# Currently – 20th November 2026

1. **PM Urges Industry to Increase Wages, Employment and Product Quality — The Hindu — GS III: Economy, Manufacturing, Employment**
2. **Wayanad to Become India's First E-Waste-Free Model District — The Hindu — GS III: Environment, Waste Management**
3. **Rohingya Genocide: ICJ Holds Myanmar Responsible — Associated Press — GS II: International Relations, International Law**
4. **India–Japan Defence Cooperation: Japanese Forces to Train at Indian Firing Ranges — The Hindu — GS II: International Relations | GS III: Defence and Security**
5. **India's Critical Minerals Policy: Moving from Mineral Auctions to Material Security — Source not specified — GS III: Economy, Mining, Critical Minerals**
6. **Graça Machel Receives Indira Gandhi Prize (2025) — The Hindu — GS II: International Relations, Women's Empowerment**
7. **Delhi Launches 'Ehsaas 2026' Policy for Students' Mental Health — The Hindu — GS II: Education, Health, Social Justice**

# PM slams industry leaders over static wages, employment

**T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan**
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday tore into gathered industry leaders on a variety of issues, including the lack of progress in the manufacturing sector, companies' failure to increase employment and wages, the trend of exporters sending their best-quality items out of the country, and industry's lack of preparedness to exploit benefits unleashed by Free Trade Agreements.

"Have you increased the salaries of your employees," he asked them while addressing the inaugural session of FICCI's Annual General Meeting here.

The Congress took Mr. Modi's statements as a sign that he was "nervous and rattled". "For the first time in 12 years, a nervous and rattled PM has pulled up the captains of industry"



Narendra Modi

At the meeting, Mr. Modi voiced several points of criticism against the Indian private sector. One of these pertained to the Make in India mission, aimed at making the country self-reliant. "In 1930, Gandhi came to you and said exactly this," Mr. Modi said. "And even today, after all these years, I have to say the same thing. Is this your success or your failure?"

**Economic strengths**

At the meeting, Mr. Modi

# PM slams industry over static wages, jobs

"Don't take my word for it, at least listen to Gandhi," he exhorted the assembled industry leaders. "He too spoke of Swadeshi, he too spoke of a self-reliant India. And you have completed 100 years, yet things remain exactly where they were!"

**'Tax benefits not passed on'**

The Prime Minister spoke about how this government had reduced corporate taxes to 22% and had ensured that individuals earning up to ₹12 lakh a year did not have to pay income tax.

However, he also castigated the assembled leaders for wanting even more, rather than passing on the benefits. "Have you increased the salaries of your employees," Mr. Modi asked. "Have you increased the number of your employees? No! 'Modi *ji*, you do it, we'll watch'. This is how it will continue."

**Product quality**

The Prime Minister also called on the private sector to improve the quality of products it sells in India, saying that the mindset where 'export quality' denotes high-quality products should change.

"We have our own market of 1.4 billion people, and sometimes I feel that this itself becomes your biggest problem," he said.

"You will have to change your quality," Mr. Modi added. "Do not take our 1.4 billion countrymen

# 1. PM Urges Industry to Increase Wages, Employment and Product Quality

**Source:** The Hindu | **GS III – Indian Economy, Manufacturing, Employment**

**Context:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged Indian industry to translate India's economic growth, tax concessions and expanding trade opportunities into higher wages, employment, better product quality and stronger manufacturing.

## 1. Strengths of the Indian Economy

1. **Economic transformation:** India has moved from the *Fragile Five* to one of the world's fastest-growing major economies.
2. **Economic growth:** Real GDP growth estimated at **7.4% in FY 2025–26** (First Advance Estimates).
3. **Poverty reduction – World Bank (October 2026):**
    - Around **49.6 crore people** moved out of poverty between 2011 and 2023.
    - Poverty at the $4.20/day threshold declined from **57.7% to 16.1%**.
    - Extreme poverty at the $3/day threshold declined from **27.1% to 2.6%** (2021 PPP).
4. **Rising exports:** India's total exports reached approximately **$825.3 billion in FY 2024–25**.
5. **Tax reforms:** Corporate tax reduced to 22% for eligible domestic companies and 15% for eligible new manufacturing companies.
6. **Trade opportunities:** FTAs provide greater access to international markets, investment and global value chains.

## 2. Key Concerns Raised by the PM

### 1. Stagnant Real Wages

- Economic growth has not translated proportionately into workers' purchasing power.
- ICRIER analysis found real urban wages grew at only around **0.5% annually during 2019–2024**.
- CEDA analysis found real daily earnings of factory-floor workers grew by approximately **0.6% annually during 2002–03 to 2021–22**.

### 2. Inadequate Employment Generation

- Industry has not generated employment at the desired scale despite policy and tax benefits.
- India's unemployment rate for persons aged 15 years and above was **3.1% in 2025** (PLFS, usual-status measure).

- Underemployment, informal work and inadequate quality employment remain concerns.

**3. Weak Manufacturing Contribution**

- Manufacturing's share in GDP remains around **13–15%**, below the policy ambition of 25%.
- Indicates the challenge of expanding manufacturing-led growth and large-scale industrial employment.

**4. Limited Pass-through of Corporate Tax Benefits**

- Despite corporate tax reductions, the PM questioned whether companies were translating tax benefits into higher employee salaries and additional jobs.

**5. Product Quality Gap**

- Indian consumers should receive the same quality and safety standards as international consumers; export-quality products should not be treated as superior to domestic products.

**6. Underutilisation of FTAs**

- Limited export readiness, technology adoption and quality competitiveness restrict Indian industries from fully exploiting international market opportunities.

## 3. Way Forward

1. **Employment-intensive growth:** Promote labour-intensive manufacturing, MSMEs and export-oriented sectors.
2. **Better real wages:** Link productivity gains and corporate incentives with improved wages and working conditions.
3. **Manufacturing competitiveness:** Improve technology, infrastructure, research and domestic value addition.
4. **Quality assurance:** Ensure domestic products meet international quality standards.
5. **FTA utilisation:** Strengthen export readiness and integration into global value chains.

## 4. Important Term: Fragile Five

- Coined by Morgan Stanley in 2013 for five emerging economies vulnerable to external financing pressures due to large current account deficits and dependence on foreign capital.
- **Countries:** India, Brazil, Indonesia, Turkey and South Africa.
- India's improved macroeconomic stability and external-sector resilience subsequently strengthened its economic position.

# Wayanad collects nearly 100 tonnes of e-waste, set to earn model district tag

**The Hindu Bureau**
KOZHIKODE

After a month-long intensive campaign, Wayanad will become the first district in India to be officially declared e-waste-free on November 27. Keralam Chief Minister V.D. Satheesan will make the declaration at a function in Kalpetta at 4 p.m.

Agriculture Minister T. Siddique said all local bodies and Haritha Karma Sena members who participated in the e-waste collection drive would be honoured.

Suchitwa Mission district programme officer K. Anoop said Wayanad was set to become India's first e-waste-free model district, a distinction no other district in the country had achieved so far. "This is not merely an achievement for a district in Keralam but a first for the country. Although some model villages have achieved e-waste-free status, no district has so far attained this distinction," he said.



A total of 38.46 metric tonnes of e-waste was collected from the district's 26 local self-government institutions. GETTY IMAGES

Ahead of the declaration, the Suchitwa Mission and the Clean Kerala Company have collected a total of 97.26 tonnes of electronic waste (e-waste) through coordinated efforts.

The Clean Kerala Company directly collected e-waste from government institutions, while the Haritha Karma Sena was tasked with collecting it from households.

A total of 38.46 metric tonnes of e-waste was collected from the district's 26 local self-government institutions, while another 58.8 metric tonnes was collected from various government offices and schools.

## 2. Wayanad: India's First E-Waste-Free Model District

**Source:** The Hindu | **GS III – Environment, Waste Management, Circular Economy**

**Context:** Wayanad, Kerala, is set to become India's first officially declared e-waste-free district on November 27, following a coordinated campaign that collected **97.26 tonnes of electronic waste**.

### 1. Wayanad Model: Collection and Management

- **Total e-waste collected:** 97.26 tonnes.
- **Households:** Collection through Haritha Karma Sena, Kerala's community-based waste-collection workforce.
- **Government institutions and schools:** Collection by Clean Kerala Company.
- **Local participation:** 38.46 tonnes collected from 26 local self-government institutions; another 58.8 tonnes from government offices and schools.
- **Institutional coordination:** Suchitwa Mission and Clean Kerala Company coordinated the campaign.

**Why is it a model for other districts?**

1. Door-to-door household collection.
2. Separate collection channels for institutions and households.
3. Participation of local governments and community-based workers.
4. Organised collection and channelisation for scientific processing and recycling.

## 2. India's E-Waste Generation

- **Global ranking:** India is the world's third-largest e-waste generator, after China and the USA (Global E-waste Monitor 2024, based on 2022 data).
- **India's latest generation:** Approximately **13.98 lakh tonnes in FY 2024–25**, compared with 12.54 lakh tonnes in FY 2023–24 (CPCB).
- Globally, 62 million tonnes of e-waste were generated in 2022, but only **22.3%** was formally collected and recycled.

## 3. Environmental Concerns

1. **Soil and water pollution:** Lead, mercury and cadmium can contaminate soil and groundwater through improper disposal.
2. **Air pollution:** Open burning of electronic components releases toxic fumes and hazardous pollutants.
3. **Human health risks:** Informal dismantling exposes workers to toxic substances, potentially affecting the nervous system, kidneys and respiratory health.
4. **Resource depletion:** Improper disposal leads to the loss of valuable and critical materials such as copper, gold and rare earth elements.
5. **Informal recycling:** Unsafe dismantling and extraction practices increase occupational and environmental hazards.

## 4. Regulatory Framework

- **E-Waste (Management) Rules, 2022:** Effective from 1 April 2023; regulate specified electrical and electronic equipment.
- **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR):** Makes producers responsible for meeting prescribed recycling obligations.
- **Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB):** Registration and monitoring of producers, manufacturers, refurbishers and recyclers through an online portal.

## 5. Way Forward

1. Replicate the Wayanad model through district-level collection drives and local-body participation.
2. Strengthen authorised collection centres and scientific recycling infrastructure.
3. Integrate informal waste workers into the formal recycling ecosystem.
4. Enforce EPR obligations and improve producer accountability.
5. Promote repair, refurbishment, reuse and recycling under the circular economy.

## UPSC Prelims PYQ – 2025 (GS Paper I)

**Consider the following statements:**

Statement I: Circular economy reduces the emissions of greenhouse gases.

Statement II: Circular economy reduces the use of raw materials as inputs.

Statement III: Circular economy reduces wastage in the production process.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

(a) Both Statement II and Statement III are correct and both of them explain Statement I.

(b) Both Statement II and Statement III are correct but only one of them explains Statement I.

(c) Only one of the Statements II and III is correct and that explains Statement I.

(d) Neither Statement II nor Statement III is correct.

**Answer: (a)**

**Explanation:** Circular economy promotes reuse, repair, refurbishment and recycling. It reduces the demand for virgin raw materials and production waste, thereby lowering resource extraction, energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

# Myanmar guilty of Rohingya genocide: ICJ

The court finds that Myanmar's security forces killed thousands of Rohingya civilians, carried out sexual assaults and acts of extreme violence against children, and attacked fleeing Rohingya; the panel rejects Myanmar's claim that the 2017 operation was a legitimate counter-insurgency campaign

Associated Press
THE HAGUE

In a landmark judgment, the United Nations' top court ruled on Thursday that Myanmar committed genocide against the Rohingya minority in a brutal 2017 military operation and ordered the Southeast Asian nation to allow people who fled the violence to return home.

International Court of Justice (ICJ) President Yuji Iwasawa said the court, in a 9-6 decision, found that Myanmar "has committed genocide against the Rohingya group in northern Rakhine State, in violation of its obligations under the Genocide Convention".

The 15-judge panel of the World Court, which included Navi Pillay, the respected international jurist who won the Nobel Peace Prize last month, rejected Myanmar's defence that the 2017 campaign was a legitimate operation against insurgents.

Mr. Iwasawa said that "the court finds that Myanmar's security forces killed thousands of Rohingya civilians, perpetrated widespread acts of sexual violence, as well as acts of extreme violence against children, and attacked fleeing Rohingya as they sought to flee in large numbers".

The decision marks the first time the court has ruled that a state committed genocide and comes as the World Court also is handling genocide allegations linked to the Gaza conflict and the war in Ukraine.



Rohingya refugees look through a metal net as they watch the live announcement of ICJ verdict, in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. REUTERS

There was no immediate reaction from the Myanmar delegation in The Hague or from the government in Myanmar.

The court also ordered Myanmar to commit to reparations including allowing Rohingya "safe, voluntary and dignified return to their place of residence". It ordered Myanmar to investigate, prosecute and punish people found to have committed genocidal acts and to pay compensation to Rohingya. The amount will be decided in later court proceedings.

An umbrella organisation of Myanmar opposition groups said in a statement that "the struggle for justice will continue, and this judgment must now be enforced," calling on the international community to ensure it is fully implemented.

The court's rulings are final and legally binding, but it has no way to enforce them beyond reporting non-compliance to the UN Security Council.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called the ruling "a demonstration of international justice and a reaffirmation that impunity for such horrific acts must not stand".

Shortly after the ruling was read, U.K. Foreign Secretary Ed Miliband said his government was expelling Myanmar's defence attache from the U.K..

In August 2017, Myanmar's military launched what it called a clearance campaign in Rakhine State in response to an attack by a Rohingya insurgent group. The campaign led to accusations that security forces committed mass rapes and killings and burned thousands of homes.

The court said that evidence showed Myanmar forces killed about 10,000 Rohingya.

About 1.2 million Rohingya refugees now live in Bangladesh, primarily in crowded camps across Cox's Bazar district, where they endure harsh conditions.

# 3. Rohingya Genocide: ICJ Holds Myanmar Responsible for Violating Genocide Convention

**Source:** Associated Press | **GS II – International Relations, International Law, Human Rights**

**Context:** The International Court of Justice (ICJ), by a **9–6 majority**, ruled that Myanmar committed genocide against the Rohingya minority in northern Rakhine State during the 2017 military operation, violating its obligations under the Genocide Convention.

## 1. Rohingya Crisis: Background

- **Rohingya:** A Muslim ethnic minority predominantly residing in Myanmar's Rakhine State.
- In August 2017, Myanmar's military launched a *clearance operation* following attacks by a Rohingya insurgent group.
- The operation involved mass killings, sexual violence, attacks on children and destruction of homes.
- Approximately **10,000 Rohingya were killed**, while around **1.2 million refugees** now live in Bangladesh, mainly in Cox's Bazar.

## 2. ICJ Judgment: Key Findings

- The ICJ held Myanmar responsible for genocide against the Rohingya.
- Rejected Myanmar's argument that the 2017 operation was merely a legitimate counter-insurgency campaign.
- Found evidence of killings, widespread sexual violence and extreme violence against civilians, including children.
- Directed Myanmar to investigate, prosecute and punish those responsible.
- Ordered reparations, including compensation to victims; the amount will be determined in subsequent proceedings.
- The judgment is **final and legally binding** on Myanmar.

## 3. Legal Basis: Genocide Convention, 1948

- Adopted by the United Nations in 1948; entered into force in 1951.
- Defines genocide as acts committed with the **intent to destroy, wholly or partly, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group**.
- Prohibits genocide and obligates states to prevent and punish it.
- Myanmar is a party to the Convention.

## 4. International Court of Justice (ICJ): Role

- Established in **1945** under the UN Charter; principal judicial organ of the United Nations.

- **Headquarters:** The Hague, Netherlands.
- **Composition:** 15 judges elected for nine-year terms by the UN General Assembly and Security Council.
- **Jurisdiction:** Settles legal disputes between states and provides advisory opinions to authorised UN bodies.
- Only states can be parties in contentious cases; the ICJ determines state responsibility, not the criminal guilt of individual military personnel.
- Under **Article 94 of the UN Charter**, the UN Security Council may be approached if a state fails to comply with an ICJ judgment.

## 5. Significance

1. **State accountability:** Establishes that states can be held responsible for genocide under international law.
2. **Minority protection:** Reinforces international obligations to protect vulnerable ethnic and religious communities.
3. **International justice:** Strengthens the role of the ICJ and the Genocide Convention in addressing mass atrocities.
4. **Refugee rehabilitation:** Reinforces the need for safe, voluntary and dignified repatriation of Rohingya refugees to Myanmar.

# In a first, Japanese forces to train in Indian firing ranges

Foreign and Defence Ministers of the two countries hold '2+2' dialogue in Tokyo; both sides indicate forward movement in India receiving UNICORN naval radar system from Japan

**Saurabh Trivedi**
**Kallol Bhattacherjee**
NEW DELHI

India and Japan on Thursday held a '2+2' Foreign and Defence Ministers' dialogue in Tokyo, where both sides welcomed the signing of a Letter of Intent (LoI) that will, for the first time, allow Japan's Self-Defence Forces to use Indian test ranges for "live-fire training..., including those involving surface-to-ship missiles".

The two sides also indicated forward movement towards India receiving the Unified Complex Radio Antenna, or UNICORN, naval radar system from Japan, and discussed the ongoing revisions in Japan's national security and defence policies.

"They welcomed the signing of LOI toward the utilisation of firing ranges in India, whereby Japan Self-Defence Forces would, for the first time, conduct live-fire training etc., including those involving surface-to-ship missiles, at firing ranges in India," said a joint statement that also announced that the two sides will deepen security and defence cooperation and hold "bilateral and multilateral exercises at short notice".

The Ministers also planned a dialogue and tabletop exercise (TTX) involving the consular authorities of India and Japan to help in cases where evacuation of Indian and Japanese nationals would be required.



**Closer ties:** Defence Minister Rajnath Singh with his Japanese counterpart, Shinjiro Koizumi, in Tokyo on Thursday. X/PTI

The two-plus-two dialogue featured Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and their Japanese counterparts, Toshimitsu Motegi and Shinjiro Koizumi. The Japanese side "explained the ongoing efforts to revise Japan's National Security Strategy, National Defence Strategy and Defence Buildup Program".

The current government in Japan, led by Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, is carrying out several reforms in the country's strategic and security culture in view of the ongoing wars in West Asia and Ukraine, as well as global trends.

Following the meeting, Mr. Jaishankar said, "Reviewed the entire gamut of our bilateral cooperation, focusing on strengthening economic security and deepening G2G, B2B and P2P linkages. Our discussions also covered challenges and opportunities in the Indo-Pacific, regional hotspots, global issues, and multilateral cooperation."

The joint statement said the Ministers discussed the UNICORN naval radar system that Japan has proposed for India, and added that an "early formulation" of "Acceptance of Necessity" by February of next year is on track.

**Further collaborations**

The two sides also discussed enhancing "mine countermeasures capabilities" and "joint development in naval ship building and design".

"They welcomed the expanding cooperation between the two countries' coast guards, including the 5th Coast Guard Global Summit (CGGS) to be held in India in February 2027, a framework which was initiated by the Japan Coast Guard," the statement said.

The Ministers also agreed to deepen information-sharing arrangements between the Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force and the Indian Navy. Welcoming the participation of both countries in the Malabar 2026 multilateral naval exercise and the Japan-India Maritime Exercise (JAIMEX 2026), held in Japan this month, the two sides agreed to expand joint exercises and exchanges between their Special Operations Forces.

Further, they agreed to advance collaboration between the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Japan's Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Agency (ATLA) in advanced missile and defence technologies. They also agreed to promote cooperation in 'air domain awareness' and expand multilateral defence engagement in the Indo-Pacific.

In an interview with *The Japan News,* Mr. Jaishankar said that Japan and India, alongside 'Quad' partners United States and Australia, would advance a free Indo-Pacific through "practical cooperation".

# 4. India–Japan Defence Cooperation: Japanese Forces to Train at Indian Firing Ranges

**Source:** The Hindu | **GS II – International Relations, India–Japan Relations | GS III – Defence and Security**

**Context:** India and Japan held a **2+2 Foreign and Defence Ministers' Dialogue in Tokyo**, agreeing to deepen defence cooperation, military exercises, technology sharing and Indo-Pacific security.

## 1. Major Outcomes of the 2+2 Dialogue

1. **Joint Military Training:** Japan's Self-Defence Forces will use Indian firing ranges for live-fire training, including surface-to-ship missile exercises, for the first time.
2. **UNICORN Naval Radar:** Progress towards Japan supplying India with its Unified Complex Radio Antenna (UNICORN) naval radar system.
3. **Defence Technology:** Cooperation between India's DRDO and Japan's Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Agency (ATLA) in advanced missile and defence technologies.
4. **Maritime Security:** Greater information-sharing between the Indian Navy and Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force.
5. **Military Exercises:** Expand bilateral and multilateral exercises, including Malabar 2026 and JIMEX 2026.
6. **Coast Guard Cooperation:** The 5th Coast Guard Global Summit will be held in India in February 2027.

## 2. Other Areas of Cooperation

- **Mine Countermeasures:** Enhance joint capabilities and cooperation.
- **Naval Shipbuilding:** Explore joint development in naval shipbuilding and design.
- **Air Domain Awareness:** Strengthen information-sharing and monitoring.
- **Consular Cooperation:** Prepare for evacuation of Indian and Japanese nationals during emergencies.
- **Economic and Strategic Cooperation:** Deepen government-to-government and business-to-business partnerships.

## 3. Strategic Significance for India

1. **Indo-Pacific security:** Strengthens cooperation for a free, open and rules-based Indo-Pacific.
2. **Defence modernisation:** Facilitates access to advanced Japanese defence technology and expertise.
3. **Maritime security:** Enhances surveillance, naval interoperability and protection of sea lanes.

4. **Strategic balancing:** Strengthens India's partnerships with Japan, the United States and Australia through the Quad.
5. **Defence self-reliance:** Joint research, development and manufacturing can support India's defence industrial ecosystem.

## 4. Important Diplomatic Frameworks

### A. India–Japan 2+2 Dialogue

- Involves the Foreign and Defence Ministers of both countries.
- **Initiated in 2019**, with the first meeting held in November 2019 in New Delhi.
- Provides a platform for discussing strategic, defence and security cooperation.

### B. India–Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership

- Established in **2014**, elevating bilateral relations beyond a conventional strategic partnership.
- Covers defence, economic cooperation, infrastructure, technology and Indo-Pacific security.

# *India's minerals policy needs to move to material security*



**Rohan Gupta**
Co-founder and COO, Attero

One can auction a lithium block in a day. Turning what lies beneath it into a resource that Indian battery manufacturers can use is an entirely different story. Bridging that gap between a resource and a usable supply will shape the next phase of India's critical minerals policy.

In the last two years, the government moved the sector up on their policy agenda. The National Critical Mineral Mission was allocated ₹34,300 crore for a seven-year program covering exploration, mining and processing of critical minerals and materials. The amended mining law enables the government to auction blocks of 24 critical minerals; more blocks are expected to be auctioned before 2031.

The government's intent is justified. There is a growing global reliance on minerals such as lithium, cobalt, nickel and rare earth elements for Electric Vehicles (EVs), batteries, electronic devices, renewable energy and strategic industries. Without the secure supply of these critical minerals, India cannot implement its ambitious manufacturing plans. However, the real question is, will having mines ensure the supply of materials?

**Beyond the auctions**

Mining a block is just the beginning. The minerals have to be extracted and processed for industry use. Often, that requires high end beneficiation (treatment of raw ore or material to remove impurities) and refining. Having mines does not mean having the materials. India is particularly vulnerable because it still imports most of its critical and processed materials.

China's case clarifies this point. It has gained control over critical mineral supply chains because of its ability to process and refine minerals at scale, not just because of its dominance in mining.

It is one thing to successfully auction mineral blocks and meet exploration targets; it is another to refine the materials and provide a steady supply of industrial material

India could have vast untapped mineral resources, and still be heavily reliant on imports for critical minerals. This happens when a country does not develop the required capacities for mineral processing in conjunction with mining. This is why some aspects of the National Critical Mineral Mission, that are relatively less known, may ultimately be more important than the schedule for mineral auctions.

It takes time to set up new mines. Several challenges such as environmental concerns, land acquisitions, and limited mining and processing infrastructure can delay the opening of new mines and processing facilities. One cannot choose between mining and processing. Both need to happen simultaneously.

**Tapping the recycling industry**

The same is true for recycling. One of the schemes under the Critical Minerals Mission has a target of recycling 400 kilotonnes of critical minerals from tailings, fly ash and red mud, as well as from end-of-life products by 2031 with a monetary allocation of ₹1,500 crore. This is only a small fraction of India's requirement of critical minerals but that is not the point. Recycling critical minerals can be a quicker option than new mines.

There are several factors that have the potential to impact the nation's minerals security. For example, e-waste production in India is already large, and is only expected to increase. According to Redseer, India produced 3.8 million metric tonnes of e-waste in 2024, and the situation will only become more acute. The growth in the battery storage and EV sectors will also increase the supply of materials for recycling.

Collection and traceability will be the larger challenges. Currently, the scrap economy is largely fragmented. For recovered minerals to be reliable inputs to industry, recyclers must have predictable access to waste, and manufacturers must have confidence in the quality and consistency of the material they purchase.

**Stockpiling not a long-term plan**

The proposal for a national stockpile of selected critical minerals is another important part of the emerging strategy. Recent restrictions on the export of minerals have illustrated the rapid and unanticipated changes in supply. While a strategic reserve of minerals can lessen the impact of short-term disruptions, simply stockpiling minerals is not a strategy.

There will need to be decisions on what to stock, and what the target inventory levels will be. These challenges will become more pertinent as changes in technology impact the minerals that will be most strategically important.

There is little doubt India has made a considerable effort in a short amount of time. A few years ago, there was very little policy focus on critical minerals. Today, there is increased focus and support for policy and financial and institutional frameworks for critical minerals recycling, processing and imports.

The challenging part, now, will be implementing these policies.

It is one thing to successfully auction mineral blocks and meet exploration targets; it is another to refine the materials and provide a steady supply of industrial material through recycling. India's mineral strategy in the coming decade will likely revolve around the response to these challenges rather than the number of mineral blocks sold at auctions.

India has initiated steps to ensure access to a robust mineral resource base. Now, the next big step will be to transform those mineral resources into materials that the Indian industry needs. The big challenge that India is still facing is to evolve from mineral block auctions to material security.

# 5. India’s Critical Minerals Policy: Moving from Mineral Auctions to Material Security

**Source:** Newspaper clipping | **GS III – Indian Economy, Mining, Critical Minerals, Energy Security**

**Context:** India’s critical minerals policy must move beyond auctioning mineral blocks towards developing the entire supply chain, including exploration, mining, processing, refining and recycling, to ensure a reliable supply of industrial materials.

## 1. India’s Critical Mineral Strategy

- **National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM):** Approved with an outlay of **₹34,300 crore over seven years**, covering exploration, mining, processing and recycling.
- The amended mining law enables the auction of blocks containing **24 critical and strategic minerals** by the Central Government.
- More mineral blocks are expected to be auctioned before 2031.
- Critical minerals such as lithium, cobalt, nickel and rare earth elements are essential for electric vehicles, batteries, electronics, renewable energy and defence industries.

## 2. Major Challenges: Beyond Mineral Auctions

1. **Processing and refining gap:** Mining alone does not ensure usable materials. Minerals require advanced processing and refining; India remains heavily dependent on imports for several processed critical minerals.
2. **Infrastructure constraints:** New mines and processing facilities face delays due to land acquisition, environmental clearances and inadequate infrastructure.
3. **Recycling limitations:** India has a fragmented scrap-recycling ecosystem. The NCMM targets recycling **4 lakh tonnes of critical minerals by 2031**, with a proposed incentive outlay of ₹1,500 crore.
4. **E-waste management:** India generated approximately **3.8 million tonnes of e-waste in 2024**, according to the article’s cited estimate. E-waste can provide a secondary source of valuable minerals, but collection, traceability and organised recycling remain challenges.
5. **Supply-chain dependence:** China’s dominance in mineral processing and refining exposes India to export restrictions and geopolitical disruptions.

## 3. Policy Priorities for Material Security

1. **Develop processing capacity:** Build domestic refining and mineral-processing facilities alongside mining operations.
2. **Promote recycling:** Recover critical minerals from e-waste, mine tailings, fly ash and industrial waste.

3. **Ensure material quality:** Provide manufacturers with consistent, reliable and predictable supplies of processed minerals.
4. **Strategic stockpiling:** Maintain selective reserves of critical minerals to manage short-term supply disruptions; stockpiling alone cannot replace domestic production and processing.
5. **Strengthen the supply chain:** Combine domestic exploration with overseas mineral partnerships and diversified imports.

## 4. Significance for India

- **Energy security:** Ensures supplies for electric vehicles, batteries and renewable energy.
- **Industrial self-reliance:** Reduces import dependence and strengthens domestic manufacturing.
- **Strategic autonomy:** Minimises vulnerability to geopolitical restrictions and supply-chain disruptions.
- **Circular economy:** Converts discarded products and industrial waste into valuable secondary resources.

## UPSC Prelims PYQ – 2025 (GS Paper I)

**Consider the following statements:**

I. India has joined the Minerals Security Partnership as a member.

II. India is a resource-rich country in all the 30 critical minerals that it has identified.

III. Parliament in 2023 amended the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957, empowering the Central Government to exclusively auction mining leases and composite licences for certain critical minerals.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

(a) I and II only
(b) II and III only
(c) I and III only
(d) I, II and III

**Answer: (c) I and III only.**

- India joined the Minerals Security Partnership in June 2023.
- India is not resource-rich in all 30 identified critical minerals.
- The 2023 amendment empowered the Central Government to auction mining leases and composite licences for specified critical and strategic minerals.

# Women's rights advocate Graca Machel receives Indira Gandhi peace prize

**The Hindu Bureau**
NEW DELHI

Mozambican politician and women's rights advocate Graca Machel was conferred the 2025 Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development on Thursday, coinciding with the former Prime Minister's 109th birth anniversary.

Sonia Gandhi, who heads the Indira Gandhi Memorial Trust, presented the award, which comprised a citation and a cash prize of ₹1 crore.

Ms. Gandhi said Ms. Machel's life and work reflected Indira Gandhi's ideals, particularly the commitment to social justice, human dignity and equality. Both Indira Gandhi and Ms. Machel believed in people's power to shape their own futures, she said.

Their lives, Ms. Gandhi noted, demonstrated that leadership was measured by the courage to challenge injustice and the commitment to bring about change. Tracing Ms. Machel's journey from Mozambique's liberation struggle to her work on women's and children's rights, Ms. Gandhi recalled that Ms. Machel became the country's first Minister of Education after it gained independence in 1975. During her tenure, school participation rose from 40% to over 90% among boys and 75% among girls.



**Much deserved:** Senior Congress leader Sonia Gandhi presenting the Indira Gandhi Prize for 2025 to Graca Machel. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Ms. Machel was also the wife of Mozambique's first President, Samora Machel, serving as First Lady until his death in 1986. In 1998, she married former South African President Nelson Mandela, becoming the only woman to have been First Lady of two countries.

Ms. Gandhi also referred to Ms. Machel's landmark 1996 United Nations report on the impact of armed conflict on children, which helped shape the international response to the suffering of children in conflict zones.

In her acceptance speech, Ms. Machel said India and Africa shared a legacy that needed to be carried forward. "Our lives and our families have been connected across generations, through shared convictions, public service, friendship, and profound personal loss," she said.

Ms. Machel said the next chapter of India-Africa relations should be written not merely in the language of trade and diplomacy but in that of "human possibility".

# 6. Graça Machel Receives Indira Gandhi Prize (2025)

**Source:** The Hindu | **GS II – International Relations, Women's Empowerment, International Awards**

**Context:** Mozambican politician and women's rights advocate **Graça Machel** received the 2025 Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development for her contributions to women's empowerment, education and children's rights.

## 1. About Graça Machel

- Mozambican politician and humanitarian.
- Became Mozambique's first **Minister of Education in 1975** after independence.
- Worked extensively for women's empowerment, children's rights and protection of children affected by armed conflicts.
- Was married to Mozambique's first President, Samora Machel, and later to South African President Nelson Mandela.

## 2. Indira Gandhi Prize

- **Established:** 1985.
- **Awarded by:** Indira Gandhi Memorial Trust.
- Recognises contributions to international peace, disarmament, development and human welfare.
- **Award:** ₹1 crore and citation.
- **2025 recipient:** Graça Machel (Mozambique).

## 3. Difference Between Indira Gandhi Prize and Gandhi Peace Prize

| Basis | Indira Gandhi Prize | Gandhi Peace Prize |
|---|---|---|
| Established | 1985 | 1995 |
| Awarded by | Indira Gandhi Memorial Trust | Government of India |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Focus | Peace, disarmament and development | Gandhian ideals of truth, non-violence and social transformation |
| Latest relevant recipient | Graça Machel (2025) | Gita Press, Gorakhpur (2021 award, announced in 2023) |
| Award amount | ₹1 crore | ₹1 crore |

## UPSC Prelims PYQ – 2025

**Who among the following are members of the jury to select the recipient of the Gandhi Peace Prize?**

I. President of India
II. Prime Minister of India
III. Chief Justice of India
IV. Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha

(a) II and IV only
(b) I, II and III
(c) II, III and IV
(d) I and III only

**Answer: (c) II, III and IV**

# Delhi rolls out 'Ehsaas 2026' policy to support students' mental health

One counsellor for every 500 students; district well-being centres to provide psychological assessments, therapeutic interventions and psychiatric consultations; teachers and parents will be trained to identify early behavioural changes

**The Hindu Bureau**
NEW DELHI

The Delhi government on Thursday launched the 'Ehsaas 2026' Mental Health and Well-Being Policy for schools and higher educational institutions, with a provision for one counsellor for every 500 students, helplines and mental health support services.

Lieutenant-Governor (L-G) Taranjit Singh Sandhu, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, Art of Living founder Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, and Environment Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa were present at the launch.

The policy aims to promote mental health awareness and address issues such as academic stress, anxiety, depression and digital behaviour, while supporting students preparing for board and entrance examinations, according to the Chief Minister's Office.



(From left) Minister Ashish Sood, L-G Taranjit Singh Sandhu, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, CM Rekha Gupta, and Manjinder Singh Sirsa during the launch of 'Ehsaas 2026' on Thursday. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

The L-G said mental health and emotional well-being must be integral to education, adding that every child should receive equal opportunities, acceptance and support, irrespective of their background, abilities or circumstances. He said responsibility for students' mental health rested with teachers, parents, and the school management.

Ms. Gupta said 'Ehsaas' would give millions of students studying in Delhi's schools and colleges an opportunity to move forward with greater mental and emotional resilience.

"The Delhi government wants every child to progress in life with happiness, positivity and confidence," she said.

**Specialised care**

According to an official statement, students will have access to specialised mental health services through district well-being centres. These centres will provide psychological assessments, therapeutic interventions, and psychiatric consultations.

Education Minister Ashish Sood said the government began working on the policy after a student attempted self-harm a few days ago, following discussions with school principals and mental health experts. Mr. Sood thanked the Art of Living, the Institute of Human Behaviour and Allied Sciences and other expert institutions for helping develop the policy, and said teachers, parents, principals, Educational and Vocational Guidance Counsellors, officials and support staff would be trained to identify early behavioural changes in children and respond sensitively.

The 'Ehsaas' policy rests on four pillars: a whole-institution approach to mental health, preventive care through early identification and resilience-building, institutional accountability through staff training, and rights-based support to protect students' dignity, privacy and autonomy.

## 7. Delhi Launches 'Ehsaas 2026' Policy for Students' Mental Health

**Source:** The Hindu | **GS II – Education, Health, Social Justice**

**Context:** The Delhi Government launched the **Ehsaas 2026 Mental Health and Well-Being Policy** for schools and higher educational institutions to address student stress, anxiety, depression and other mental health concerns.

### 1. Key Provisions

1. **Counsellor Availability:** One counsellor for every **500 students**.
2. **District Well-being Centres:** Psychological assessments, therapeutic interventions and psychiatric consultations.
3. **Early Identification:** Teachers, parents, principals and support staff will be trained to identify behavioural changes and respond sensitively.
4. **Helplines:** Mental health support services and access to assistance for students.

5. **Examination Support:** Special attention to students experiencing stress while preparing for board and entrance examinations.

## 2. Four Pillars of the Policy

1. **Whole-institution approach:** Integrating mental health support into schools and colleges.
2. **Preventive care:** Early identification of psychological distress and resilience-building.
3. **Institutional accountability:** Training teachers and staff to recognise and address mental health concerns.
4. **Rights-based support:** Protecting students' dignity, privacy and autonomy.

## 3. Significance

- **Student well-being:** Addresses academic stress, anxiety and depression.
- **Early intervention:** Helps identify mental health concerns before they become severe.
- **Inclusive education:** Ensures students receive support irrespective of their background or circumstances.
- **Safe learning environment:** Promotes emotional resilience, confidence and better educational outcomes.
- **Institutional responsibility:** Makes mental health support a shared responsibility of schools, parents and educational authorities.