

MRAI's 12th IMRC and Union Budget 2025 Set the Course for India's Sustainable Recycling Leadership

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The **12th International Material Recycling Conference (IMRC)**, held from **January 28 to 30, 2025**, at the **Novotel Jaipur Convention Centre**, emerged as a critical forum for industry leaders, policymakers, and global stakeholders to address the challenges and opportunities in India's recycling sector. Organized by the **Material Recycling Association of India (MRAI)**, the event strengthened India's dedication to a **circular economy** and sustainable resource management.



Naresh Pal Gangwar, Additional Secretary, MoEFCC at the event, with Sanjay Mehta, MRAI President, Vinod Kumar Tripathi, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Steel, GOI, & other dignitaries

A Call for Pro-Planet Living

Setting an inspiring tone for the event, **Sanjay Mehta, President of MRAI**, aligned the conference with **Hon. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's Mission LiFE**. He emphasized, *"LiFE is about becoming 'Pro-Planet People.' Changing the world begins with changing ourselves. Recycling, when done thoughtfully, can reduce the strain on nature. We must start at home, in offices, and in factories by practicing proper segregation."*

Reflecting on the conference's impact, **Amar Singh, Secretary General of MRAI**, added, *"Transformative ideas and actionable insights have emerged here. Our resolve for sustainable resource management has grown stronger."*

Government's Support for Recycling Industry Growth

Speaking at the conference, **Naresh Pal Gangwar, Additional Secretary, MoEFCC**, outlined the government's roadmap for sustainability and resource efficiency, stating, *"Achieving India's vision of becoming a developed nation by 2040 requires manifold growth in GDP, increased consumption, and efficient management of material resources."*

Supporting this view, **Vinod Kumar Tripathi, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Steel**, reaffirmed the need to improve the recycling ecosystem. He stated, *"By strengthening our recycling infrastructure, supporting education and awareness campaigns, and encouraging industries to adopt circular economic principles, we can build a thriving, sustainable future for all."*

Industry Leaders and Global Perspectives

The conference featured key insights from global experts:

- Major General K. Narayanan, Program Director, Niti Aayog, highlighted the role of innovation and collaboration in maximizing India's recycling potential.
- Dr. Soumya Gurjar, Hon. Mayor of Jaipur, stressed the need for greater participation of women entrepreneurs in the recycling sector and praised Prof. Bineesha P., Advisor at MRAI, for her contributions.
- Robin Wiener, President of ReMA, lauded MRAI's advocacy efforts, while Arnaud Brunet, Director General of BIR, and Susie Burrage OBE, President of BIR, shared perspectives on the challenges posed by evolving EU regulations on shipping.

'Recycling India' – A National Initiative

Dhawal Shah, Senior Vice President of MRAI, called for a national campaign-Recycling India-to raise awareness and open doors to new opportunities in the sector. *"Our vision is to*

see India emerge as a global leader in sustainable resource management,” he stated.

Zain Nathani, Vice President of MRAI, reinforced the industry’s role in India’s carbon emission and steel production goals, advocating for greater support of the Vehicle Scrappage Policy and the promotion of recyclable materials.

With 2,500 delegates, 400 foreign participants, 200 exhibitors, and representatives from over 50 countries, the 12th IMRC marked a defining moment in India’s sustainable recycling journey.



Vinod Kumar Tripathi, Joint Secretary, MOS, GOI; & Major General K.Narayanan, Program Director, NITI Aayog; honored at the 12th IMRC with MRAI’s Board of Directors & Secretary General

Government Approves Zero Duty on Non-Ferrous Scrap: A Game-Changer for Recycling

In a landmark decision, the Government of India has reduced the basic customs duty on non-ferrous scrap to zero percent, marking a major breakthrough for the recycling industry. The duty exemption applies to key materials such as Lead, Zinc, Copper, Brass, and Lithium-Ion Battery Scrap, providing a boost to India's circular economy and sustainable manufacturing sector.

MRAI's Advocacy Paves the Way for Policy Reforms

Sanjay Mehta, President of MRAI, expressed his gratitude for the government's progressive decision, stating, *"MRAI has consistently engaged with stakeholders and government bodies to bring about such transformative reforms. The duty-free non-ferrous scrap marks a critical advancement for the recycling industry."*

He further noted MRAI's ongoing efforts to reduce duties on aluminium scrap, aligning India's policies with global standards.

Union Budget 2025: Boosting India's Recycling Industry

The Union Budget 2025, presented by Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman, Minister of Finance & Corporate Affairs, stressed the importance of exports and imports as key drivers of economic growth. The reduction in non-ferrous scrap duties is a strategic move to enhance manufacturing competitiveness and facilitate access to affordable raw materials. The decision aligns with India's broader vision of Viksit Bharat, accelerating growth and strengthening the recycling sector as a key contributor to a resource-efficient economy.

Projected Growth and Sustainability Mandates

The Indian recycled metal market, which generated USD 28.9 million in 2023, is projected to reach USD 38.0 million by 2030, growing at a CAGR of 4% from 2024 to 2030. The zero-duty policy is expected to lower operational costs and encourage

greater recycling activities, reinforcing India's circular economy.

A significant step toward sustainable manufacturing, the budget introduces zero import duty on non-ferrous metal scrap, including lead, zinc, copper, cobalt powder, lithium-ion battery scrap, and 11 other critical minerals. The measure is set to transform India's recycling sector, reducing production expenses while strengthening the country's position in global markets.

Additionally, the government has mandated a minimum of 5% recycled content in all new non-ferrous metal products from FY 2028, with targets set for 10% recycled aluminium, 20% copper, and 25% zinc by FY31. These measures are designed to reduce industrial waste, enhance resource utilization, and support long-term environmental objectives.

MRAI's Call for Further Reforms

In continuation of these efforts, MRAI has urged the government to remove Basic Customs Duty (BCD) on all grades of aluminium scraps, Cupro Nickel & Nickel containing Brass, and Zinc dross scrap under HS code 26201910. With aluminium recycling alone cutting energy consumption by over 95%, such measures would significantly reduce emissions and support India's environmental objectives. The budget's provisions are set to accelerate the recycling sector's expansion.

MRAI's Continued Engagement with Policymakers

Amar Singh, Secretary General of MRAI, highlighted the association's role in shaping policy, *"In aluminium, we have achieved what we set out to do, ensuring that scrap is imported based on its specification. On the policy front, JNARDDC has been authorized as a metal recycling authority by the Ministry of Mines, marking a significant step in policy-driven change."*

Tax Reforms and Mission LiFE

The Material Recycling Association of India (MRAI) welcomed the tax policy updates of 2024, including the implementation of the Reverse Charge Mechanism (RCM) under GST and the introduction of a 2% Tax Deducted at Source (TDS) on non-ferrous scrap purchases. These reforms enhance compliance, increase transparency, and streamline operations in the recycling sector.

Speaking at MRAI's 12th IMRC in Jaipur, Naveen Sharma, Vice President of MRAI, urged the government to extend RCM to e-waste and battery waste, covering chapters 83, 84, and 85, which will advance formal sector participation.

Calling attention to the economic potential, **Dhawal Shah, Senior Vice President of MRAI**, noted, *"The Indian non-ferrous metal industry is currently valued at \$18 billion and is projected to reach \$30 billion in the next five years. Renewable energy, automotive, and packaging sectors offer immense growth potential."*

A Collective Step Toward a Greener Future

MRAI extends its deep appreciation to the Government of India, under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, for supporting the recycling sector. The removal of import duties on non-ferrous scrap marks a watershed moment, positioning India as a leader in sustainable metal recycling. This move, backed by key ministries, is expected to reduce production costs, drive the adoption of recycled materials, and enhance India's global competitiveness in green manufacturing.

Shri H. D. Kumaraswamy, Minister of Steel; Shri G. Kishan Reddy, Minister of Mines; Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman, Minister of Corporate Affairs; and Shri Piyush Goyal, Minister of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change, have played pivotal roles in defining this progressive policy.

With this pivotal policy move, the nation accelerates its transition toward a cleaner and more sustainable future.

