

## Business

# India bans many single-use plastics to tackle waste

## Unprepared manufacturers, consumers unwilling to pay more

**NEW DELHI:** India imposed a ban on many single-use plastics on Friday in a bid to tackle waste choking rivers and poisoning wildlife, but experts say it faces severe headwinds from unprepared manufacturers and consumers unwilling to pay more. The country generates around four million tons of plastic waste per year, about a third of which is not recycled and ends up in waterways and landfills that regularly catch fire and exacerbate air pollution.

Stray cows munching on plastic are a common sight in Indian cities and a recent study found traces in the dung of elephants in the northern forests of Uttarakhand state. Estimates vary but around half comes from items used once, and the new ban covers the production, import and sale of ubiquitous objects like straws and cups made of plastic as well as wrapping on cigarette packets.

Exempt for now are products such as plastic bags below a certain thickness and so-called multi-layered packaging. Authorities have promised to crack down hard after the ban - first announced in 2018 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi - came into effect. Inspectors were set to fan out from Friday checking that no suppliers or distributors are flouting the rules at risk of a maximum fine of 100,000 rupees (\$1,265) or five-year jail sentence.

### Industry lobbying

Around half of India's regions have already sought to impose their own regulations but as the state of rivers and landfill sites testifies, success has been mixed. Firms in the plastics industry, which employs millions of people, say that alter-

natives are expensive and they have been lobbying the government for a delay to the ban. Pintu, who earns his living hacking the top of coconuts with a machete and serving them to customers with a plastic straw, doesn't know what he will do.

Switching to "expensive paper straws will be tough. I will likely pass the cost to the customers," he told AFP in New Delhi. "I've heard it'll help the environment but I don't see how it'll change anything for us," he added. GlobalData analysts said small packs with plastic straws make up 35 percent of soft drinks volumes, meaning manufacturers will be "badly hit". "(The) price-sensitive masses are unable to foot the bill for eco-friendly alternatives," Bobby Verghese from GlobalData added.

### 'Resistance'

Jigish N Doshi, president of industry group Plastindia Foundation, expects "temporary" job losses but said the bigger issue was firms "which had invested huge capital for machines that may not be useful" after the ban. "It's not easy to make different products from machines and the government could help by offering some subsidies and helping develop and purchase alternative products," Doshi told AFP.

Satish Sinha from environmental group Toxics Link told AFP that "there will be initial resistance" as finding replacements may be hard but it was a "very welcome step". "There will be difficulties and we may pay the price but if you're serious about the environment, this is an important issue that needs a concerted push," he said.



**NEW DELHI:** A man sits on a cart next to a sewer canal filled with plastics and other waste on June 30, 2022. —AFP

One young company trying to be part of the change is Ecoware, which makes disposable biodegradable products at its factory outside Delhi. Chief executive Rhea Mazumdar Singhal told AFP

that the appalling state of landfills and widespread plastic consumption inspired her venture. "We've seen plenty of bans before, but as citizens the power lies with us," Singhal said. —AFP

## Chinese airlines buy almost 300 Airbus planes

**BEIJING:** Four Chinese airlines said Friday they will buy a total of 292 planes from Airbus in a \$37 billion windfall for the aviation giant, as the industry rebuilds after the coronavirus pandemic. The orders come after a bumper year for Airbus, which posted record profits in 2021 after a two-year pandemic slump, giving the company a further boost over US rival Boeing.

China Eastern said Friday it had agreed to purchase 100 A320neo jets and China Southern said on the same day that it would buy 96 of the same model. Air China and its subsidiary Shenzhen Airlines also confirmed the purchase of a combined 96 A320neo planes, according to separate filings. Airbus said in a statement Friday that the deals showed "the positive recovery momentum and prosperous outlook for the Chinese aviation market".

It said the deals "brought to conclusion these long and extensive discussions that have taken place throughout the difficult Covid pandemic". Boeing's business in China - one of the world's largest aviation markets - was hit in recent years by uncertainty over its 737 MAX planes, which were suspended

from use in the country after deadly crashes in 2019. Chinese authorities finally gave the go-ahead for the 737 MAX to resume service last year after making a series of safety adjustments.

In March this year, a Boeing 737-800 crashed in the southern province of Guangxi, killing 132 people in China's worst air disaster in decades. The China Eastern flight was travelling from the cities of Kunming to Guangzhou when it inexplicably plummeted from an altitude of 29,000 feet into a mountainside. Last month, the Wall Street Journal reported that US investigators believe someone on board crashed the aircraft deliberately, citing a person familiar with a preliminary assessment of the incident. —AFP

## DHAMAN receives JCI Accreditation for PHCs in Kuwait

**KUWAIT:** Health Assurance Hospitals Company (DHAMAN) announced that it has obtained international accreditation certificate from the Joint Commission International (JCI) for the Quality of Health Service for all its healthcare centers facilities. DHAMAN became the first healthcare institution to obtain this important international accreditation at the level of Primary Healthcare Centers (PHCs) in Kuwait.



Thamer Arab

The (JCI) is considered the largest accreditation body in the healthcare field in the United States and the world's leader, and the JCI certifications granted by this Commission are deemed an international accreditation for controls and best practices in the field of quality and patient safety.

On this occasion, DHAMAN CEO Thamer Arab said: "We are very proud of this great achievement as it represents a practical embodiment of one of the most important values of DHAMAN, which is the keenness to provide the best health services at the highest levels of international quality. The accreditation of the Joint Commission International (JCI), one of the most important accreditation institutions in the healthcare sector globally, provides a guarantee of the sound implementing of an integrated work plan and studied steps in all departments of the company through its specialized medical, administrative and technical staff".

Arab added that DHAMAN has been keen since its establishment to cooperate with major international bodies in the health sector and to adopt the latest and best international quality standards, to achieve its vision of being the leading provider of high-quality integrated health services, in order to raise healthcare indicators through its integrated network of primary and secondary healthcare services in the various governorates of the State of Kuwait, in implementation of the Company's strategy in building and managing a comprehensive health system that focuses on providing health services based on quality, positive patient interactive experience, and achieving professional competence through carefully selected medical and administrative staff. This vision was reflected on the ground through the health services provided by DHAMAN healthcare centers.

Arab indicated that DHAMAN has worked for more than two years in fulfilling and implementing the requirements for obtaining JCI accreditation and has gone through a number of preparatory steps and received specialists to carry out audit procedures, field visits, and meetings with the concerned parties in the company's departments and sections performing objective and independent evaluation by international consultants and experts with extensive experience in healthcare and their guiding role in key issues of patient safety, quality, and how to continually improve proper healthcare processes and outcomes.

The DHAMAN CEO concluded by thanking all company employees for their determined efforts and hard and continuous work to implement the requirements of the International Committee and to obtain this significant and prominent accreditation, which is an addition to the company's series of achievements and successes. It is noteworthy that DHAMAN has obtained the International Accreditation Certificate (JCI) for DHAMAN Primary Healthcare Centers in Hawally, Farwaniya and Dajeej.

## V Nandakumar of Lulu Group awarded Retail Marcom Icon

**DUBAI:** Top retail professionals of the Middle East were recognized for their tremendous contribution to the industry at the annual RetailME Summit 2022 held in Dubai. The event saw some of the biggest retailers from around the world coming together to share the innovations and trends shaping the retail industry, one of the biggest contributors to the region's economy.

An eminent jury comprising leaders from global organizations such as Facebook, Google, TikTok, Zebra Technologies and Images Retail Magazine had selected the final award winners in the categories of Technology, IT, E-commerce, Logistics, Marketing and communications across the Middle East.

V Nandakumar, Director of Marketing & Communications, Lulu

Group, the region's top retail organization has been recognized as the Retail Marcom Icon of the year for his dynamic leadership in spearheading and transforming the marketing & communications of brand Lulu over the last 22 years across different countries globally. Last year Nandakumar was ranked among the Top 5 Marketing professionals in the Middle East by the world-famous Forbes magazine.

Other winners included Ahmad AR BinDawood, CEO - Bin Dawood Holding, Kamran Abbasi, CIO - Chalhoub Group, Mark Tesseyman, CEO at Liwa Trading, Mohammed Sajjad, VP Marketing and E-commerce at AZADEA Group, McCarthy, Chief Communications Officer - BinDawood Holding and Warwick Gird, GM -



**DUBAI:** V Nandakumar, Director of Marketing & Communications, Lulu Group being presented with the Retail Marcom Icon Award by Anna Germanos, MENA region head of Meta (Facebook).

Marketing at Spinneys.

Lulu Group is the leading hypermarket & shopping mall player with operations in 23 countries serving 1.6 million shoppers everyday through their 235

branches across ME, Africa, India and the Far East. The leading audit group Deloitte had recently ranked Lulu as one of the Top 20 fastest growing retailers in the world.



## Concept Mercedes-Maybach Haute Voiture close to production

**KUWAIT:** Al Mulla Automobiles Co, the sole authorized distributor and exclusive service partner for Mercedes-Benz in Kuwait, is excited to share a preview of the Concept Mercedes-Maybach Haute Voiture. A tailor-made creation, built using fine materials with the most exquisite craftsmanship: inspired by haute couture, Mercedes-Maybach is expanding its model portfolio with an exclusive and limited special edition.

The close-to-production Concept Mercedes-Maybach Haute Voiture combines the aesthetics and craftsmanship typical of the brand with unusual, fashion-inspired color and material combinations - such as bold nautical blue contrasting with a light, shimmering rose and elegant crystal white. Exquisite nappa leather combines with high-quality boucle fabric and particularly stylish trim elements. Similar to the principle of the limited high-fashion collection, the Concept Mercedes-Maybach Haute Voiture heralds a new era of exclusivity for the tradition-rich brand. The model will be



brought to market in early 2023 in a strictly limited edition.

The color and equipment concept of the Concept Mercedes-Maybach Haute Voiture has never existed before. Mercedes-Maybach is fusing the art of high fashion and automotive design at the highest level to create something completely new - a true Icon of Excellence. The Concept Mercedes-Maybach Haute Voiture embodies our style of 'Sensual Purity' in a new, extraordinary way. It combines beauty and unexpected, extraordinary details that appeal to all the senses.

The Concept Mercedes-Maybach Haute Voiture provides a concrete preview of an all-new, highly exclusive and limited edition. Mercedes-Maybach has always been considered a pioneer in defining luxury, style and status. Maybach customers are looking for something special and for their expectations to be exceeded. With the Mercedes-Maybach Haute Voiture special edition, Mercedes-Maybach is realizing its claim to leadership in the high-end segment and combining the world of fashion with the automobile. The result represents the absolute pinnacle of Sophisticated Luxury.

The exterior of the concept car is characterized by a particularly exclusive two-tone paint finish: the upper part and the forged wheels typical of Maybach are finished in dark nautical blue. The lower part and the sides shine in a light, shimmering rose. The sensual and unusual color combination sets the stage for the true showpiece on the automotive catwalk - the interior.

### A bespoke interior inspired by haute couture

The combination of consummate craftsmanship, high-quality materials and extraordinary details creates a new level of exclusivity. The color and material concept is reminiscent of the world of haute couture. The exciting contrast of radiant white and dark nautical blue creates a sensual yet technically modern atmosphere. The seats, the armrests, the lower part of the instrument panel, the steering wheel and the roof lining are upholstered in crystal white nappa leather.

Another highlight is the generous, lacquered trim element on the dashboard support in white chrome look with rose gold-colored flowing lines. It is stylishly framed in rose gold, thus underlining the ultimate luxury of the Concept Mercedes-Maybach Haute Voiture. Further accents in rose gold can be found on the center console and the Mercedes-Maybach badge at the rear. The radiantly bright look is interspersed with nautical blue nappa leather on the window frames and along the belt-line. A special detail is a stylized star pattern in light grey printed on the leather on the instrument panel, doors, headrests and in headliner. It shows the perfect fusion of the traditional material with modern technology. The extravagance of the Concept Mercedes-Maybach Haute Voiture is further emphasized by white faux fur which is used in the door pockets, inlay mats and scatter cushion.