

CHAMPIONS OF SUSTAINABILITY

EARTH DAY 2025

CONSUMER CONNECT INITIATIVE

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Every Earth Day, we talk about planting trees, cleaning beaches, and making 'greener choices', but the climate crisis is no longer a distant threat—it is here, now. Glaciers are melting faster than ever, coastal cities are flooding, species are vanishing, and our air,

planet, our people, and future generations," says B K Soni, chairman and managing director of Eco Recycling Ltd. These pollutants don't simply disappear—they leak into the soil, seep into groundwater, and linger in the air. Ultimately, they return to us through the food we eat and the water we drink. "We often forget that waste isn't just a by-product—it's built into the way things are made. Most products today

Experts estimate that India's e-waste holds an estimated resource value of over USD 6 billion, offering both environmental and economic gains. With investment in formal recycling infrastructure and technology, India can generate green jobs, reduce pollution, and build a more circular economy. But this can only

happen if consumers and companies commit to disposing of electronic waste responsibly.

HIDDEN HEALTH HAZARDS
Informal handling of e-waste releases toxic substances—including lead, mercury, and brominated flame retardants—into the environment.

"These pollutants contaminate the air, water, and soil, and have been linked to severe health problems such as respiratory issues, neurological disorders, and developmental defects, particularly among vulnerable communities involved in informal recycling work," says Rajesh Jain, founder of

the Environmental Resources Management Corporation.

POLICY CHANGES
The Indian government has introduced several key measures, including the revised E-Waste (Management) Rules, a minimum support price mechanism for recyclers, and stricter Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) targets. However, implementation challenges persist. Industry stakeholders have expressed concerns about the increasing cost and complexity of compliance, highlighting the need for streamlined processes and greater support for the formal recycling sector. True sustainability requires shared responsibility—from manufacturers to consumers and recyclers. The planet doesn't need perfection from one, but action from many. This Earth Day, let's move beyond symbolism and embrace a mindset of using less, wasting less, and caring more.

Can waste become our greatest resource?

A throwaway culture, poor regulatory enforcement, and ever-increasing consumer demand have together triggered a deepening crisis—one that calls for urgent introspection into our consumption patterns and the choices we make every day

water, and soil are becoming increasingly toxic. While the signs of climate change are stark, what's equally alarming is how we've adapted to a lifestyle that fuels it. Convenience has taken priority over conscience. We consume more than we need, replace more than we repair, and discard more than we recycle. This quiet shift in behaviour has made over-consumption feel normal—even acceptable—while pushing the planet far beyond its limits. "The Earth's resources are finite. This is a call to live more consciously through personal choices and collective action. When done thoughtfully, recycling helps reduce the strain we place on nature," says Sanjay Mehta, president of the Material Recycling Association of India (MRAI).

THE WASTE WE OVERLOOK

In many urban areas, it's easy to spot overflowing bins, illegal landfills, drains clogged with discarded waste, and more. But perhaps the most dangerous kind of waste is the one we can't easily see—electronic waste, or e-waste. Laptops, phones, televisions, tablets and other gadgets that were once gleaming symbols of progress now lie broken, burnt, or buried. While these devices power our modern lives, their afterlife is anything but digital—it's dangerously physical, deeply toxic, and largely ignored.

India generated 3.8 million metric tonnes of e-waste in 2023-24, according to Redseer Strategy Consultants. That figure is expected to increase nearly eightfold to 29 million metric tonnes (MNT) by 2030, making it one of the fastest-growing waste streams in the country. What's more concerning is that over 80 percent of this waste is handled by the informal sector, according to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

Devices are dismantled in backyards using acid baths and open flames. Workers—often women and children—do so without gloves, masks, or any protection from the toxic metals they are exposed to daily. "It's time we recognise that e-waste is not just a technological challenge, but also a moral one. Responsible recycling is no longer optional; it is essential to safeguard our

are designed for convenience, not longevity. If companies focused on reparability and reuse from the start, we wouldn't be dealing with this level of e-waste," says Richa Kedia, an environmental activist.

As the scale of e-waste grows, so does the urgency to rethink not just what we consume, but how we dispose of it. Experts say that when done right, recycling doesn't just deal with waste—it helps slow the climate crisis. "Recycling responsibly is a crucial step in preserving our planet. It helps conserve natural resources, reduce pollution, and mitigate climate change. Additionally, it plays a key role in protecting ecosystems, safeguarding human health, and contributing to a more sustainable future," adds Amar Singh, secretary general of the Material Recycling Association of India.

REIMAGINE THE CYCLE

Most people don't realise that the gadgets we discard contain valuable materials like copper, gold, and rare earth metals. If properly

Small acts that can make a big difference:

- **Make the most of what you have:** Don't upgrade your phone or appliance unless necessary. Instead, opt for products that are built to last.
- **Repair instead of replacing:** A small fix can extend the life of an item—be it your kettle, laptop, or shoes.
- **Recycle responsibly:** Avoid giving old electronics to scrap dealers who may not dispose of them safely. Rather, look for authorised e-waste collection centres near you.
- **Cut down on single-use items:** Carry your bottle, bag, or tiffin. It's a small habit that saves a lot of time.
- **Start conversations:** Raise awareness in your housing society, workplace, or school by organising a clean-up or an e-waste collection drive.

recycled, these materials can be recovered, reducing the need for mining and lowering pollution. "Enough has been extracted from the Earth—it's time to restore. Urban mining turns our cities into resource hubs by recovering valuable materials from e-waste, reducing the need for destructive mining," says Divyee Kohli, director of Terranova Eco Management Pvt Ltd.

We don't take from the EARTH but give back to the EARTH

Ferrous Metal Recycling:

Saves 72% energy, cuts CO₂ emissions by 58%, reduces manufacturing cost, and conserves natural resources.

Non-Ferrous Metals Recycling:

Reduces CO₂ emissions - Copper (96%), Aluminium (95%), Lead (75%), and Zinc (60-75%) - while saving energy, avoiding mining damage, and protecting ecosystems.

E-Waste Recycling:

Reduces pollution, saves resources, lowers landfill load, and prevents toxic air emissions.

Battery Recycling:

Prevents chemical leaks, protects water bodies, reduces raw material extraction, and shields the environment.



Plastic Recycling:

Cuts pollution, saves fossil resources, lowers landfill use, and reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

Tyre Recycling:

Transforms end-of-life tyres into fuel or products, saves energy, reduces waste, and prevents water contamination.

Used Oil Recycling:

Reclaims waste oil into fuel or lubricants, saves energy, protects soil and water, and reduces crude oil use.

Paper Recycling:

Saves trees, reduces deforestation, cuts emissions, and conserves water and energy.



MATERIAL RECYCLING ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

Voice of the Indian Recycling Industry

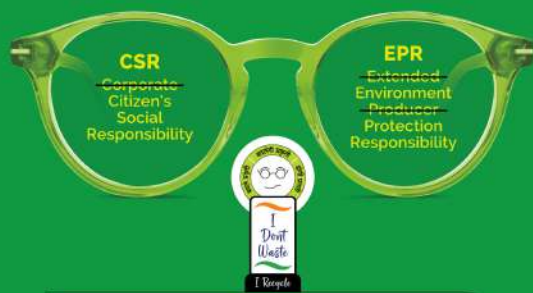
We are contributing towards India's Net Zero by 2070 Mission, bridging the gap between recyclers and government to achieve the sustainable development goals (SDGs) and also promoting responsible recycling best practices across India.

Join the Movement. Join MRAI.



www.mrai.org.in

It's only when you see clearly that what you do will begin to make a difference.



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