EDITORIALS - 12TH NOV 2026

1. TURNING BATTERY WASTE INTO STRATEGIC MINERAL WEALTH (GS PAPER III ECONOMY)

This editorial '**Turning battery waste into strategic mineral wealth**' was published in **The Hindu** on 12th Nov 2026, highlights battery **recycling's potential** to strengthen India's critical mineral security through a circular economy.

Critical Mineral Security and Recycling Potential

- **Electrification** increases demand for lithium, nickel and cobalt; concentrated supplies, geopolitical tensions, resource nationalism and trade restrictions threaten **import-dependent India**, while China dominates processing.
- **End-of-life batteries** offer valuable domestic minerals, but landfill disposal and informal recycling yield only **10%–20% recovery**, against over 90% in formal facilities; manual methods are often unsafe.
- With **8.7 million EVs** on Indian roads by FY 2025–26, growing spent-battery volumes create both a waste-management challenge and a **resource-security opportunity**.
- Recycling could meet **10%–12% of lithium demand** for EV battery manufacturing, supplement mining and overseas sourcing, and develop **domestic processing capacity**, without ensuring mineral self-sufficiency.

Regulatory Foundation and Investment Constraints

- The **Battery Waste Management Rules, 2022** establish **extended producer responsibility**, but the recycling ecosystem remains immature; low current waste volumes should not delay preparedness.
- **Recycling capacity** and logistics require advance investment; initial underutilisation and uncertain revenues create **financing risks**, making just-in-time expansion unrealistic.

Strategy for a Circular Battery Economy

- Integrate recycled minerals into **strategic resource planning**; mandate their inclusion in the proposed **national critical mineral stockpile** to ensure predictable demand and encourage recovery beyond intermediate black mass.
- Strengthen **research and development** to address diverse battery chemistries and weak recycling economics, achieving higher **mineral recovery and purity** without environmental harm.
- Establish **standards** for battery characterisation, recycled-mineral quality and second-life applications, supported by testing infrastructure and **design for repurposing and recycling**.
- Expand remunerative **take-back or buy-back systems** through EV manufacturers, dealers and service networks; easier collection and **consumer participation** are essential for circularity.
- Provide **patient capital** for facilities with long gestation periods; significant long-term potential does not guarantee **immediate commercial returns**.

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Reducing Critical Mineral Demand at Source

- **Alternative chemistries:** Sodium-ion batteries avoid lithium, offering an alternative for suitable storage and mobility applications, although lower energy density can limit vehicle range.
- **Mineral substitution:** Lithium iron phosphate batteries avoid nickel and cobalt; their share reached 40% of EV battery deployment in 2023, demonstrating commercially viable substitution.
- **Appropriate sizing:** Matching battery capacity to actual travel needs reduces material requirements; the IEA identifies smaller packs as a major mineral-demand reduction strategy.

- **Longer service life:** Durable batteries delay replacement and fresh mineral demand; the IEA's 2026 assessment identifies roughly 15 years between battery deployment and comparable recycling availability.
- **Repairable products:** Replaceable batteries can prevent premature disposal of functioning devices; EU rules provide for user-replaceable portable batteries from 2027, subject to specified exceptions.
- **Smaller mobility modes:** Electric two-wheelers and three-wheelers require batteries approximately twenty times smaller than electric cars, offering less material-intensive options where travel needs permit.
- **Reduced car dependence:** Compact settlements, walking, cycling and public transport can moderate battery demand; IPCC assessments support these measures for reducing transport energy requirements.

2. RESET TAX ON TRANSFER OF PROPERTY (GS PAPER II GOVERNANCE)

This editorial '**Reset tax on transfer of property**' was published in **The Hindu** on 12th Nov 2026, highlights reforming property transfer taxation through **lower rates, scientific valuation** and **transparent administration**.

Revenue Significance and Tax Design

- **Stamp duty and Registration Fees (SDR)** contributed **11.7%** of States' own-tax revenue in 2024–25; Tamil Nadu collected 11.3%, against Maharashtra's 14.8% and Karnataka's 12.3%.
- **Transfer taxes** raise effective property costs and influence the values being taxed; high rates encourage **evasion**, while lower rates can improve compliance, requiring an optimal revenue-yielding rate.
- **Guideline values** set the minimum registration value but often fall below actual prices; scientific valuation, periodic revision and suitable rates must encourage **truthful disclosure**.

- Tamil Nadu's **9% SDR**, against 6% in Karnataka and Maharashtra, yielded about **₹22,000 crore**, versus ₹24,000 crore and ₹50,000 crore respectively, despite registering more documents: 33.6 lakh versus 25 lakh and 30 lakh.

Rate, Valuation and Administrative Reforms

- Lower **conveyance costs** could make short-term housing returns competitive with financial investments; more frequent secondary-market transactions would improve **price discovery**.
- Introduce **graduated stamp-duty concessions** for developers selling within one–two years of completion, tapering over five years before full duty applies; reduce duty rates as **declared purchase prices** rise to encourage accurate reporting.
- Cap **registration fees**, since document registration and recordkeeping costs do not increase with property value; Maharashtra already applies a **₹30,000 ceiling**.
- Use **spatial analytics** incorporating neighbourhood sale prices, rents and public utilities to determine guideline values; ensure transparent methodology, open data, **annual revision** and valuation-committee autonomy.
- Partial implementation of the **2002 Tax Reforms and Revenue Augmentation Committee** recommendations on lower rates and guideline valuation raised SDR revenue from ₹1,070 crore in 2002–03 to **₹2,997 crore** in 2006–07.

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Distributional Impact of Property Transfer Taxation

- **Housing affordability:** Upfront transfer taxes particularly constrain cash-limited first-time buyers; OECD analysis identifies young households as especially vulnerable to the resulting barriers to residential mobility.

- **Targeted concessions:** First-home relief can distinguish housing access from investment purchases; England and Northern Ireland introduced stamp-duty relief for eligible first-time buyers in 2017.
- **Women's ownership:** Delhi provides lower stamp-duty rates for women purchasers; World Bank research across Indian States and cities finds economically significant concessions can encourage female property ownership.
- **Residential mobility:** Transfer taxes can discourage relocation for employment or changing household needs; the IMF identifies reduced labour and residential mobility among their principal economic costs.
- **Investor differentiation:** Higher duties on additional homes can distinguish investors from primary-home buyers; England and Northern Ireland introduced an additional-property surcharge in April 2016.
- **Unequal benefit capture:** Tax concessions may increase property prices when housing supply is constrained, allowing existing owners to capture benefits intended for aspiring homeowners, as OECD analysis cautions.
- **Revenue trade-offs:** Temporary concessions can shift transaction timing rather than permanently expand access; Britain's Office for Budget Responsibility identifies such advance purchasing as a significant behavioural response.

3. NEEDED: A SUSTAINED DECLINE IN EMISSIONS (GS PAPER III ENVIRONMENT)

This editorial '**Needed: A sustained decline in emissions**' was published in **The Indian Express** on 12th Nov 2026, highlights the need for sustained emission reductions through **renewable integration, power-sector reform** and protection of **carbon sinks**.

Emission Trends and Their Limits

- The **Global Carbon Budget** study, presented at **COP31** in Antalya, projects a slight fall in fossil-fuel emissions in 2026, largely due to the Iran-war energy shock and wind–solar expansion.
- Disruption-driven declines in 1992, 1998, 2009 and 2020 remained **single-year aberrations**; improved renewable economics alone cannot guarantee **sustained reductions**.
- **China's emissions** are projected to fall nearly 1%, with declines also expected in the US, Europe and Japan; **India's fossil-fuel emissions** could rise over 4% against 2025.

India's Renewable Integration Constraints

- Rising **renewable capacity** faces storage shortages and inadequate **grid infrastructure**, preventing surplus solar and wind generation from meeting demand when these sources are unavailable.
- Poor **discom finances** constrain infrastructure upgrades for renewable integration; persistent funding deficits require renewed attention to **power-sector economics**.

Land-use Emissions and Climate Priorities

- **Deforestation and land-use changes**, particularly in Southeast Asia, could offset fossil-fuel emission reductions; Super El Niño-linked dryness could intensify **peat fires**.
- **Total carbon emissions** are projected to rise from **42.8 billion tonnes** in 2025 to 43.3 billion tonnes in 2026, underscoring the limits of renewable expansion alone.

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Climate Equity in Allocating Mitigation Responsibilities

- **Historical responsibility:** Least developed countries contributed less than 0.4% of cumulative fossil-fuel and industrial CO_2 emissions during 1850–2019, strengthening demands for differentiated mitigation burdens.
- **Per-capita fairness:** In 2019, least developed countries emitted 1.7 tonnes CO_2-equivalent per person against a global average of 6.9, excluding land-use CO_2 emissions.
- **Development space:** IPCC assessments find that eliminating extreme poverty and energy poverty can occur without significant global emissions growth, supporting protection of essential development needs.
- **Differentiated obligations:** Article 2.2 of the Paris Agreement recognises equity and common but differentiated responsibilities, requiring implementation to reflect capabilities and different national circumstances.
- **Finance accountability:** Developed countries first met the annual $100-billion climate-finance goal in 2022, two years late, illustrating why timely support matters for equitable climate action.
- **Technology access:** The UNFCCC's Climate Technology Centre and Network provides developing countries with requested technical assistance, offering an institutional mechanism for addressing unequal technological capabilities.
- **Domestic inequality:** The highest-emitting 10% of households generate 34%–45% of global consumption-based household emissions, supporting differentiated burdens within countries rather than uniform household sacrifices.