

Cabinet Approves Incentive Scheme to Promote Critical Mineral Recycling

Scheme is part of the **National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM)**.

- Recycling of critical minerals aims to ensure **near-term supply chain sustainability**, given the long gestation period for new mining operations.

Key features of the scheme

- **Financial Outlay:** ₹1,500 crore
- **Tenure:** Six years, from FY 2025-26 to FY 2030-31
- **Eligible Feedstock:** Includes **e-waste, Lithium-Ion Battery (LIB) scrap**, and other scraps such as catalytic converters from end-of-life vehicles.
- **Beneficiaries:** Both **large and small/new recyclers** (including start-ups), with one-third of the outlay for small entities.
- **Incentive Mechanism:**
 - ⊕ **20% capital expenditure (capex) subsidy** on plant and machinery for timely production.
 - ⊕ **Operational expenditure (opex) subsidy on incremental sales:** 40% in the 2nd year and 60% in the 5th year (FY 2026-27 to FY 2030-31).
- **Incentive Ceilings:** Total incentives capped at **₹50 crore for large entities** and **₹25 crore for small entities**.
- **Expected Outcomes:**
 - ⊕ Projected to develop **270 kilotons of annual recycling capacity**, resulting in **40 kilotons of annual critical mineral production**,
 - ⊕ Attracting **₹8,000 crore in investment**, and
 - ⊕ Creating **70,000 direct and indirect jobs**.

National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM)

- NCMM from FY 2024-25 to FY 2030-31 aims to **secure India's critical mineral supply chain** by ensuring mineral availability from domestic and foreign sources.
- The NCMM **encompasses all stages of the value chain**, including mineral exploration, mining, beneficiation, processing, and recovery from end-of-life products.

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change Notifies Environment Audit Rules, 2025

These rules create a **formal framework for environmental auditing across the country** aimed at **enhancing environmental compliance monitoring** & ease of doing business across India.

Main Features of Environment Audit Rules, 2025

- **Environment Audit Designate Agency (EADA):** EADA's responsibilities include certification, registration, oversight, and training of auditors.
- **Registered Environment Auditors (EAs):** Auditing to be undertaken only by REAs.
 - ⊕ The certification of Environmental Auditors will be based on either scrutiny of their qualification and experience or by **conducting an exam**.
 - ⊕ REAs are assigned **using a random assignment method** to **ensure impartiality**.
- **Responsibilities of REAs:** Sampling, analysis, compensation calculation, verification under Green Credit Rules, audit under waste management rules and under **various other environment and forest related legislations**.
- **Two-Tiered System:**
 - ⊕ **Tier-1:** Comprises existing government regulator-based review of compliance by agencies like CPCB, SPCBs, and ministry regional offices.
 - ⊕ **Tier-2:** Involves an environment auditor-based mechanism.
- **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change:** Oversees implementation of Rules and issues necessary guidelines
- **CPCB/SPCB/ROs:** Continue inspection and verification roles, assist MoEFCC in Rules implementation.
- **Oversight Mechanism:** A Steering Committee, led by an Additional Secretary from MoEFCC, monitors progress and suggests reforms.

Guidelines for Co-location of Anganwadi Centres(AWCs) with Schools released

The guidelines launched by the **Ministry of Education in collaboration with the Ministry of Women & Child Development** to align with the vision of **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**.

- **NEP 2020** recognizes **Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)** as the foundation of the learning continuum by integrating three years of pre-school into the 5+3+3+4 structure.
- **Objectives of Co-location:**
 - ⊕ **To ensure school preparedness and smooth transition** of children from Anganwadi Centers (AWCs) to Grade 1 in primary schools.
 - ⊕ **Facilitates better utilization of infrastructure, enhances school readiness**, and strengthens convergence between the education and nutrition sectors.
 - ⊕ **Enhance learning and developmental outcomes.**
- **Current Status:** Over 14 lakh AWCs and in **9.16 lakh schools** with Grade 1, **2.9 lakh** AWCs are already co-located.
- **Recommendations:**
 - ⊕ **Co-located schools** should not exceed **500 meters in urban areas** and **1 km in rural areas**.
 - ⊕ **Prioritize co-location of those AWCs** where most of the children belong to marginalized groups (economically weaker sections, tribal areas, and migrant families).
 - ⊕ **Co-location may preferably** be considered in schools with Grade 1 that do not have an existing Balvatika/pre-primary class.
 - ⊕ Co-located AWCs should have **separate entry and exit gates**.

Initiatives for Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)

- **The Anganwadi services:** Implemented under the **Mission Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0**.
 - ⊕ **It provides a comprehensive package of 6 services:** Supplementary Nutrition, Pre-school Non-formal Education, Nutrition and Health Education, Immunization, Health Check-ups, and Referral Services.
- **Pre-school Education facilities in Government Schools:** Framework for Samagra Shiksha made budgetary provision for adding **pre-school classes** in school and strengthening of AWCs located within school premises.

The Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council Approves Next generation GST Reforms

The 56th meeting of the GST Council recommended several key changes in the GST framework aimed at lowering the tax burden on common people.

Key Reforms Approved

- **Two-rate tax Slab Structure:** GST rationalized into **5% (merit rate)** and **18% (standard rate)**. The 12% and 28% slabs are scrapped. (With effect from 22nd September 2025)
- **Cheaper Daily Essentials:** **Zero GST on milk, paneer, chapati, paratha; 5% on toiletries, medicines, bicycles, farm tools.**
- **Relief on Consumer Goods:** **Small cars, TVs, ACs, and home appliances** moved from 28% to 18%.
- **Insurance & Health:** GST Exemptions on All life insurance policies & health insurance policies.
- **Higher Tax on Sin Goods:** **Tobacco, luxury cars, and aerated drinks** are now taxed at 40%.
- **Support for Key Economic Sectors:**
 - ⊕ Reduced GST on Agricultural machinery and Fertilizer sector, renewable Energy devices and automobile structure.
 - ⊕ Correction of inverted duty structure on manmade fiber and manmade yarn.
- **Institutional Reforms:** Operationalization of **Goods and Services Tax Appellate Tribunal (GSTAT)** for faster resolution of cases.



About GST Council

- Constitutional body established under **Article 279 (A) of Constitution through 101st Constitutional Amendment Act, 2016**.
- Constituted by the **President with the Union Finance Minister as Chairperson**.
- **Objective:** Responsible for setting tax rates, making policy decisions related to GST and making recommendations to the center and states.

200th Birth Anniversary of Dadabhai Naoroji

Dadabhai Naoroji also known as the "**Grand Old Man of India**" and "**official Ambassador of India**" was an Indian Parsi scholar, trader and politician.

- He was a founding member and thrice **president of the Indian National Congress** (in 1886, 1893, and 1906).

Key Contributions of Dadabhai Naoroji (1825–1917)

➤ Social Reform

- ⊖ **Promoted Women's Education:** Founded **Literary and Scientific Society (1848)** which established 6 schools for girls by 1849.
- ⊖ **Spread reformist ideas:** Founded **Rast Goftar newspaper**, Co-founded **Rahnumai Mazdayasan Sabha (1851)** to reform Parsi society.

➤ Economic Contributions

- ⊖ **Drain of Wealth Theory:** Highlighted how British policies drained India's wealth through taxation, salaries, pensions, and remittances.
- ⊖ **Major Literary works:** Poverty of India (1876), Poverty and Un-British Rule in India (1901)
- ⊖ **Exposed colonial exploitation at forums** like East India Association.

➤ Political Contributions

- ⊖ **Moderate leader:** Advocated **constitutional and peaceful methods** like petitions, prayers, and protests.
 - ◆ Founded the **London Indian Society** in 1865 and the **East India Association** in 1866,
 - ⊖ **First Indian MP in British Parliament:** Elected for the Liberal Party in Finsbury Central in the 1892 general election.
 - ⊖ **Declared Swaraj (self-government):** As concrete political goal of the Indian National Congress (INC) in 1906.
- **Mentorship:** Naoroji played a crucial role in **mentoring future INC leaders** such as Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, and Mahatma Gandhi.

Also in News



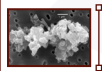
Equity Derivatives

SEBI has introduced a new framework **to monitor intraday positions in equity index derivatives**.

- Effective from October 1, the net intraday position is capped at **5,000 crore rupees** per entity in index options to curb risks.

About Equity Derivatives

- **A Derivative** is a financial instrument whose value is derived from the value of an underlying asset.
 - ⊖ The underlying asset can be **equity shares** or index, precious metals, commodities, currencies, interest rates, etc.
- Equity Derivatives are instruments **whose values are partly derived from one or more underlying equity asset class**.
 - ⊖ Futures and Options are the most commonly-traded equity derivatives products.



Interstellar Dust Grain

Researchers have found evidence that **interstellar dust grains align with magnetic fields** in the milky way.

About Interstellar Dust Grain

- Interstellar dust **grains are formed in the cool outer layers of stars like red giants**.
- They are released into space through **radiation pressure, stellar winds, or stellar explosions**.
- **Composition:** Amorphous silicate grains and carbonaceous materials.
- **Role in Star Formation:** In star formation, interstellar dust cools and shields the molecular cloud, making it cold and dense enough for gravity to collapse it into stars.



Indian Rosewood (or Dalbergia latifolia)

A study found **Tamil Nadu has the lowest density of rosewood tree population** in south India.

About Indian Rosewood

- It is predominantly a **single-stemmed deciduous tree** with a dome shaped crown of lush green foliage, which on wet sites are not shed.
- **The bark is gray**, thin with irregular short cracks, exfoliating in fibrous longitudinal flakes.
- **Mean annual rainfall:** 750-5000 mm
- **Soil type:** Laterite, alluvial, black cotton soils, etc.
- **Native:** India, Indonesia.
- **Exotic:** Kenya, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Nigeria, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Vietnam.
- **Uses:** Apiculture, Timber, Medicines (diarrhoea, worms, indigestion, and leprosy).



Operation Black Forest

'Operation Black Forest' is the **biggest Anti-Naxal operation** ever conducted on **Karregutta hill** situated along the **Chhattisgarh-Telangana border**.

Other Anti-Naxal mission

- **Mission Sankalp:** Launched on sprawling hills of Karregutta and adjoining hills along the Chhattisgarh-Telangana border.
- **Operation Green Hunt:** Began in late 2009. It takes place across five states - West Bengal, Jharkhand, Bihar, Orissa and Chhattisgarh.



Coffee

Karnataka's coffee belt (**Chikmagalur, Coorg, and Hassan**) has been hit by prolonged rains and cold, damaging plantations.

About Coffee Cultivation

- Coffee was introduced in India by **Baba Budan** (17th century, Chikmagalur, Karnataka).
- **Crop Requirements:** Grows in a tropical climate, temperature 15–28°C, rainfall 150–250 cm, well-drained loamy soil, requires shade.
- **Other Conditions:** Hill slopes are more suitable for growth.
- **World Leading Producer:** Brazil. **India is now the seventh-largest coffee producer globally.**
- **India:** Major **Arabica & Robusta coffee producer/exporter.**
 - ⊕ **Cultivation Areas:** Mainly **Nilgiri region** covering Karnataka, Kerala & Tamil Nadu.
- **Production:** **Top producing states are Karnataka (70%), Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, and North-East.**



Vultures

Assam-based foundation launched India's first vulture conservation portal.

About Vultures

- **India is the home to 9 species of vultures:** Slender-billed Vulture, White-rumped Vulture, Red-headed Vulture, Himalayan Griffon Vulture, Egyptian Vulture, Cinereous vulture, Indian Vulture, Bearded Vulture, Eurasian Griffon Vulture.
- **Significance:** Scavenging on animal carcasses of animals and thereby helping keep the environment clean.
- **Threats:** Ingestion of toxic **non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)** like **diclofenac** (used to treat livestock), habitat loss, electrocution, food scarcity and human disturbances.
- **Conservation Initiatives:** Vulture Conservation Breeding Centre (VCBC)- at Rani (Assam), Pinjore (Haryana), Action Plan for Vulture Conservation in India, 2020-2025, etc.



Nalanda University

Bhutan's PM pays visits to Nalanda University.

Ancient Nalanda:

- **Founded:** In 5th century by Emperor **Kumaragupta** of Gupta dynasty.
- **Nature:** Ancient centre of higher learning in (Rajgir) Bihar, along with **Taxila** and **Vikramashila.**
 - ⊕ First **residential university in the world.**
 - ⊕ Now, **UNESCO World Heritage Site.**
- **Patrons:** It was patronized by various rulers including King Harshavardhana of Kannauj (7th century CE), **Pala rulers (8th – 12th century CE).**
- **Scholars:** Attracted from **China, Korea, Japan, Tibet, Mongolia, Sri Lanka & SE Asia.**
 - ⊕ Chinese scholar **Xuan Zang** documented Nalanda's architecture, ambience, and scholarly traditions.
- **Decline:**
 - ⊕ Gradual decline from the 9th century onward due to **Tantric developments in Buddhism** under the **Pala Empire.**
 - ⊕ Ultimately destroyed around **1200 CE** by Bakhityar Khilji.

Place in News



Germany (Capital: Berlin)

The Prime Minister meets the Foreign Minister of Germany.

Political Features

- One of Europe's largest countries.
- **Bordering Countries:** Denmark (North), Poland and Czech Republic (East), Austria and Switzerland (South), and France, Luxemburg, Belgium and Netherlands (West).
- **Bordering Water Bodies:** Baltic sea (Northeast) and North Sea (Northwest), connected by the **Kiel Canal.**

Geographical Features

- **Important Rivers:** Rhine (Longest river), Elbe, Danube.
- **Climate:** Temperate, with mild winters and warm summers; rainfall well-distributed.
- **Major Mountain Ranges:** Alps & Bavarian highlands
- **Lake Constance:** The largest freshwater lake.



AHMEDABAD



BHOPAL



CHANDIGARH



DELHI



JAIPUR



JODHPUR



GUWAHATI



HYDERABAD



LUCKNOW



PRAYAGRAJ



PUNE



RANCHI



SIKAR