

Ecological conservation initiatives in Union Budget 2023-24

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In news- The Union Finance Minister, during her budget speech introduced schemes and policies aimed at ecological conservation.

The new initiatives-

This is part of a larger “green push” with focus on the environment and climate change. The following are the schemes announced.

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

- MISHTI will facilitate mangrove plantation along India's coastline and on salt pan lands.
- It will operate through convergence between MGNREGS, CAMPA Fund and other sources.
- India has such forests on both its Eastern and Western coasts with the Sundarbans in Bengal being one of the largest mangrove forests on the planet.

PM PRANAM (Prime Minister Programme for Restoration, Awareness, Nourishment and Amelioration of Mother Earth)-

- This programme will seek to incentivise states and union territories promoting alternative fertilisers and the balanced use of chemical fertilisers
- The programme aims to ultimately bring down the government's subsidy burden, which is estimated to reach Rs 2.25 lakh crore in 2022-23: 39 per cent higher than last year's figure of Rs 1.62 lakh crore.

Bhartiya Prakritik Kheti Bio-Input Resource Centres-

- To further facilitate **the adoption of “natural farming,” 10,000 Bio-Input Resource Centres will be set-up,** creating a national-level distributed micro-fertiliser and pesticide manufacturing network.
- This will impact over 1 crore farmers over the next three years.

Amrit Dharohar-

- This is a scheme that will be **implemented over the next three years to encourage optimal use of wetlands, and enhance bio-diversity, carbon stock, eco-tourism** opportunities and income generation for local communities.
- Amrit Dharohar will emphasise on the importance of wetlands and their preservation, with an outlook that is inclusive of local communities as caretakers of the ecosystem.

Other elements of the Budget’s Green Growth push-

- **Green Hydrogen Mission:** The recently launched National Green Hydrogen Mission, with an outlay of Rs 19,700 crores, will facilitate transition of the economy to low carbon intensity, reduce dependence on fossil fuel imports, and make the country assume technology and market leadership in this sunrise sector. India aims to reach a target of an annual production of 5 MMT of green hydrogen by 2030.
- **Energy Transition:** The Budget has provided Rs 35,000 crore for priority capital investments towards energy transition and net zero objectives, and energy security by the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas.
- **Energy Storage Projects:** To steer the economy on the sustainable development path, Battery Energy Storage Systems with capacity of 4,000 MWH will be supported

with Viability Gap Funding. A detailed framework for Pumped Storage Projects will also be formulated.

- **Renewable Energy Evacuation:** The Inter-state transmission system for evacuation and grid integration of 13 GW renewable energy from Ladakh will be constructed with investment of Rs 20,700 crore including central support of ` 8,300 crore.
- **Green Credit Programme:** For encouraging behavioural change, a Green Credit Programme will be notified under the Environment (Protection) Act. This will incentivize environmentally sustainable and responsive actions by companies, individuals and local bodies, and help mobilize additional resources for such activities.
- **GOBARdhan scheme:** 500 new 'waste to wealth' plants under **GOBARdhan (Galvanizing Organic Bio-Agro Resources Dhan) scheme** will be established for promoting a circular economy. These will include 200 compressed biogas (CBG) plants, including 75 plants in urban areas, and 300 community or cluster-based plants at total investment of Rs 10,000 crore.
- **Coastal Shipping:** Coastal shipping will be promoted as the energy efficient and lower cost mode of transport, both for passengers and freight, through PPP mode with viability gap funding.
- **Vehicle Replacement:** Replacing old polluting vehicles is an important part of greening our economy. In furtherance of the vehicle scrapping policy mentioned in Budget 2021-22, I have allocated adequate funds to scrap old vehicles of the Central Government. States will also be supported in replacing old vehicles and ambulances.