

# Gadkari looks at biofuels to clean up air, save Taj Mahal

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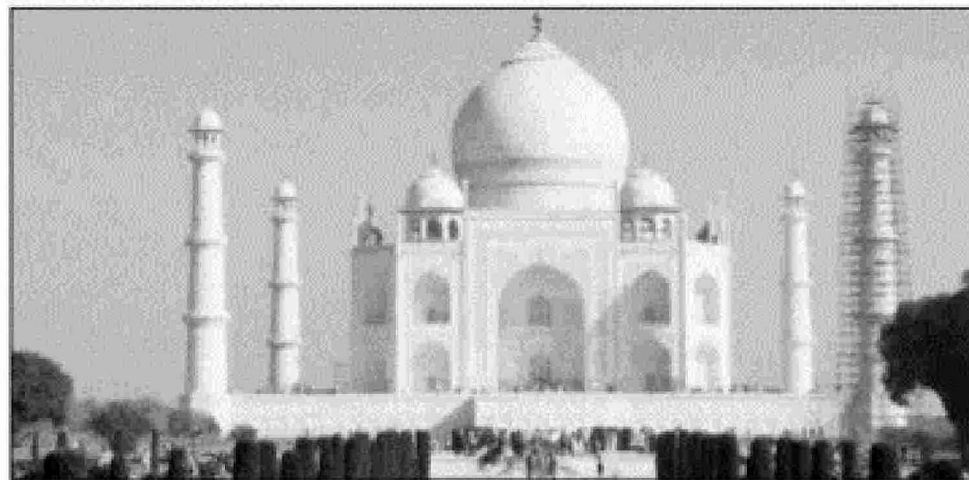
IN AN attempt to address two issues — excess sugar production by farmers in western Uttar Pradesh, and the yellowing of the Taj Mahal due to air pollution — with one solution, the Centre on Monday announced plans to put in place steps to convert Agra into a city that relies only on biofuel.

Sugar output in India reached record levels this year.

“In UP, there is a lot of sugar. So, instead of sugar, ethanol will be produced,” Union Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari said.

Ethanol is produced by fermentation of sugar. “This will be cost-effective, pollution-free and indigenous,” Gadkari said, estimating that 1,000 industrial units will open in the next five years with 1 lakh crore litres of ethanol being produced.

Five days after the Supreme Court told the Centre that the Taj Mahal should either be restored or demolished, three Union min-



**The apex court had told the Centre to either restore the Taj Mahal or demolish it.**

isters and the UP chief minister met on Monday to discuss plans to address pollution sources. Gadkari, who also holds the Water Resources portfolio, said the entire stretch of the Yamuna needs to be cleaned to see the effects in Taj Mahal’s backyard.

He announced 36 projects worth Rs 4,000 crore — of them, detailed projects reports (DPR) will be expedited for 20, he added. Gadkari set a December deadline for putting in place solutions to

address water pollution that affects the monument.

“*Agar Yamuna shudh hogi, toh Ganga shudh hogi* (Ganga will be clean if the Yamuna is cleaned),” he said, announcing several measures for one of the Ganga’s main tributaries stretching from Gurgaon, Delhi, Mathura and Agra. Gadkari said that the DPR has been drawn up for an inland waterway and a river port just behind the Taj. He said there are also plans to set up the world’s biggest

garden, modelled on one in Singapore. He said the Niti Aayog, along with other ministries, will look into the details.

Dismissing previous reports on the state of pollution in Agra city due to industries in neighbouring areas, Gadkari said that an expert committee will be set up under Union Environment Secretary C K Mishra, and will have experts from IITs and NEERI. “There are several industries (units) in neighbouring Rajasthan, and within UP itself. The completely hazardous ones will be definitely shut down, but those that can set standards and bring down their pollution levels will be considered,” he said. The expert committee will look into each unit on a case by case basis, he said.

Union Environment Minister Harsh Vardhan, Culture Minister Mahesh Sharma, Minister of State for HRD and Baghpat MP Satyapal Singh, and UP CM Yogi Adityanath participated in the talks. The discussion will form part of the affidavit submitted in Supreme Court in the next hearing, Gadkari said.