

TRACK TRANSFORMATION

Full circle: Focus on circular economy

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At a time when climate change is coursing through the economy with deleterious consequences, the Union Budget 2023-24 has put the spotlight on sustainable development and a circular economy.

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) got no substantial increase in its budgetary grant, even as India aims for lofty goals in climate action.

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, while citing India's climate commitment LIFE (Lifestyle for Environment), said: "India is moving forward firmly for the 'panchamrit' and net-zero carbon emission by 2070 to usher in green industrial and economic transition. This Budget builds on our focus on green growth."

For achieving the goal of a circular economy, the minister announced a new scheme called GOBARDhan (Galvanising Organic Bio-Agro Resources Dhan) with an outlay of ₹10,000 crore. This will entail setting up 500 'waste-to-wealth' plants, including 200 compressed biogas (CBG) plants and 300 community or

RUB OF THE GREEN

Allocation to National Mission for Green India reduced to ₹220 crore, from ₹361 crore in last year's Budget

Galvanizing Organic Bio-Agro Resources Dhan (GOBARDhan): ₹10,000-crore outlay

► 500 new 'waste to wealth' plants will be made

► Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats & Tangible Incomes (MISHTI)

► Funds from MGNREGS, Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority Fund and other sources

cluster-based plants.

The minister said there would soon be a mandate of 5 per cent CBG for all organisations marketing natural



Amrit Dharohar

► Optimal use of wetlands, biodiversity enhancement over next three years

Ramsar Sites

► Current: 75
► Before 2014: 24

and biogas.

For building on India's success in afforestation, the Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats & Tangible

Incomes (MISHTI) will be taken up for mangrove plantation along the coastline and on salt pan lands.

In the Budget there was an increased focus for promoting conservation values through a scheme to encourage the optimal use of wetlands.

"The government will promote (its) unique conservation values through Amrit Dharohar, a scheme that will be implemented over the next three years," the minister said.

The government also aims to promote coastal shipping as the energy-efficient and lower-cost mode of transport, both for passengers and freight, through PPP mode and with viability gap funding.

On the other hand, the budgetary allocation to MoEFCC increased barely 1.6 per cent over the previous Budget. Also the allocation to the flagship National Mission for Green India was reduced by 40 per cent.

In order to increase forest cover and to protect existing forest land, the ministry has two plan schemes -- Green India Mission— National Afforestation Programme (GIM-NAP), and Forest Fire Prevention Management. The funds for GIM-NAP will now be met from the sovereign green fund.