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MAGAZINE NOTES

Government Policies & Critiques (January 1-15)

15 January 2026 · ENVIRONMENT · POLITY · GEOGRAPHY · GS2 · GS3

CURATED & WRITTEN BY

Bharat Choudhary

UPSC Educator & Content Creator

linkedin.com/in/epicbharat

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Down to Earth Chapter 17 · 1 min read ·

"Wasteland" Classification — Colonial Legacy

- Government uses colonial-era classification of "wastelands" for western Rajasthan's scrublands
- In reality: vital community pastures, medicinal repositories, critical wildlife habitats
- Provides **legal loophole** to acquire and divert commons for "green energy" and infrastructure
- Destroys native ecology under guise of sustainable development

Urban River Encroachment (Dehradun)

- Rispana and Bindal rivers squeezed into narrow concrete embankments to free land for real estate
- Natural drainage destruction directly caused devastating **September 2025 Sahastradhara cloudburst floods**

India Cooling Action Plan (ICAP, 2019)

- Aims to cut cooling demand by **20-25% by 2037-38**
- Space cooling demand projected to rise **11-fold by 2038**
- Cities must adopt **"Cooling Master Plans"** with nature-based solutions, low-embodied carbon materials, passive design
- Energy-intensive ACs emit waste heat, worsening **Urban Heat Island** effect

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