

# *‘Global Biofuels Alliance to act as a counter to Opec’*

The launch of the Global Biofuels Alliance (GBA) at the G20 summit signifies a pivotal moment for New Delhi’s pursuit of sustainable energy solutions and its energy diplomacy, says **HARDEEP SINGH PURI**, minister of petroleum and natural gas. Led by India, Brazil, and the US, the alliance aims to expedite the uptake of biofuels worldwide. Puri tells **Subhayan Chakraborty** in an interview in New Delhi that an action plan for the initiative will be ready within 6 months. Edited excerpts:

## **How will the GBA benefit India?**

The GBA members reflect major producers and consumers of biofuels. The US (52 per cent), Brazil (30 per cent), and India (3 per cent) are the principal producers of ethanol globally, and together contributed about 85 per cent to its global production and 81 per cent to its consumption as of 2022. India will, thus, get leadership status in the space of biofuels, despite producing only 3 per cent currently.

On the diplomatic front, the alliance is a tangible outcome of the G20 presidency and will help strengthen India’s position globally. It will position India as a climate and sustainability champion and make it a critical voice in setting standards for biofuels. India will also act as the voice of the global south by getting countries that are yet to start their biofuels programme.



**HARDEEP SINGH PURI**

Union minister of petroleum and natural gas

It will bring significant benefits to our domestic industry. It will focus on collaboration and provide our industry the opportunity to export technology and equipment. This will contribute to Make in India, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, and Skill Development, apart from raising farmers’ income.

## **What will be the next step for the alliance?**

Acting as a counter to the Opec grouping on biofuels, the GBA will help in advancing interests of large fossil fuel importers like India. One of the primary goals of the alliance is to expedite the global uptake of biofuels through technology advancements. It will serve as a catalytic platform, fostering global collaboration for the advancement and widespread adoption of biofuels.

## **How will the GBA be organised and how will it operate?**

The secretariat headquarters will be hosted virtually by India during the initial period. A temporary executive committee will be constituted for proposing an appropriate governance framework and action plan for the initiative within six months. The GBA will have a light structure, with separate tiers for government, industry and civil society. It is being set up with an initial seed capital of only ₹60 crore.

We will support the developing countries by sharing technology and best practices. The alliance will be identifying the bottlenecks countries face in realising their biofuel potential and bring together multiple stakeholders from government, industry, think tanks, and financial institutions to alleviate these challenges.

## **What are long-term goals of the alliance?**

It will work to create, and expand the existing, international sustainable biofuels markets to advance global biofuels trade. It will support worldwide development and deployment of sustainable biofuels by offering capacity-

building exercises across the value chain, technical support for national programmes, and promoting policy lessons-sharing.

It will also facilitate mobilising a virtual marketplace to assist industries, countries, ecosystem players, and key stakeholders in mapping demand and supply, as well as connecting technology providers to end users. Research and advocacy will also be supported for improvements in biofuel technology across supply chains, and to expand the range of sustainable feedstock and convert feedstock into biofuels.

## **Do you expect the grouping to increase in size soon?**

Brazilian sugarcane industry association UNICA and other major oil companies have indicated their willingness to fund the initiative. Nineteen countries and 12 international organisations have already agreed to join. Of these, seven are G20 members — Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Italy, South Africa, United States and India. Four are G20 invitee countries — Bangladesh, Singapore, Mauritius, and the United Arab Emirates. Eight non-G20 countries are supporting the GBA.

