumbai and Thane districts is around 432 hectares, comprising forest, private and government land. NHSRCL officials said 44 per cent of the private land and 80 per cent of the government land has been acquired so far, while no forest land has been acquired yet. As of now, there is no clarity of land acquisition in Mumbai and Thane, although things are finally moving ahead in Palghar after a series of protests by the locals.

Meanwhile, in Gujarat, the NHSRCL has managed to acquire more than 98 per cent of the total 352 km of land needed for the project.

On December 26, Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel visited the casting yard at Surat to get an update on the progress by NHSRCL officials. At the yard, 950-tonne girders are being cast, which take 15 days to complete and will be placed on the pillars. Later, another batch of 1500-tonne girders will be put in place, resulting in the toughest pillars and rail girders that will be capable of accommodating bullet trains running at 350 kmph.

In Gujarat, civil work has commenced on a 343-km stretch. Of the total Rs 1.08 lakh crore estimated project cost, Rs 72,000 crore will be spent in Gujarat. The NHSRCL authorities agreed that there could be possibility of the project cost going up and this is being worked out with the Japanese



counterparts who are providing technology and support for the multi-crore project.

Indian Railways freight traffic achievements continue! Central Railway records highest loading in April-Dec 2021

*Financial Express, 04/01/2022*

Indian Railways displays noteworthy freight traffic achievements! For the first time, the Central Railway zone has crossed the milestone of 7 million tonnes freight loading in one month. In December 2021, freight loading of Central Railways was 7.21 million tonnes as against 5.87 MT in December 2020, registering a whopping increase of 22.8 per cent.

The freight loading of Central Railways, during April-December 2021, is 55.06 million tonnes which is the highest ever during any April-December period. The previous best record was 44.98 million tonnes during April-December 2017-18, according to a statement issued by Central Railways.

The freight loading of Central Railways of 7.2 million tonnes in the month of December 2021 also crossed the previous best monthly freight loading of 6.96 million tonnes which was recorded in March 2021. Following are some of the major freight traffic achievements made by Central Railways in December 2021:

- **Best ever coal loading of 1023 rakes** registered in December 2021 while 708 rakes were loaded in December 2020
- **As many as 34 rakes of Automobiles** were loaded by Pune Division out of total 51 rakes loaded
- **A total of 199 rakes of Cement** (including

Clinker) have been loaded as compared to loading of 154 rakes in December 2020

- **A total of 84 rakes of Steel** have been loaded as against 65 rakes of Steel during December 2020
- **As many as 121 rakes of Sugar** loaded in comparison to last year's 30 rakes
- **During December 2021, Rs 724.2 crore** freight revenue was registered as against Rs 542 crore in December 2020, registering 33.6 per cent increase

Meanwhile, Central Railways has continued drive against ticketless/irregular travel of passengers including unbooked luggage and has detected 3.33 lakh number of cases in December 2021, realizing Rs 19.54 crore penalty from them. A total of 24.19 lakh cases were detected and Rs 144.23 crore revenue was collected which is the highest in terms of revenue among all zonal railways across the Indian Railways network.

### 3. Développement et transports urbains

Delhi government to inaugurate first 100 electric buses today

*The Economic Times, 14/01/2022*

Delhi government will inaugurate the first 100 electric buses on Friday, a Delhi government source said. These electric buses will help in reducing the pollution levels while aiding in providing transport solutions in the national capital.

"Congrats Delhi! After a long wait, prototype of DTC's first 100% Electric bus has reached Delhi! Hon'ble CM @ArvindKejriwal will soon flag off this Electric bus," Delhi Transport



Minister Kailash Gahlot had tweeted on January 4.

In September, IANS had reported that the national capital will get its first fleet of 300 electric buses in January 2022. Delhi Cabinet in March had approved a proposal for the engagement of 300 Low-Floor Fully Electric Air Conditioned buses by DTC under the Centre's 'Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Hybrid and Electric Vehicles in India [FAME] Phase-II' Scheme.

In August 2020, Kailash Gahlot had said that Delhi will receive as many as 2,000 electric buses by the end of 2021. However, due to lack of infrastructure, the rollout was delayed. Currently, there is a fleet of 6,793 buses, of which 3,760 are run by the Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) and 3,033 are operated by the Delhi Integrated Multi-Modal Transit System (DIMTS) Limited through the state transport department.

Draft Regional Plan 2041 makes suggestions to deal with supply, use, and reuse of water in Delhi-NCR

*The Financial Express, 06/01/2022*

The National Capital Region's Draft Regional Plan 2041, which was made public recently, made some suggestions to deal with the use, reuse, and supply of water, as well as the management and use of water bodies in NCR.

The Draft Regional Plan 2041 suggests exploring possibilities of bringing seawater to Delhi-NCR through pipelines from the nearest source of seawater, in order to meet non-potable water requirements for large industries as well as commercial establishments. This is so that the fresh water available in the National Capital

Region can be reserved for potable purposes.

To augment the supply of water, the plan also suggests that 300 tube wells can be built along floodplains in NCR, according to an IE report.

The National Capital Region Planning Board, which operates under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, has invited objections as well as suggestions on the draft plan by 7 January 2022. The Draft Regional Plan also recommends exploring the possibility of ferry services in the Yamuna river between Wazirabad and Sonia Vihar, along with similar cargo and passenger ferry services across the canal network in NCR, including the Upper Ganga Canal, Agra canal, and Western Yamuna Canal, the report further stated.

Diwan Singh, an environmentalist, who has been associated with water conservation as well as the Yamuna floodplains, was quoted in the report saying that drawing water from the floodplains will have to be carefully done. Some of the parts of the floodplains, beyond a certain depth, are likely to have saline water, Singh informed. He further said encouraging ferry services along the Yamuna river would mean dredging the water body, which can harm the natural ecology. In summer, the Yamuna river would also not have enough water, he added. For wastewater treatment, the Draft Regional Plan proposed setting up decentralised treatment plants that can be locally reused.

Agra Metro Rail Project: India, EIB sign contract for 250 M EUR

*Mint, 24/12/2021*

To boost urban public transport connectivity in Agra the Indian and European Investment Bank (EIB) signed a finance contract for the first tranche loan of Euro 250 million for the metro rail project on Thursday.

Last year in December, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had inaugurated the construction work of the Agra Metro project. And, the EIB had approved a total loan of Euro 450 million to fund the metro project.

The financing from EIB will help to fund the construction of a 29.4 km metro corridor comprised of Corridor-1 from Sikandara to Taj East Gate (14 km) and Corridor-2 from Agra Cantt to Kalindi Vihar (15.4 km) in the Agra City.

The Agra Metro Project will connect major tourist attractions like Taj Mahal, Agra Fort, Sikandra with railway stations as well as ISBT, Raja Ki Mandi Railway Station, Medical College, Agra Cant Railway Station, Collectorate, Sanjay Place, and surrounding densely populated residential areas.

According to the Prime Minister's Office, the Agra Metro Rail Project will benefit the 26 lakh population of the city of Agra and will also cater to more than 60 lakh tourists who visit Agra every year. It will provide an environment-friendly Mass Rapid Transit System to the historic city of Agra. The estimated cost of the project will be ₹8,379.62 crore which will be completed in 5 years.

'Lucknow Metro Rail Corporation', a 50:50 jointly owned Company of Govt of India and Govt. of Uttar Pradesh has been reconstituted as 'Uttar Pradesh Metro Rail

Corporation (UPMRC)' for implementation of the project.

The proposed corridors will be having Multimodal Integration with Railway Stations & BRTS Stations and will have feeder network of Bus, Intermediate Public Transport (IPT) and Non Motorized Transport (NMT).

#### 4. Energies fossiles et biocarburants

Coal India adds over 3% on increase in production reports

*The Economic Times, 04/01/2022*

Shares of Coal India gained 3.4 per cent in early trade Monday as the state-owned coal player reported a 3.3 per cent rise in coal production to 60.2 million tonnes (MT) in December. Coal India Ltd (CIL) had produced 58.3 MT of coal in the corresponding month of the previous fiscal.

The company's counter touched a high of Rs 150.95 against Rs 146.05 at the previous close on the National Stock Exchange. Coal India's output increased 5.3 per cent to 413.6 MT during the April-December period from 392.8 MT in the corresponding period of the previous fiscal, the company said in an exchange filing Saturday. Coal India accounts for over 80% of coal output in the country.

Coal off-take increased in December 2021 by 15.7 per cent to 60.7 MT compared to 15.5 MT in December last year, the company said in the release. From April to December this year, the off-take showed growth of 17.6 per cent to 481.8 MT from 409.8 MT during the same period last year. Analysts expect

India's coal production to record a sizeable increase in 2022 with increased output from Coal India and captive mines, which may act as a buffer against any shortages of dry fuel as were witnessed in the previous year.

According to recent reports quoting Coal Secretary Anil Kumar Jain, the increase in output would be on account of more production by Coal India Limited through captive coal blocks auctioned from 2015-20 and commercial mines put on sale last year. In the last financial year, CIL dug out about 596 MT of coal, Jain said, adding that in the current financial year, the figure could rise to 640 MT.

99 coal mines for commercial mining put on sale

*The Economic Times, 17/12/2021*

The government on Thursday launched the fourth round of auction of coal mines for commercial mining under which 99 blocks have been put on sale. With coal mines rolling over from third round of commercial auction and second attempt of second tranche of commercial auctions, there will be total 99 mines on offer, the coal ministry said in a statement.

"Union Minister of Coal, Mines and Parliamentary Affairs Pralhad Joshi has launched the fourth tranche of auction of 99 coal mines, including 24 new mines in a function here today," the statement said. Launching the latest tranche, the minister called upon the investors who have already completed successful bidding of coal mines to start production at the earliest for greater self-reliance in this sector.

The minister also urged the officials to identify more coal blocks for auctioning. Joshi further pointed out that at least for

next 30 to 40 years coal will continue to be crucial in India's energy sector. He urged investors to step up participation in the fully transparent auction process evolved by the ministry.

Of these 99 mines on offer, 59 are fully explored mines and 40 are partially explored. These mines are spread across eight coal bearing states namely Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. The list of mines has been finalized post detailed deliberations, and mines falling under protected areas, wildlife sanctuaries, critical habitats, having forest cover greater than 40 per cent, heavily built-up area etc. have been excluded.

Key features of the auction process include introduction of National Coal Index, ease in participation with no restriction for prior coal mining experience, full flexibility in coal utilisation, optimised payment structures, efficiency in promotion through incentives for early production and use of clean coal technology. Further incentives are being contemplated by the ministry with focus on sustainability. The commencement of sale of tender document will start from Thursday. Details of the mines, auction terms, timelines etc. can be accessed on MSTC auction platform. The auction shall be held online through a transparent two-stage process, on the basis of Percentage Revenue Share. This will be the 14th round of auction under CMSP Act and fourth tranche of auction under MMDR Act. SBI Capital Markets Ltd, sole transaction advisor to Ministry of Coal for the commercial coal mine auction, had devised the methodology and is assisting the ministry in conducting the auction. Of the total 99 coal mines, 35 are under 14th tranche of auction under CMSP Act and 64 are under fourth tranche of auction under MMDR Act.



Besides, of these 99 mines, 24 are new coal mines whereas the remaining 75 are rollover mines from the earlier round of auctions. After successful auction of 28 coal mines in the first two tranches and upon receipt of 53 bids for 20 coal mines under tranche 13 of CMSP Act and tranche 3 of MMDR Act, the ministry has now launched the auction process of 24 new mines. Of these 24 mines, 9 are under tranche 14 of CMSP Act and 15 under tranche 4 of MMDR Act.

## 5. Electricité et énergies renouvelables

India's renewable energy generation capacity addition estimated at 16 GW in FY23, says Icra

*Mint, 10/01/2022*

NEW DELHI: India's renewable energy generation capacity addition in FY23 is estimated at 16 gigawatt (GW), according to ratings agency Icra.

"Growth prospects robust with India's commitment to reducing emissions and meeting 50% energy requirement from renewable sources by 2030," Icra said in a statement on Monday, adding that, "Investment requirement remains large at \$450 billion - \$500 billion to achieve the RE capacity targets by 2030."

This green push is expected to help India meet climate commitments it made at the COP-26 summit in Glasgow. At the November summit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi pledged to increase the country's non-fossil fuel power generation capacity to 500GW and meet 50% of its energy requirements from renewable sources by the end of this decade. The Central

Electricity Authority estimates India's power requirement to rise to 817 GW by 2030.

"The outlook for the capacity addition in the renewable energy (RE) sector remains strong with a large project pipeline of over 55 GW and the highly competitive tariffs offered by these projects," the statement said and added, "The capacity addition witnessed a strong recovery in the first eight months of FY2022 with 8.2 GW added against 3.4 GW added in 8M FY2021."

India has achieved its nationally determined contributions target with a total non-fossil based installed energy capacity of 157.32GW, which is 40.1% of the total installed electricity capacity. Of this, solar, wind and hydropower account for 48.55 GW, 40.03 GW and 51.34 GW, respectively. India's nuclear energy-based installed electricity capacity stands at 6.78 GW.

"The backlog of the projects awarded by the Central nodal agencies and state distribution utilities remains large with under-development solar, wind and hybrid capacities of more than ~55 GW. Basis this pipeline, Icra expects the RE capacity addition to increase from 7.4 GW reported in FY2021 to 12.5 GW in FY2022 and further to 16.0 GW in FY2023," Girishkumar Kadam, senior vice president and co-group head, corporate ratings, Icra, said in the statement.

About 63 GW of renewable energy capacity is under various construction phases, and installed power capacity from non-fossil fuels is expected to go up to 66% by 2030.

"The downside risks for renewable energy sector in the near term emanate from the execution headwinds and supply chain

challenges for procuring modules and wind turbine generators (WTGs). Moreover, the average price of imported solar PV modules (Mono PERC) have increased by over 35% over the past 12 months, putting upward pressure on capital costs for solar power projects," the statement said.

At the Glasgow summit, Modi also promised to cut India's total projected carbon emission by 1 billion tonnes and carbon intensity of the nation's economy by less than 45% by 2030 and achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2070. India's green energy projects received foreign direct investments worth \$7.27 billion from 2014-15 to June 2021. Of this, \$797.21 million was received during 2020-21.

"Notwithstanding the same and the recent hike in GST rate for solar power equipment, the solar bid tariffs continue to remain highly competitive as seen from the quoted bid tariff of ₹2.17 per unit in December 2021. The ability of the developers to secure modules within their budgeted costs and cost of debt funding at less than 8.5% remains important to make these projects viable. On the other hand, the wind segment continues to witness subdued capacity addition owing to execution headwinds, financing challenges for few developers and weak financial profile of some of the OEMs leading to supply side constraints," the statement said.

The government recently cleared a ₹12,031 crore plan to set up infrastructure to transmit electricity from renewable energy projects as it seeks to boost the output from green sources and meet half of the nation's energy requirement from them by 2030.

"Coming to the collection performance, the overall dues to RE IPPs from distribution utilities (discoms) in the eight key states have gone up by 43% to ₹194 billion as of December 2021 from ₹136 billion as of July 2021," the statement said.

Reliance to invest \$80 billion in green energy projects in Gujarat

*The Economic Times, 14/01/2022*

New Delhi: India's Reliance Industries Ltd said on Thursday it would invest Rs 5.95 lakh crore (\$80.49 billion) in green energy and other projects in the western state of Gujarat, as the conglomerate targets net-zero carbon emissions by 2035.

The company will invest Rs 5 lakh crore over a span of 10 to 15 years to set up a 100 gigawatts renewable energy power plant and has already started scouting land for the project, it said in a filing to the stock exchanges. The remaining sum will consist of Rs 60,000 crore for setting up solar modules and fuel cells and Rs 25,000 crore rupees for investment in existing projects and new ventures over the next three to five years.

Reliance will also spend Rs 7,500 crore to upgrade its Jio telecom network and invest Rs 3000 crore in its retail business. "These projects will create 10 lakh (1 million) direct/indirect employment opportunities (in Gujarat)," Reliance said. In June last year, Reliance had said it would invest \$10.1 billion in clean energy over three years in a drive to become a net carbon zero company by 2035.

DISCOMS' Outstanding Dues Surge 4.4% To Rs 1,21,030 Crore In January

*Outlook India, 09/01/2022*

Total outstanding dues owed by electricity distribution companies (DISCOMs) to power producers rose 4.4 per cent year-on-year to Rs 1,21,030 crore in January 2022.

DISCOMs owed a total of Rs 1,15,904 crore to power generation firms in January 2021, according to portal PRAAPTI (Payment Ratification And Analysis in Power procurement for bringing Transparency in Invoicing of generators). On a sequential basis also, total dues in January increased from Rs 1,15,462 crore in December 2021.

The PRAAPTI portal was launched in May 2018 to bring in transparency in power purchase transactions between generators and DISCOMs.

In January 2022, the total overdue amount, which was not cleared even after 45 days of a grace period offered by generators, stood at Rs 1,01,357 crore as against Rs 99,650 crore in the same month a year ago. The overdue amount stood at Rs 99,981 crore in December 2021.

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 Centre had also given some breathers to DISCOMs for paying dues to gencos in view of the Covid-19-induced lockdown. The government had also waived penal charges for the late payment of dues.

In May 2020, the government had announced a Rs 90,000-crore liquidity infusion for DISCOMs under which these utilities got loans at economical rates from Power Finance Corporation (PFC) and REC Ltd.

This was a government initiative to help gencos remain afloat. Later, the liquidity infusion package was increased to Rs 1.2 lakh crore and further to Rs 1.35 lakh crore.

DISCOMs in Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Jharkhand and Tamil Nadu account for the major portion of dues to gencos, the data showed.

Overdue of independent power producers amounted to 54.56 per cent of the total overdue of Rs 1,01,357 crore of DISCOMs in January 2022.

The proportion of central PSU gencos in the overdue was 22.43 per cent.

Among the central public sector gencos, NTPC alone has an overdue amount of Rs 4,298.32 crore on DISCOMs, followed by NPCIL - KUDANKULAM NUCLEAR POWER PLANT at Rs 2,745.21 crore, DVC at Rs 2,447.83 crore and NLC India at Rs 2,206.86 crore in January 2022.

Among private generators, DISCOMs owe the highest overdue amount of Rs 26,648.56 crore to Adani Power, followed by Bajaj Group-owned Lalitpur Power Generation Company at Rs 4,966.09 crore in the month under review.

The overdue of non-conventional energy producers like solar and wind stood at Rs 19,651.15 crore in January 2022.



## 6. Mobilités électriques

CESL to set-up 900 more EV charging stations in 2022

*The Economic Times, 14/01/2022*

New Delhi: State-run Convergence Energy Services Limited (CESL) plans to install at least 900 more electric vehicle (EV) charging stations in the country in 2022. CESL is a wholly owned subsidiary of Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL) - an entity under the Ministry of Power.

In a conversation with IANS, CESL's MD Mahua Acharya informed that 396 charging stations have already been installed across India. "As on date, 396 charging stations have been installed across the country, out of which 166 are commissioned," she said. "When we see a projection for 2022, we are doing all we can to expand the number of charging stations in the country including install or enable the installation of another 900 more."

At present, the state-run firm has tied up with various private and public companies to set up public charging infrastructure. It has also partnered with urban local bodies to create such infrastructure. One of the main requirements to set up charging infrastructure is the availability of 'land', which in most cases, is provided free of cost by most municipal bodies or firms for public chargers to CESL. Currently, many automobile companies and other private players, including standalone charging infrastructure developers, are also installing these facilities.

Besides, the company intends to accelerate the adoption of e-vehicles in the country. Recently, it launched the 'MyEV' app a

digital marketplace to enable the deployment of electric vehicles in the country. Notably, Kerala became the first state to launch the digital marketplace 'MyEV' which will enable easy access to consumers for booking and buying electric two-wheelers.

In addition, the company runs -- Gram Ujala -- scheme under which it provides high quality 7-Watt and 12-Watt LED bulbs with 3 years guarantee at a cost of INR 10 per bulb in exchange of working incandescent bulbs. This program is uniquely financed with carbon credits, achieving these low sale prices. The programme is being implemented in rural households in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Telangana. Currently, CESL focuses on energy solutions that are at the confluence of renewable energy, electric mobility, and climate change. It employs unique business models by utilising a blend of concessional and commercial capital, carbon finance and grants to enable commercialisation of these clean energy solutions at scale.

High costs, low use may derail development of EV charging infra

*Mint, 11/01/2022*

The electric vehicle (EV) industry may fall well short of its target of setting up a sufficient number of public charging stations in India this year and thus dampen the excitement over EV adoption in the country.

India would need four lakh public charging stations to cater to an estimated total of two million EVs plying on the roads by 2026, according to a June 2021 report by Grant Thornton-Bharat and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (Ficci).

However, on December 16, 2021, data disclosed in the Parliament by Raj Kumar Singh, union minister of power and new and renewable energy, reveals that India currently has only 1,028 public EV charging stations — almost 30 per cent of which are in Delhi alone.

This implies that government bodies and private startups have their work cut out, say industry experts.

To be sure, Indian cab aggregator and mobility company Ola said last month it will be setting up a total of 4,000 public EV charging facilities by 2022 in a bid to market its new S1 electric scooter portfolio. Besides, as part of government mandates, oil sector companies have also vouched to set up EV charging facilities.

In November last year, Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said the Indian Oil Corporation, Bharat Petroleum and Hindustan Petroleum have set targets of 4,000 total EV charging stations by the end of 2022. Distribution companies such as Tata Power, too, have set estimates, targeting 2,000 EV charging stations in 2022, Praveer Sinha, chief executive officer and MD of Tata Power said in October last year.

Moreover, in October 2021, the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) announced plans to cover 40,000 kilometres of highways in the country with an EV charging facility spread every 40 to 60 kilometres apart. "We have bid out 100 wayside amenities and got a tremendous response. Each wayside amenity has received at least six-seven bids. Once the bids are awarded, it will take six months to complete," said Giridhar Aramane, NHAI

chairman in an interview with ThePrint at the time.

Industry experts, however, remain sceptical. Rajesh Singh, founder and chief executive of eChargeBays, a Delhi-based startup that offers setup and installation of private charging infrastructure, believes that many targets in the public charging infrastructure **space could be inflated.** "If you look at the past two years, less than 1,000 public chargers compatible with all EVs have been installed. If you look at high-voltage chargers of 50kW and above for passenger EVs in the public space, it wouldn't have crossed 200 in the past two years."

"The key point about EV charging stations is that they don't make money. Setting up a charging facility for an apartment complex or a commercial centre does not make any business sense. As a result, while there is a need for charging station operators, it's hard to organically build that demand," corroborated Arun Vinayak, co-founder of Exponent Energy.

There are other challenges too. Experts point out that instead of setting up public charging facility targets, the key could be to adopt facilities specific to the Indian market.

According to Vinayak, "94% of passenger vehicles are charged at home (in India), so they don't really need a public charging station right now." He added that the lack of organised parking spaces in India is also a big hindrance to setting up public chargers. "This is a big difference between India and a market like the USA, where prices of cars are almost 4-5x as here. As a result, one thing that is required in order to boost public EV charging infrastructure in India, and help make it a viable business for the involved

parties, is to come up with solutions custom to our market. Many users also do not have the facilities of charging at home, which is why we need public charging. But, for the latter, a person cannot take 2-3 hours to charge their car, so we need faster charging. To make public charging profitable would also be a task. India cannot simply adopt an international model — we will need our own set of regulations to suit the market," Vinayak explained.

eChargeBays' Singh agreed. "The biggest challenge of setting up public chargers is viability — the cost of setting up is very high, and use is very low. Companies in this sector either follow or are only slightly ahead of EV launches by automakers. For example, if Maruti Suzuki or Hyundai talk about launching their first EVs in India, charging infra companies will likely follow suit as the latter would have good potential in viability. But, if companies talk about launching cars in the later years, then despite the initial mission statements of public charging goals, the timelines will keep getting pushed back," he explained.

It is this lack of viability that could be pegging back 2022's initial estimates — despite tall projections from many. Vinayak concluded, "A lot of companies right now look at charging stations as a marketing initiative, which serves a branding cause. But, are companies right now lining up to become charging station operators yet? Not quite."

## 7. Environnement et qualité de l'air

Why India's deadly air pollution keeps getting worse not better

*Mint, 11/01/2022*

India is failing in efforts to improve its toxic air quality, with the number of smog-plagued cities increasing since the launch of a national program to tackle the issue. A total of 132 cities now have pollution levels deemed below national standards, from 102 cities when the National Clean Air Programme began in 2019, according to a report by the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air.

Limited funding, the lack of tighter emissions standards for industries including metal smelters to oil refineries and slow progress on adding monitoring stations are all factors hampering work to improve air quality, CREA said.

India's government "should start acting on a war scale," to hit targets to curb pollution, authors Shivansh Ghildiyal and Sunil Dahiya said in the report. "Stringent actions should be implemented across sectors to reduce emission loads."

More than 90% of India's population lives in areas where air quality is below World Health Organization standards, with coal-fired power plants, factories and vehicles among the major sources of pollution. The problem worsens during winter due to the burning of crop stubble by farmers, typically blanketing northern cities, including the capital New Delhi, in choking smog.

Slow progress in tackling pollution risks adding to premature deaths of citizens -- an estimated 1.67 million people died in 2019 as a result of India's dirty air -- and extending pressure on the nation's economy from higher health expenditure and productivity losses. Poor air quality also affects the



country's image as a business destination, potentially deterring investments.

India's national strategy aims to reduce particulate matter emissions by as much as 30% from 2017 levels by 2024, though so far few cities and none of the country's state-level authorities have delivered action plans, the CREA report said.

Because sources of pollution can vary from city to city, it's crucial to speed up work on studies into air quality in different locations, Dahiya said in an interview. "Knowing how much each source accounts for can lead to more efficient use of time and money in dealing with the problem," he said. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government has previously faced criticism for extending deadlines for power plants to enforce pollution standards, and hasn't yet set any date to reduce consumption of coal, which produces 70% of the country's electricity.

India's forest, tree cover rose by 2,261 sq km in last 2 years: ISFR report

*The Hindu, 13/01/2022*

India's forest and tree cover has risen by 2,261 square kilometers in the last two years with Andhra Pradesh growing the maximum forest cover of 647 square kilometers, according to the India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2021 released on Thursday.

The biennial report by the Forest Survey of India (FSI), an assessment of the country's forest resources, was released by Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav.

He revealed that the total tree-and-forest cover in the country includes an increase of 1,540 square kilometres of forest cover and

721 sq km of tree cover compared to the 2019 report.

"It is very satisfying to know that the tree and forest cover has increased in India. The report also touches aspects which are important in terms of climate change.

"We are entering second phase of the Green Mission, the ministry has taken several decisions for increasing forest conservation and people participation. To achieve India's aim of increasing additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent by 2030, Nagar Van Yojna has been introduced to increase the tree cover and joined with the second phase of Green Mission in the next five years," Mr. Yadav said in his address.

He also said forest officials and frontline staff play a huge role in saving our forests and work under difficult circumstances so the Environment Ministry is working to provide them job security and help in their capacity building.

The Minister stressed on the need for generous tree plantation by private sector to reduce the burden on forests. "To reduce the burden on our forests, the private sector should ensure maximum tree plantation. For this, our department has initiated a consultation process. Under the Forest Conservation Act, we invited suggestions from people and have received over 5,000 responses. Our biggest aim is to maintain the quality of forests and increase the green cover," he said.

According to the report, India's total forest and tree cover is now spread across 80.9 million hectares, which is 24.62% of the geographical area of the country.

The top five states in terms of increase in forest cover are Andhra Pradesh (647 sq km), Telangana (632 sq km), Odisha (537 sq km), Karnataka (155 sq km) and Jharkhand (110 sq km).

**“The gain in forest cover or improvement in forest canopy density may be attributed to better conservation measures, protection, afforestation activities, tree plantation drives and agroforestry,” the report said.**

Area-wise, Madhya Pradesh has the largest forest cover in the country followed by Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Maharashtra.

The report also added that the north-east did not show positive results as the current assessment showed a decrease of forest cover to the extent of 1,020 sq km in the region. Arunachal Pradesh lost the maximum forest cover of 257 sq km, followed by Manipur which lost 249 sq km, Nagaland 235 sq km, Mizoram 186 sq km and Meghalaya 73 sq km.

The report said 17 States/UTs have above 33% of the geographical area under forest cover. Out of these States and UTs, Lakshadweep, Mizoram, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya have more than 75% forest cover, while 12 states/UTs (Manipur, Nagaland, Tripura, Goa, Kerala, Sikkim, Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Assam, Odisha) have forest cover between 33% to 75%.

The report also said in total 140 hill districts of the country, the forest cover reduced by 902 sq km in the last two years. In the 2019 report, the forest cover in the hill regions had increased by 544 sq km.

It also recorded an increase of 17 sq km in mangrove cover in the country as compared to the previous assessment of 2019. Total mangrove cover in the country is 4,992 sq km. Top three States showing mangrove cover increase are Odisha (8 sq km) followed by Maharashtra (4 sq km) and Karnataka (3 sq km).

According to the report, the total carbon stock in the country's forest is estimated to be 7,204 million tonnes and there is an increase of 79.4 million tonnes in the carbon stock of the country as compared to the last assessment of 2019. The annual increase in the carbon stock is 39.7 million tonnes.

The Forest Survey of India (FSI), in collaboration with Birla Institute of Technology and Science (BITS) Pilani, Goa Campus also performed a study based on 'Mapping of Climate Change Hotspots in Indian Forests' as part of the report. The collaborative study was carried out with the objective to map the climatic hotspots over the forest cover in India, using computer model-based projection of temperature and rainfall data, for the three future time periods, that is, years 2030, 2050 and 2085.

Why legal experts are concerned about the Biological Diversity Amendment Bill 2021

*Hindustan Times*, 17/12/2022

The Biological Diversity Amendment Bill 2021, introduced in the Lok Sabha on Thursday, exempts Ayush practitioners from the ambit of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002, and facilitates access to biological resources and traditional knowledge by the Indian traditional medicine sector. Legal

experts have, however, expressed concerns that easing the norms for the sector could be detrimental to ecology and go against the principle of sharing commercial benefits with indigenous communities.

What is the Biological Diversity Amendment Bill 2021?

The Biological Diversity Act, 2002 was enacted for the conservation of biological diversity and fair, equitable sharing of the monetary benefits from the commercial use of biological resources and traditional knowledge. Now, according to the statement of objectives of Biological Diversity (Amendment) Bill, 2021, it seeks to reduce the pressure on wild medicinal plants by encouraging the cultivation of medicinal plants; exempts Ayush practitioners from intimating biodiversity boards for accessing biological resources or knowledge; facilitates fast-tracking of research, simplify the patent application process, decriminalises certain offences; bring more foreign investments in biological resources, research, patent and commercial utilisation, without compromising the national interest.

Why is the Biodiversity Act 2002 being amended?

According to the bill, concerns were raised by Ayush medicine, seed, industry and research sectors urging the government to simplify, streamline and reduce the compliance burden to provide for a conducive environment for collaborative research and investments. They also sought to simplify the patent application process, widen the scope of access and benefit-sharing with local communities. In most cases, this is a certain percentage of the sale price.

Ayush companies have been seeking relaxation of the benefit-sharing provisions. A case in point is the case relating to Divya Pharmacy founded by Swami Ramdev and Acharya Balkrishna in Uttarakhand. The Uttarakhand Biodiversity Board (UBB) sent a notice to Divya Pharmacy in 2016 stating that the company was in violation of the Biodiversity Act for using biological resources from the state for its ayurvedic formulations, without intimating the board and that it was liable to pay an access and benefit-sharing fee. Challenging the board's notice, the company filed a writ petition before the Uttarakhand high court in December 2016 challenging the powers of the biodiversity board to determine benefit-sharing by Indian companies. The court in 2018 upheld the powers of the biodiversity board in its judgement.

Why are legal experts criticising the bill?

The Biological Diversity Amendment Bill 2021 has been introduced without seeking public comments as required under the pre-legislative consultative policy. **"The bill has been only introduced. The environment ministry will also publish the bill for public comments and a month's time will be given to respond," a senior official of the ministry of environment, forest and climate change said.**

What are the changes proposed to be introduced by the Biological Diversity Amendment Bill 2021?

The bill focuses on regulating who can access biological resources and knowledge and how access will be monitored. Ayush practitioners have been exempted from the ambit of the Act, a huge move because the Ayush industry benefits greatly from



**biological resources in India.** The role of state biodiversity boards has been strengthened and better clarified in the bill. There are also significant changes proposed in the offences section, according to Kanchi Kohli, a legal researcher at the Centre for Policy Research. Violations of the law related to access to biological resources and benefit-sharing with communities, which are currently treated as criminal offences and are non-bailable, have been proposed to be **made civil offences.** **"This bill would have** been an important opportunity to reconcile the domestic law with free prior informed consent requirements of the 2010 Nagoya Protocol on ABS. However, this has been a missed opportunity as the proposed amendments continue to marginalise biodiversity management committees (BMCs). Their powers have not been enhanced, and the proposed amendments also allow for state biodiversity boards to represent BMCs to determine terms of benefit sharing," said Kohli.

Under the Biodiversity Act 2002, national and state biodiversity boards are required to consult the biodiversity management committees (constituted by every local body) while taking any decision relating to the use of biological resources.

What are the other concerns with the bill?

One of the major changes in the new bill is that registered Ayush practitioners who have been practising indigenous medicine can access any biological resource and its associated knowledge for commercial utilisation, without giving prior intimation to **the state biodiversity board.** **"The** amendment seems to be done with the sole intention of providing benefit to the Ayush industry. The main focus of the bill is to

facilitate trade in biodiversity as opposed to conservation, protection of biodiversity and knowledge of the local communities. The amendments are completely contrary to the aim and objective of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002," argued Ritwick Dutta, environmental lawyer. Dutta also underlined that **the bill has excluded the term "bio-utilisation."** **"Bio-utilization** is an important element in the Act. Leaving out bio utilization would leave out an array of activities like characterization, inventorisation and bioassay which are undertaken with commercial motive," added Dutta.

**The bill also exempts cultivated medicinal plants from the purview of the Act but it is practically impossible to detect which plants are cultivated and which are from the wild. This provision could allow large companies to evade the requirement for prior approval or share the benefit with local communities under the access and benefit-sharing provisions of the Act.**

What is access and benefit-sharing?

Under the Convention of Biological Diversity, and the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing to which India is a party, it is mandated that benefits derived from the use of biological resources are shared in a fair and equitable manner among the indigenous and local communities. **When an Indian or foreign company or individual accesses biological resources such as medicinal plants and associated knowledge, it has to take prior consent from the national biodiversity board.** The board can impose a benefit-sharing fee or royalty or impose conditions so that the company shares the monetary benefit from commercial utilisation of these resources

with local people who are conserving biodiversity in the region.

The December 2018 judgement of Uttarakhand high court in the Divya Pharmacy matter clarifies that the board has a core function of regulation, which also includes asking for benefit sharing and determining the terms and conditions to be imposed on the user/accessor against access said legal researchers, Kanchi Kohli and Shalini Bhutani.

One Ocean Summit an opportunity to gather those ready to make decisive contributions: India

*The New Indian Express, 13/01/2022*

The One Ocean Summit, which is to be held in France in February, will be an opportunity to gather political leaders and all stakeholders ready to make a decisive contribution with bold, tangible and actionable initiatives and commitments, India said on Wednesday.

Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav, in a virtual meeting with French Ambassador Emmanuel Lenain, said India is fully determined to protect its maritime interests, while it supports the maintenance of rule-based maritime systems, as mandated under the UN Convention on the Law of Seas (UNCLOS), 1982.

During the meeting, the minister underlined the urgent need for action to prevent and reduce marine litter, but stressed voluntary domestic action by countries.

"Held a virtual meeting with French Ambassador Emmanuel Lenain. Fruitful discussions on issues related to One Ocean

Summit, Cooperation on Plastic Pollution and the Global Treaty on Plastics, High Ambition Coalition and upcoming @UNBiodiversity COP15," the minister tweeted after the meeting.

Yadav also mentioned an announcement made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during World Environment Day 2018 for elimination of single-use plastics in India by 2022.

In the meeting, both sides also discussed in detail the issues concerning the High Ambition Coalition on Biodiversity beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ), and how it should not undermine existing relevant legal instruments, frameworks and relevant global, regional and sectoral bodies, the Environment Ministry said.

"Both sides further discussed how COP 15 will help in developing a holistic Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) taking into account poverty eradication, means of implementation and resource mobilisation, etc. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, both sides agreed to further strengthen activities in 2022 under the Indo-French Year of Environment," it said.