EDITORIALS - 13TH NOV 2026

1. NEW DEAL (GS PAPER III ENVIRONMENT)

This editorial '**New deal**' was published in **The Hindu** on 13th Nov 2026, highlights the need to fulfil existing **climate commitments** before adopting ambitious **new goals**.

COP31 priorities and implementation gaps

- **COP31**, hosted by Türkiye in Antalya with Australia presiding over negotiations, followed ministerial visits to Fiji and Tuvalu highlighting **small island vulnerability**; prominent leaders' absence, including Europeans, weakened urgency.
- Priorities include delivering **$300 billion annually by 2035**, agreed at COP29 in Baku, and **tripling adaptation finance**, called for at COP30; decisions on fund flows remain deferred to COP32.
- The **second global stocktake** begins at COP31, but the **IPCC** lacks a timeline for reports needed to guide efforts towards keeping warming below 2°C, preferably 1.5°C.
- **COP30** produced no formal roadmap away from fossil fuels, retreating from the **COP28 consensus**; the voluntary roadmap ahead of COP31 remains outside formal negotiations.
- The West Asia war, **U.S. withdrawal** from the Paris Agreement and European financial strain constrain funding; Nepal's recent **Loss and Damage Fund** approval of $21 million contrasts with needs running into billions.

Electrification and national approaches

- **COP31 president Murat Kurum** proposes raising **electricity's share** of total energy consumption from 23% to 35% by 2035.
- India has refused the pledge, insisting on **predictable climate finance**, technology transfer and **nationally determined approaches** to mitigation.

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Equity in sharing the global carbon budget

- **Historical responsibility:** Greater past emissions justify heavier mitigation burdens; the UNFCCC's preamble recognises developed countries as the source of the largest historical share of greenhouse gases.

- **Per capita equity:** Population-sensitive comparisons reveal unequal carbon use; IPCC estimates place 2019 fossil-fuel and industrial CO_2 emissions at 9.5 tonnes per person in developed countries versus 1.2 tonnes in Africa.
- **Developmental needs:** Carbon allocation must accommodate essential services; IPCC finds that providing decent living standards in low-emitting regions need not significantly increase global emissions.
- **Capacity-based obligations:** Wealthier economies should decarbonise faster; Paris Agreement Article 4 expects developed countries to lead through absolute economy-wide emission reductions while recognising differing national circumstances.
- **Consumption accountability:** Imported goods carry embedded emissions; IPCC documents carbon-intensive production shifting from developed to developing economies, supporting responsibility assessments beyond territorial emissions alone.
- **Vulnerability-based protection:** Low contribution strengthens vulnerable countries' equity claims; small island developing states generated only 0.6% of global greenhouse gases in 2019, excluding land-use CO_2.
- **Intergenerational fairness:** Present emissions must not impose disproportionate future restrictions; Germany's Constitutional Court ruled in 2021 that inadequate post-2030 reduction provisions threatened future freedoms.

2. RESPECT THE RIVER, DON'T TREAT IT LIKE A QUARRY (GS PAPER III ENVIRONMENT)

This editorial '**Respect the river, don't treat it like a quarry**' was published in **The Indian Express** on 13 Nov 2026, highlights the need to meet **construction demand** through **sustainable sand** sourcing while protecting river ecosystems.

Sand extraction and regulatory challenges

- **Sand**, the second-most exploited natural resource after water in several regions, faces unregulated extraction that destabilises **riverbanks**, deepens and widens riverbeds, alters flows and causes downstream erosion.
- Despite **Supreme Court** interventions at least three times since 2023, orders remain largely unimplemented amid a nearly **40% sand supply gap** for India's construction industry.
- The **Central Empowered Committee (CEC)** proposes a **three-year phase-out** of extraction from active river channels, progressively substituting alternative sources, including desilting dams and reservoirs.

Desilting potential, limits and safeguards

- **Desilting** removes accumulated sand and gravel, restoring **reservoir capacity** and facilitating water flow during heavy rainfall; implementation requires long-term planning.
- **Sediments** sustain downstream ecosystems; the **B K Mittal committee (2022)** found large-scale desilting technologically and economically unviable, recommending scientifically supported dredging at specific river reaches, as does the CEC.
- With **reservoir sediment availability** unknown, the CEC seeks a **Jal Shakti Ministry**-led national framework specifying reservoir-wise quantities, financing and environmental safeguards.

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Reducing sand demand through circular construction

- **Construction-waste recycling:** Replace suitable virgin materials with processed debris; Delhi's Burari plant converts construction waste into aggregates, pavement blocks and kerbstones, reducing fresh resource demand.
- **Material-efficient design:** Reduce extraction through resource-conscious construction; UNEP's 2023 building-materials report prioritises avoiding unnecessary raw-material production through circular practices across the building lifecycle.
- **Component reuse:** Design buildings for dismantling rather than destructive demolition; the European Commission's REMODE research examines modular systems that enable disassembly and reuse of building components.
- **Building-life extension:** Renovation can reduce repeated material consumption; the European Environment Agency identifies circular renovation as a means to conserve resources and minimise embodied emissions.
- **Public procurement:** Government projects can establish demand for recycled products; CPWD incorporated construction-waste-derived products into its Schedule of Rates in 2018, supporting their adoption in public works.
- **Quality assurance:** Application-specific standards build confidence in substitutes; India's revised IS 383:2016 permits recycled aggregates within prescribed limits, supporting technically appropriate use rather than unrestricted substitution.
- **Lifecycle assessment:** Recycling decisions must consider transport and processing impacts; UNEP recommends evaluating environmental, health and ecosystem effects from material extraction through demolition.

3. GREEN JOBS CAN FILL THE GAPS IN THE GROWTH STORY (GS PAPER III ECONOMY)

This editorial '**Green jobs can fill the gaps in the growth story**' was published in **The Indian Express** on 13th Nov 2026, highlights the potential of **green employment** and **targeted skilling** to sustain **poverty reduction** and secure **rising incomes**.

Green employment potential

- The **World Bank** estimates 496 million Indians escaped poverty during 2011–2023, with **extreme poverty** falling from 27.1% to 2.6%, driven by consumption, social transfers and employment, including women's paid work.
- Supporting Viksit Bharat 2047 and net-zero 2070, **renewables**, storage, EVs, green hydrogen, recycling and nature-based solutions could generate **over 1.3 crore jobs by 2035**, according to iFOREST's assessment.
- **Local employment** in rooftop solar, EV repair and recycling, alongside **rural opportunities** in agroforestry and mangrove restoration, can benefit households newly above the poverty line.
- Over **27% of Indians** are aged 15–29 and better educated; the **worker-population ratio** trails labour force participation by only 1.9 percentage points, providing a strong workforce base.
- **Skill transferability** is high or medium for 71% of assessed thermal-power roles towards renewables and green hydrogen; **90% of automobile roles** can transition to EVs through targeted training.

Skilling gaps and institutional priorities

- Only **5.3% of youth** have technical education and 5% formal vocational training; dedicated green programmes have trained approximately **81,000 people**, against projected annual additions of 4.5 lakh direct green jobs.
- Around **43% of formally trained workers** completed courses shorter than six months, while **advanced green roles** require deeper technical knowledge.
- Over **15,000 ITIs** offer more than 26 lakh seats; **PM-SETU** is modernising 1,000 government ITIs, requiring green laboratories, trained instructors and longer programmes alongside short courses and apprenticeships.
- A **school-to-work continuum** linking technical education, vocational training and employment, supported by the ongoing **National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship** revision, can prepare India's green workforce.

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Ensuring decent work in the green economy

- **Fair remuneration:** Link green incentives to labour standards; U.S. clean-energy tax provisions offer enhanced incentives when applicable prevailing-wage and registered-apprenticeship requirements are met.
- **Occupational safety:** Clean technology does not eliminate workplace hazards; U.S. OSHA identifies electrocution, burns and falls during solar installation, requiring appropriate training and protective measures.
- **Social protection:** Connect green training with insurance coverage; the Philippines links vocational programmes, including circular-economy training, with social-insurance registration through cooperation between its training and social-security institutions.
- **Employment formalisation:** Recognise informal recyclers as service providers; Brazil's 2010 National Solid Waste Policy enabled municipalities to contract waste-picker cooperatives for collecting and sorting recyclable household waste.
- **Worker representation:** Negotiate transition safeguards with affected workers; Spain's 2018 coal-sector agreement involved government, unions and mining enterprises, providing compensation, training and re-employment support.
- **Inclusive workplaces:** Integrate marginalised workers into municipal green services; Pune's SWaCH cooperative enables women waste pickers to provide door-to-door collection through an agreement with the municipal corporation.
- **Transition security:** Combine decarbonisation with credible employment alternatives; the EU's Just Transition Fund supports worker reskilling, job-search assistance and economic diversification in territories affected by the transition.