Construction and Demolition (C&D) Waste

What is the issue?

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- The Supreme Court has stayed construction activity in States that do not have a solid waste management policy.
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- In this context, understanding the Construction and Demolition (C&D) Wastes' potential becomes essential.
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What is Construction and Demolition Waste?

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- Construction and demolition waste (C&D) is generated during the construction, renovation, and demolition of buildings or structures.
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- These wastes include materials such as concrete, bricks, wood and lumber, roofing, drywall, landscape and other wastes.
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- Construction and Demolition Waste Management Rules 2016 was released by Ministry of Environment.
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- It clearly defines the duties of Waste Generator, Service providers and Contractors, State Government and Local Authorities and Pollution Control boards.
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- C&D wastes can revolutionize the construction industry, especially the Housing Industry, if they are properly reused.
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What are the guidelines in place?

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- Earlier in 2012 the Ministry of Urban Development urged States to set up C&D waste management facilities.
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- The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), in 2017, brought out the guidelines on Environmental Management of C&D Wastes in India.
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- It observed that Construction accounted for nearly 65% of the total investment in infrastructure.
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- Therefore it becomes more important to know how to effectively manage construction and demolition waste.
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- Further the CPCB's Waste Management Rules of 2016 and the guidelines 2017 mentions clear timelines on
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i. formulating policies
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ii. identifying sites for processing
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iii. commissioning the wastes
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What are the concerns?

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- Despite the above, the performance of industry and the State pollution control boards is poor.
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- Around 25-30 million tons of C&D waste is generated annually in India of which only 5% is processed.
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- It is significant that 36% of C&D waste comprises soil, sand and gravel.
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- This waste impacts soil fertility and is a health hazard in urban areas.
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- The virtual absence of recycling also goes against India's commitments with respect to carbon emission reduction.
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- There is an urgent need to recycle C&D waste.

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- This is because the rampant sand mining is already destroying river beds and eventually worsening the impact of floods.
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What could be done?

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- Promoting Green buildings, which entail that C&D waste is utilized, can be made mandatory all over the country.
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- At present they are only incentivized in certain States.
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- As the 2016 rules have pointed out, the Bureau of Indian Standards and Indian Roads Congress should initiate processes for the use of recycled material.
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- For example, pavements and drainage structures can be made this way.
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- Recycling will reduce housing costs, given the materials shortage, and can be an integral aspect of 'affordable housing'.
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- The construction sector should be more environmentally responsible, by shifting to the use of recycled water and recycling its own waste.
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- All stakeholders, especially States and industry, need to create an environmentally sustainable ecosystem.
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Source: BusinessLine

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