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IMPORTANT INSIGHTS

India Plans to Expand Agrivoltaics Under PM-KUSUM to Integrate Solar Energy Generation with Sustainable Agricultural Production

Recent Developments:

- In **October 2026**, the Government of India announced plans to further promote **agrivoltaics (Agri-PV)** under the proposed next phase of **PM-KUSUM**, enabling simultaneous agricultural production and solar electricity generation.
- The announcement was highlighted during the **7th Agrivoltaics World Conference**, held from **21–23 October 2026** at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, under the theme **"Powering the Global South."**
- The conference emphasised **food security, energy security, efficient land utilisation and farmers' income diversification**, particularly for small and marginal farmers.

What Is Agrivoltaics?

- **Agrivoltaics**, also called **agri-photovoltaics**, refers to the simultaneous use of agricultural land for **crop cultivation and solar photovoltaic electricity generation**.
- Solar panels are mounted above crops or arranged with sufficient spacing, allowing agricultural activities to continue while generating renewable electricity.
- The photovoltaic technology resembles conventional solar installations, but agrivoltaic systems require modified mounting structures, panel spacing and farm-compatible layouts.

Working Mechanism:

- **Elevated solar panels:** Panels may be installed approximately **3.5–4 metres above ground**, depending on project design, permitting cultivation, irrigation and agricultural machinery movement.
- **Dual land utilisation:** Crops grow beneath or between panels, while photovoltaic cells convert sunlight directly into electricity through the **photovoltaic effect**.
- **Microclimate regulation:** Partial shading can reduce soil evaporation and heat stress, although excessive shading may restrict photosynthesis and reduce crop productivity.

Agrivoltaic Potential in India:

- According to **The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)**, approximately **47.5 million hectares**, nearly **30% of India's 160 million hectares of cropland**, are technically suitable for agrivoltaics.
- The supplied assessment estimates **1–2 terawatts (TW)** of potential capacity, equivalent to **1,000–2,000 gigawatts (GW)**, although actual deployment depends on economic viability, crop compatibility and infrastructure.
- A TERI deployment scenario covering **16 million hectares** estimated annual electricity generation of **12,775 terawatt-hours (TWh)**; this is a technical scenario rather than a committed deployment target.
- **Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh** collectively account for nearly half of the estimated national agrivoltaic potential.

Significance of Agrivoltaics for India:

Agricultural and Economic Benefits:

- **Additional farmer income:** Farmers may earn revenue through electricity sales, land-leasing arrangements or participation in farmer-owned solar projects alongside agricultural production.
- **Land-use efficiency:** Combining farming and electricity generation reduces direct competition between agricultural land and conventional ground-mounted solar installations.
- **Water conservation:** Suitable panel configurations reduce evaporation and irrigation requirements; field studies indicate potential water-use reductions of around **30%** under favourable conditions.
- **Crop productivity:** Partial shading may improve yields for selected crops under heat stress, with some studies indicating **10–20% yield improvements**, although benefits are not universal.

Energy and Environmental Benefits:

- **Renewable energy expansion:** Agrivoltaics can support India's target of **500 GW of non-fossil-fuel-based installed electricity capacity by 2030**.
- **Climate mitigation:** Solar electricity can displace fossil-fuel-based generation and contribute to India's **net-zero emissions target for 2070**.
- **Decentralised electricity generation:** Farm-based solar installations can supply nearby electricity networks, reducing dependence on distant generation facilities.
- **Climate resilience:** Carefully designed systems may moderate crop exposure to excessive heat and improve water-use efficiency.

Agrivoltaics and PM-KUSUM Scheme:

- **PM-KUSUM (Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan)** was launched in **2019** under the **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)**.
- The scheme aims to **solarise agricultural energy consumption, reduce diesel dependence, improve irrigation energy security and supplement farmers' income**.

Major Components:

- **Component A:** Establishment of decentralised grid-connected renewable energy plants, generally **500 kW–2 MW**, including eligible elevated installations on agricultural land.
- **Component B:** Installation of standalone solar-powered agricultural pumps, primarily in off-grid areas.
- **Component C:** Solarisation of existing grid-connected agricultural pumps through **individual pump solarisation** and **feeder-level solarisation**.
- The proposed next phase seeks to strengthen agriculture–solar integration; detailed agrivoltaic incentives and implementation provisions remain subject to official notification.

Crop Suitability and Agricultural Limitations:

- **Suitable crops:** Leafy vegetables, selected fruits, horticultural crops, spices, floriculture and fodder may benefit from appropriately managed partial shading.
- **Potentially unsuitable crops:** Rice and sugarcane can face significant compatibility challenges in certain agrivoltaic configurations because of light requirements, crop height, cultivation practices and machinery access.
- **Site-specific assessment:** Crop suitability depends on solar radiation, panel orientation, shade duration, irrigation requirements, soil conditions and local agro-climatic characteristics.

- **ICAR's research role:** The **Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)** has emphasised developing evidence-based crop suitability matrices for India's **15 agro-climatic zones**.

Major Challenges in Agrivoltaic Deployment:

Economic and Technical Challenges:

- **Higher capital expenditure:** Agrivoltaic installations may cost approximately **25–30% more** than conventional ground-mounted systems because of elevated mounting structures and additional engineering requirements.
- **Uncertain crop performance:** Inadequate sunlight, altered rainfall distribution and unsuitable panel arrangements may reduce agricultural productivity.
- **Infrastructure constraints:** Grid connectivity, maintenance access, machinery movement and project financing can limit commercial viability.
- **Limited field evidence:** Many Indian projects remain at the demonstration or pilot stage, requiring long-term assessments of crop yields, soil health and financial returns.

Farmer Equity and Land Governance:

- **Small landholdings:** Small and marginal farmers constitute approximately **86% of India's operational landholders**, with an average operational holding of around **0.96 hectares**, according to the Agriculture Census 2015–16.
- **Land-control risks:** Poorly structured lease agreements may weaken farmers' bargaining power, restrict cultivation rights or disproportionately benefit large developers.
- **Income uncertainty:** Electricity revenue depends on tariff arrangements, power purchase agreements, generation performance and payment reliability.
- **Food-security concerns:** Solar installations must not displace productive cultivation or encourage the conversion of fertile agricultural land into effectively exclusive energy-generation sites.

Way Forward:

- **Farmer-centric policies:** Ensure transparent land agreements, fair revenue-sharing arrangements, cultivation rights and accessible grievance-redressal mechanisms.
- **Affordable financing:** Develop concessional credit, targeted subsidies and viable cooperative or **Farmer Producer Organisation (FPO)** ownership models.
- **Scientific validation:** Expand **ICAR–MNRE** research partnerships to evaluate crop productivity, soil health, water consumption and project economics across agro-climatic regions.
- **Technology optimisation:** Promote adjustable panel spacing, appropriate elevation, tracking systems and crop-specific photovoltaic designs.
- **Institutional coordination:** Integrate agricultural departments, electricity distribution companies (**DISCOMs**), state renewable energy agencies and farmer organisations.
- **Evidence-based scaling:** Establish measurable safeguards for crop yields, agricultural land access, farmer income and long-term environmental sustainability before large-scale deployment.

Value Addition for UPSC:

Important Concepts:

- **Energy–Food–Water Nexus:** An analytical framework examining interdependence between energy production, agricultural output and water availability.

- **Land Equivalent Ratio (LER):** A measure comparing the combined productivity of an integrated land-use system with the land required to produce equivalent outputs separately; an **LER greater than 1** indicates a land-use efficiency advantage.
- **Decentralised Renewable Energy (DRE):** Electricity generated near its point of consumption, potentially improving rural energy access and local resilience.

GS Paper Linkages:

- **GS-II:** Government policies, farmers' welfare, institutional coordination and inclusive development.
- **GS-III:** Agriculture, renewable energy, infrastructure, climate change, sustainable development and land-resource management.
- **Essay:** Sustainable agriculture, energy transition, rural transformation and balancing economic growth with environmental protection.

Sustainable Development Goals:

- **SDG 2:** Zero Hunger, **SDG 7:** Affordable and Clean Energy, **SDG 8:** Decent Work and Economic Growth, **SDG 12:** Responsible Consumption and Production, **SDG 13:** Climate Action.

Key Analytical Insight:

- **Agrivoltaics should be evaluated through combined agricultural productivity, electricity generation, water efficiency and farmer welfare rather than installed solar capacity alone.** Its long-term success depends on preserving food production while ensuring that farmers receive an equitable share of renewable-energy benefits.

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Supreme Court Hearing on Journalists' Rights Revives Debate Over Establishing an Independent National Media Council in India

Recent Developments:

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- In **October 2026**, allegations of police obstruction and detention of journalists during protests in New Delhi renewed demands for stronger **press freedom safeguards** and an independent **National Media Council (NMC)**.
- While hearing petitions concerning **freelance journalists and digital content creators**, the **Supreme Court** examined the difficulty of distinguishing accredited journalists, independent reporters and social media influencers.
- Petitioners sought a **national police protocol** protecting lawful newsgathering irrespective of government accreditation, while the Court indicated that different categories of journalists might require differentiated safeguards.
- The **Press Club of India's Media Transparency (and Accountability) Bill, 2025** proposes a National Media Council, media ownership transparency and a unified accountability framework. It remains a draft proposal rather than enacted legislation.

Existing Media Regulatory Framework in India:

Recognition and Accreditation of Journalists:

- **Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020:** Defines a working journalist with reference to journalism as the principal occupation and employment in newspaper, electronic or digital media, subject to statutory exclusions.
- **Government accreditation:** The **Press Information Bureau (PIB)** and designated state authorities provide accreditation based on prescribed eligibility criteria, professional experience and organisational requirements.
    - Accreditation facilitates access to official events and information but does not itself confer the constitutional right to report news; independent journalists may remain outside accreditation arrangements.

Major Regulatory Institutions:

- **Print media:** The **Press Council of India (PCI)**, established under the **Press Council Act, 1978**, is a statutory, quasi-judicial body responsible for preserving press freedom and maintaining journalistic standards.
    - It can inquire into complaints, issue warnings, admonitions and censures, but lacks general powers to impose monetary penalties for ethical violations.
- **Television news:** The **News Broadcasting and Digital Standards Authority (NBDSA)** provides industry self-regulation for participating broadcasters, while the **Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995** and associated rules establish statutory obligations.
- **Digital news and online curated content:** The **Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021** establish an ethics framework and a three-tier grievance-redressal structure, subject to applicable judicial decisions.
- **Cinema:** The **Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC)** certifies films under the **Cinematograph Act, 1952**.
- **Online intermediaries:** The **Information Technology Act, 2000** provides for content-blocking powers under **Section 69A** and conditional intermediary liability protection under **Section 79**; the **Sahyog portal** facilitates lawful communication between authorised agencies and intermediaries.

Why Is a National Media Council Needed?

Institutional and Professional Concerns:

- **Fragmented regulation:** Separate frameworks for newspapers, television and digital platforms create jurisdictional overlaps, inconsistent ethical standards and accountability gaps.
- **Media convergence:** Corporate groups increasingly operate across print, broadcasting and digital platforms, making medium-specific regulation less effective.
- **Journalist recognition:** Freelancers, independent reporters, photographers and digital journalists may lack institutional accreditation despite performing legitimate journalistic functions.
- **Weak enforcement:** The PCI's limited sanctioning powers and the voluntary reach of broadcasting self-regulation restrict their ability to address persistent ethical violations.

Emerging Media Challenges:

- **Misinformation and deepfakes:** Artificial intelligence-generated content, manipulated audiovisual material and coordinated disinformation undermine public trust and electoral integrity.

- **Sensationalism:** Competition for **Television Rating Points (TRPs)** and online engagement can encourage misleading headlines, intrusive reporting and media trials.
- **Cross-media ownership:** Concentrated corporate or political ownership may weaken editorial independence, viewpoint diversity and public accountability.
- **Algorithmic amplification:** Engagement-driven recommendation systems can disproportionately promote polarising, misleading or inflammatory content.

Proposed Functions of the National Media Council:

- **Unified ethical standards:** Establish common principles covering accuracy, fairness, corrections, privacy, conflicts of interest and responsible reporting across media formats.
- **Independent grievance redressal:** Investigate complaints through transparent procedures, proportionate remedies and opportunities for appeal.
- **Professional recognition:** Develop inclusive accreditation or identification arrangements for freelancers and other media workers without making government permission compulsory for publishing news.
- **Ownership transparency:** Require appropriate disclosure of beneficial ownership, cross-media interests and material conflicts affecting editorial independence.
- **Journalist protection:** Recommend safeguards against intimidation, arbitrary detention, equipment seizure and retaliation for lawful investigative reporting.

Constitutional and Institutional Challenges:

Freedom of Speech and Regulatory Powers:

- **Article 19(1)(a):** Guarantees freedom of speech and expression to citizens; **freedom of the press** is recognised as part of this constitutional guarantee.
- **Article 19(2):** Permits reasonable restrictions on specified grounds, including sovereignty and integrity of India, public order, defamation and contempt of court.
- **Licensing concerns:** Compulsory professional licences or mandatory journalism qualifications could exclude citizen journalists and become instruments of prior restraint.
- **Disproportionate penalties:** Excessive fines, arbitrary suspension or vague content restrictions may discourage investigative journalism and create a **chilling effect** on lawful expression.

Institutional Independence:

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- **Executive influence:** Government-dominated appointments, removals or disciplinary decisions could convert the proposed council into an instrument of censorship.
- **Financial dependence:** Reliance on discretionary government grants may compromise regulatory independence, while industry-funded arrangements could create conflicts of interest.
- **Government advertising:** Discriminatory allocation or withdrawal of public advertising can exert indirect financial pressure on independent news organisations.
- **Corporate resistance:** Large media groups may oppose stricter ownership disclosure, independent scrutiny and restrictions on market concentration.
- **Digital jurisdiction:** Cross-border platforms, anonymous publishers and rapidly evolving creator-based business models complicate enforcement.

Judicial and Policy Foundations:

Important Supreme Court Judgments:

- **Romesh Thappar v. State of Madras (1950):** Recognised freedom of political discussion and circulation of ideas as central to freedom of expression.
- **Bennett Coleman & Co. v. Union of India (1972):** Held that restrictions on newsprint affecting newspaper circulation and growth could violate press freedom under **Article 19(1)(a)**.
- **Indian Express Newspapers v. Union of India (1984):** Emphasised the constitutional importance of press freedom while examining taxation affecting newspapers.
- **Shreya Singhal v. Union of India (2015):** Invalidated **Section 66A of the Information Technology Act** and reinforced safeguards against vague restrictions on online expression.

Parliamentary and Regulatory Recommendations:

- **Parliamentary Standing Committee, 2021:** Its **27th Report on Ethical Standards in Media Coverage** examined ethical accountability and regulatory challenges in news media.
- **Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), 2014:** Recommended measures addressing **cross-media ownership, market concentration, control and internal plurality**, including competition-based assessment.
- **Press Club of India, 2025:** Proposed a statutory National Media Council, registration and ownership-disclosure provisions through its draft legislation.

Way Forward:

- **Independent co-regulation:** Combine statutory safeguards with industry participation, independent oversight and transparent public accountability rather than direct executive content control.
- **Balanced appointments:** Establish a plural selection mechanism involving judicial, parliamentary, journalistic and civil-society representation, with secure tenure and objective removal procedures.
- **National police protocol:** Protect lawful reporting at public events through verifiable identification, proportionate security restrictions and independent investigation of alleged police misconduct.
- **Inclusive recognition:** Provide voluntary professional identification to eligible freelancers without making accreditation a prerequisite for exercising freedom of expression.
- **Anti-SLAPP safeguards:** Prevent misuse of **Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPP)** intended to financially exhaust journalists or suppress public-interest investigations.
- **Independent news ombudsmen:** Strengthen internal grievance redressal, correction policies, fact-checking and editorial accountability.
- **Digital transparency:** Require proportionate disclosures concerning political advertising, synthetic media, conflicts of interest and systemic risks arising from recommendation algorithms.
- **Financial safeguards:** Promote transparent public advertising allocation, diversified revenue models and independent regulatory funding.

Value Addition for UPSC:

Important Concepts:

- **Fourth Estate:** The press is conventionally described as democracy's fourth estate because of its role in scrutinising public institutions and informing citizens.
- **Media Pluralism:** The existence of diverse, independent media voices, ownership structures and editorial perspectives within the information ecosystem.

- **Co-regulation:** A governance arrangement combining statutory obligations with industry-developed standards and independent supervision.
- **Chilling Effect:** The deterrence of otherwise lawful expression because of fear of prosecution, penalties or regulatory retaliation.
- **Prior Restraint:** Government restriction of publication before dissemination, raising particularly serious constitutional concerns.

International Best Practices:

- **European Union's Digital Services Act:** Establishes obligations relating to platform accountability, transparency and systemic-risk assessment, particularly for very large online platforms.
- **Australia's News Media Bargaining Code:** Provides a framework supporting bargaining between eligible news businesses and designated digital platforms over remuneration for news content.

GS Paper Linkages:

- **GS-II:** Fundamental rights, constitutional governance, statutory regulatory bodies, transparency, accountability and institutional independence.
- **GS-III:** Information technology, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, digital misinformation and technology-related governance challenges.
- **Essay:** Freedom versus regulation, the role of media in democracy, institutional accountability and responsible digital citizenship.

Key Analytical Insight:

- **A National Media Council should protect journalistic independence while ensuring accountability, rather than establish government-controlled permission to practise journalism.** Its effectiveness would depend on constitutional safeguards, institutional autonomy, inclusive recognition of journalists and proportionate regulation consistent with **Articles 19(1)(a) and 19(2)**.

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Operation Trident Exposes Transnational Drug Trafficking Networks as India Intensifies Anti-Narcotics Strategy for Drug-Free India by 2029

Recent Developments:

- On **23 October 2026**, the **Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB)** conducted **Operation Trident** in coordination with Mizoram Police, the **Enforcement Directorate (ED)** and other agencies to dismantle a transnational drug-trafficking network linked to **India, Myanmar and Bangladesh**.
- **38 multi-agency teams** simultaneously conducted operations at **38 locations across Assam, Mizoram and Manipur**, resulting in **18 arrests**, identification of approximately **₹100 crore in hawala transactions**, freezing of **1,424 bank accounts**, attachment of properties worth **₹17.82 crore**, and seizure of **500 detonators and ₹12 lakh in cash**.
- The cartel allegedly trafficked **methamphetamine and heroin** through the **Myanmar–Mizoram–Manipur–Assam–Tripura corridor**, extending into mainland India and Bangladesh.
- The operation reflects India's shift from **seizure-centric enforcement to network-centric investigation**, targeting trafficking routes, cartel leadership, financial assets and organised criminal infrastructure.

Why Is India Vulnerable to Drug Trafficking?

Geographical and Border-Related Factors:

- **Strategic location:** India lies between the **Golden Triangle and Golden Crescent**, two major regions historically associated with illicit opium production and narcotics trafficking.
    - **Golden Triangle:** Comprises the border regions of **Myanmar, Laos and Thailand**, with Myanmar remaining an important source of illicit opium and synthetic drugs.
    - **Golden Crescent:** Comprises **Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan**, historically associated with opium production and trafficking routes; Afghanistan's opium production has declined sharply following the Taliban's cultivation ban.
- **Porous international borders:** India's extensive land boundaries, difficult northeastern terrain and maritime routes create opportunities for trafficking through informal crossings and concealed cargo.
- **Sensitive border regions: Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir** face trafficking risks along the western border, while **Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland and Assam** are vulnerable to routes connected with Myanmar.

Economic and Security Factors:

- **Pharmaceutical industry:** India's large pharmaceutical and chemical manufacturing base creates a risk of diversion of legally produced **precursor chemicals** into illicit synthetic-drug manufacturing.
- **Organised criminal networks:** Traffickers exploit **hawala, encrypted communication, darknet marketplaces, cryptocurrency and informal transport networks** to conceal transactions.
- **Narco-terrorism:** Profits from narcotics trafficking may finance terrorist organisations, insurgent groups, illegal arms procurement and other activities threatening national security.

Major Impacts of Drug Trafficking and Abuse:

- **Public health:** Substance-use disorders increase risks of dependence, mental illness, overdose and physical deterioration; injecting drug use also increases transmission risks for **HIV and viral hepatitis**.
- **Economic consequences:** Drug dependence reduces labour productivity, increases healthcare expenditure and weakens human capital, while illegal financial flows undermine the legitimate economy.
- **Social consequences:** Addiction can contribute to family instability, domestic violence, educational discontinuation, social exclusion and intergenerational disadvantage.
- **National security:** Drug trafficking strengthens organised crime, facilitates corruption and may support **terror financing, insurgency and illicit arms networks**.
- **Governance challenges:** Cross-border trafficking strains policing, criminal investigation, judicial capacity and international law-enforcement cooperation.

India's Legal and Institutional Framework:

Major Legislation:

- **Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 (NDPS Act):** Regulates and prohibits unauthorised cultivation, production, manufacture, possession, sale, purchase, transport and consumption of specified narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.
    - It prescribes quantity-based penalties and provides for stringent punishment for serious trafficking offences, subject to statutory exceptions and safeguards.
- **Prevention of Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1988:** Provides for **preventive detention** in specified cases involving illicit drug trafficking.

- **Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002:** Enables investigation and attachment of proceeds of crime linked to scheduled offences, including specified narcotics offences.

Major Institutions:

- **Narcotics Control Bureau:** Established in **1986** under the **Ministry of Home Affairs**, it coordinates drug-law enforcement and international cooperation.
- **Narco-Coordination Centre (NCORD):** Facilitates coordination among central agencies, state governments and law-enforcement institutions through multiple administrative levels.
- **Anti-Narcotics Task Forces (ANTFs):** State-level specialised units responsible for intelligence gathering, investigations and coordinated action against drug networks.
- **Enforcement Directorate, Directorate of Revenue Intelligence and Border Security Force:** Support financial investigations, customs enforcement and border surveillance according to their respective mandates.

Government Initiatives Against Drug Trafficking:

Narcotics Control Vision 2026–2029:

- Released on **26 June 2026**, the **Vision Document on Narcotics Control (2026–2029)** establishes a three-year roadmap for achieving a **Drug-Free India by 2029** through coordinated action by central and state agencies.
- The roadmap contains **four strategic pillars, 25 components and more than 200 action points**:
    - **Intelligence and operation-based enforcement:** Identify drug sources, trafficking routes, criminal networks, cartel leaders and financial channels.
    - **Precursor and synthetic-drug control:** Prevent diversion of chemicals, identify clandestine laboratories and strengthen surveillance of emerging synthetic drugs.
    - **Demand and harm reduction:** Expand preventive education, addiction treatment, counselling and rehabilitation services.
    - **Capacity building and coordination:** Improve inter-agency intelligence sharing, specialised investigations, technological capabilities and accountability.
- The operational strategy follows **Detect, Disrupt and Destroy**, emphasising the identification of networks, disruption of financial and logistical infrastructure, and dismantling of organised trafficking operations.

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Enforcement and Financial Surveillance:

- **Border and cargo monitoring:** The **BSF, CISF, Indian Coast Guard, Customs and DRI** are expected to strengthen risk-based profiling, scanning and surveillance at borders, ports and airports.
- **Financial investigations:** The **Enforcement Directorate, Financial Intelligence Unit and banking institutions** support identification of suspicious transactions, hawala networks and proceeds of crime.
- **International cooperation:** The **CBI, Ministry of External Affairs and Interpol** facilitate action against fugitives through applicable legal and international cooperation mechanisms.
- **Digital surveillance:** Specialised **darknet and cryptocurrency investigation cells** are envisaged within state anti-narcotics task forces.

Prevention and Rehabilitation:

- **Nasha Mukt Bharat Abhiyaan:** Launched in **2020** under the **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment**, it promotes awareness, community participation and prevention of substance abuse.
- **Rehabilitation expansion:** The 2026–2029 roadmap envisages increasing drug de-addiction facilities from **334 to 1,751 by March 2029**, with specialised provisions for women and children.

- **Community mobilisation:** The roadmap targets outreach to **50 crore people** and the preparation of **1 lakh Nasha Mukt Bharat Mitras** through youth organisations and educational institutions.
- **Kashi Declaration:** Adopted during the **Youth Spiritual Summit in Varanasi**, it outlines a five-year commitment to collective action against substance abuse.
- **Long-term vision:** The 2029 mission supports the broader objective of developing a healthy, productive and drug-free youth population for **Viksit Bharat 2047**.

International Framework for Drug Control:

Major Institutions:

- **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC):** Supports international cooperation against illicit drugs, organised crime, corruption and related security threats.
- **International Narcotics Control Board (INCB):** Monitors implementation of international drug-control treaties and the availability of controlled substances for legitimate medical and scientific purposes.

Major International Conventions:

- **Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961:** Establishes international controls over narcotic drugs while recognising legitimate medical and scientific uses.
- **Convention on Psychotropic Substances, 1971:** Extends international control to specified psychotropic substances.
- **United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, 1988:** Strengthens cooperation on trafficking, money laundering, precursor control and confiscation of criminal proceeds.
- **India's international cooperation:** Bilateral agreements, memoranda of understanding, mutual legal assistance and intelligence-sharing arrangements support action against transnational trafficking networks.

Major Challenges and Way Forward:

Enforcement and Governance Challenges:

- **Border vulnerabilities:** Strengthen coordinated surveillance, technology-assisted monitoring and cooperation with neighbouring countries while facilitating legitimate trade.
- **Synthetic drugs:** Improve precursor tracking, forensic laboratories and rapid identification of emerging psychoactive substances.
- **Financial networks:** Prioritise asset tracing, confiscation of criminal proceeds and investigation of hawala and cryptocurrency-linked transactions.
- **Institutional coordination:** Integrate intelligence databases, improve evidence collection and strengthen prosecution capacity through specialised training.

Public Health and Social Interventions:

- **Balanced enforcement:** Maintain strict action against traffickers while treating substance dependence primarily as a public-health concern requiring evidence-based intervention.
- **Accessible rehabilitation:** Expand affordable treatment, mental-health support, community-based recovery and reintegration services.
- **Youth prevention:** Strengthen school-based awareness, family participation, counselling and early identification of substance-use disorders.
- **Alternative livelihoods:** Promote viable economic opportunities in regions vulnerable to illicit cultivation and trafficking-related recruitment.

Value Addition for UPSC:

Important Concepts:

- **Narco-terrorism:** The use of proceeds from illicit narcotics activities to finance terrorism or violent extremist networks.
- **Precursor Chemicals:** Substances used in manufacturing drugs that may have legitimate industrial or pharmaceutical applications.
- **Darknet:** Internet services accessed through specialised networks that can provide anonymity and may be exploited for illegal transactions.
- **Harm Reduction:** Public-health measures intended to minimise adverse consequences of drug use, including overdose prevention and infection-control interventions.
- **Network-Centric Enforcement:** An investigative approach targeting the leadership, logistics, financing and operational relationships of criminal networks rather than focusing only on individual seizures.

Constitutional and GS Linkages:

- **Article 47:** Directs the State to improve public health and endeavour to prohibit intoxicating drinks and drugs injurious to health, except for medicinal purposes.
- **GS-II:** Public health, social justice, rehabilitation, government programmes and international cooperation.
- **GS-III:** Internal security, organised crime, border management, money laundering, narco-terrorism and cybersecurity.
- **Essay:** Drug abuse and youth development, organised crime and national security, public health versus punitive approaches.

Key Analytical Insight:

- **Drug trafficking must be addressed simultaneously as a national-security threat, organised financial crime and public-health challenge.** Operation Trident illustrates the importance of targeting entire criminal networks, while the **2026–2029 roadmap** highlights the complementary roles of intelligence-led enforcement, financial disruption, prevention, rehabilitation and international cooperation.

Cabinet Secretariat's Role in Governance Comes into Focus Amid Questions over Election Commission Independence and Executive Oversight

Recent Developments: Cabinet Secretariat and the Election Commission Dispute

- In October 2026, the **Cabinet Secretariat** declined to initiate action on complaints submitted by Election Commissioners **Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi** against Senior Deputy Election Commissioner **Maneesh Garg**, an Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer serving in the Election Commission of India (ECI).
- The complaints, sent separately to Cabinet Secretary **T. V. Somanathan on 29 July 2026**, alleged that Garg had revised the distribution of work among senior officers without prior discussion with or approval from the Commission.

- The Cabinet Secretariat's internal file notings, disclosed through a **Right to Information (RTI)** response, stated that the communications were made by the Commissioners in their individual capacities and did not constitute a formal communication from the ECI as a whole. Acting without such communication could be considered interference in a constitutional body.
- The Secretariat acknowledged the letters and forwarded copies to the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT), the Establishment Officer and the office of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC). The ECI subsequently stated that the disputed work-redistribution orders had not been implemented following directions from the two Commissioners.
- **Governance significance:** The episode highlights the balance between executive control over civil servants, institutional accountability and the constitutional independence of the ECI.

What Is the Cabinet Secretariat?

- The **Cabinet Secretariat** is a central government institution that provides secretarial assistance to the Union Cabinet and its committees, coordinates government business and monitors the implementation of Cabinet decisions.
- It functions directly under the **Prime Minister**, with the Cabinet Secretary serving as its administrative head and the senior-most coordinating civil servant in the Union government.
- The Secretariat is not separately established by an express provision of the Constitution. Its responsibilities are primarily defined through the **Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules, 1961**, and the **Government of India (Transaction of Business) Rules, 1961**.
- Both sets of rules derive their authority from **Article 77(3)** of the Constitution, under which the President makes rules for the convenient transaction of government business and its allocation among ministers.
- The Allocation of Business Rules identify ministries and departments and distribute government responsibilities among them, while the Transaction of Business Rules prescribe procedures for conducting government business, including specified cases requiring approval or consultation.

Origin and Evolution: From Secretariat Support to Coordination

- Before the introduction of the portfolio system, government business was conducted collectively by the **Governor-General-in-Council**, which functioned as a joint consultative body.
- The modern institutional roots of the Secretariat developed during British rule as the administration evolved towards a more structured system of departmental responsibility and executive coordination.
- On **5 September 1946**, following the formation of the Interim Government, the Secretariat of the Executive Council was redesignated as the **Cabinet Secretariat**, and the Secretary to the Executive Council became the Cabinet Secretary.
- After Independence, the Secretariat gradually expanded beyond circulating papers and recording decisions to become an important mechanism for **inter-ministerial coordination and collaborative decision-making**.
- In independent India, **N. R. Pillai** became the first Cabinet Secretary in 1950. Subsequent institutional developments included the establishment of an Intelligence Wing in 1965 and the creation of the **Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW)** in 1968 under the Cabinet Secretariat.

Organisational Structure: Three Wings

Civil Wing:

- The Civil Wing provides the principal secretarial support to the Cabinet and its committees, administers the government's business rules and facilitates coordination among ministries and departments.

Military Wing:

- The Military Wing provides secretarial and coordination support for defence-related matters and relevant inter-service or defence coordination mechanisms.

Intelligence Wing:

- The Intelligence Wing has historically supported intelligence coordination, including matters associated with the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC). The **National Security Council (NSC)**, established in 1998, subsequently became a key mechanism for national security policy coordination.

Major Functions of the Cabinet Secretariat

Cabinet assistance and record management:

- The Secretariat arranges Cabinet meetings, prepares and circulates agendas and supporting papers, records discussions and circulates approved decisions. It also maintains Cabinet records, subject to applicable confidentiality and record-management requirements.

Monitoring implementation:

- It follows up on Cabinet decisions and seeks information from concerned ministries and departments to assess implementation. This strengthens administrative accountability and helps identify delays or coordination failures.

Administration of business rules:

- The Secretariat administers the Allocation of Business Rules and Transaction of Business Rules, helping ensure that government responsibilities are properly distributed and that prescribed decision-making procedures are followed.

Inter-ministerial coordination:

- When disagreements arise between ministries, the Secretariat facilitates consultation and consensus through formal and informal coordination mechanisms, including standing or ad hoc **Committees of Secretaries**. These mechanisms seek to resolve administrative differences before they obstruct policy implementation.

Crisis management:

- The Cabinet Secretary chairs the **National Crisis Management Committee (NCMC)**, which coordinates the response of relevant ministries and agencies during major crises. The Secretariat supports a coordinated government response rather than replacing the statutory responsibilities of specialised agencies.

Policy coordination:

- By connecting ministries and monitoring decisions across departmental boundaries, the Secretariat supports the translation of Cabinet-level decisions into coordinated administrative action.

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The Cabinet Secretary: Position and Responsibilities

- The **Cabinet Secretary** is the administrative head of the Cabinet Secretariat and the senior-most civil servant in the Union government hierarchy. The position is generally held by a serving IAS officer.
- The Cabinet Secretary functions under the Prime Minister and provides an important link between political executive leadership and the administrative machinery of government.
- The officeholder is the **ex-officio Chairman of the Civil Services Board** and chairs the Conference of Chief Secretaries of States, supporting coordination between the Union and state administrative leadership.
- The Cabinet Secretary monitors important Cabinet decisions, coordinates administrative responses to cross-ministerial issues and facilitates the functioning of government under the prescribed business rules.
- The post normally carries a **two-year tenure**, with extensions permitted under applicable service rules. The maximum permissible tenure and any exceptional extension must be assessed according to the rules in force at the relevant time.

Constitutional Significance of the ECI Dispute

- **Article 324:** Vests the superintendence, direction and control of elections to Parliament, state legislatures, and the offices of President and Vice-President in the Election Commission of India, subject to constitutional and statutory provisions.
- **Institutional independence:** The ECI's constitutional status is intended to protect electoral administration from inappropriate executive influence and to support impartial elections.
- **Multi-member decision-making:** Section 18 of the **Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023**, provides for decisions to be taken unanimously as far as possible, with differences resolved by majority.
- **Administrative control versus institutional autonomy:** An officer may be appointed through an executive appointment process but, once assigned to the ECI, their work and conduct within the Commission must be governed by the applicable rules and institutional arrangements.
- **Accountability through due process:** The controversy illustrates the distinction between taking complaints seriously and initiating action without a clear institutional basis. Formal procedures can help protect both the autonomy of a constitutional body and the rights of officials concerned.

Issues and Criticism

Tenure and neutrality:

- Repeated extensions to senior officials may raise concerns about institutional independence, predictable succession and perceived dependence on the executive. Transparent and consistently applied tenure rules are important safeguards.

Overlapping institutional roles:

- The Cabinet Secretariat, Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) may deal with related coordination issues. Clear allocation of responsibilities is necessary to prevent duplication and uncertainty over accountability.

Centralisation of decision-making:

- Strong coordination at the centre can improve policy coherence, but excessive centralisation may weaken departmental autonomy, slow routine decisions and reduce the responsibility of line ministries.

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Accountability and transparency:

- Confidentiality is necessary for Cabinet deliberations, but administrative decisions must remain subject to appropriate scrutiny, record-keeping and lawful accountability mechanisms. RTI disclosures can illuminate institutional processes, subject to statutory exemptions.

Value Addition for UPSC

- **GS-II — Constitution and governance:** Link the Cabinet Secretariat to Article 77(3), executive rule-making, inter-ministerial coordination and the constitutional position of the ECI under Article 324.
- **GS-IV — Probity in governance:** Examine neutrality, procedural fairness, institutional integrity, accountability and avoidance of conflicts between administrative authority and constitutional autonomy.
- **Important distinction:** The Cabinet Secretariat coordinates government business; it does not independently replace the Cabinet, the Prime Minister, line ministries or constitutionally autonomous institutions in exercising their respective powers.
- **Reform priorities:** Strengthen transparent administrative procedures, clarify jurisdictional boundaries, ensure consistent tenure practices and institutionalise coordination without undermining constitutional independence.
- **Core takeaway:** Effective governance requires both a capable coordinating executive and safeguards that prevent coordination from becoming inappropriate interference in constitutionally independent institutions.

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UN Loss and Damage Fund Sets Aside First Country-Specific Support for Nepal, Exposing Global Climate Finance Gaps

Recent Developments: Nepal's Provisional Allocation

- On **22 October 2026**, the Board of the United Nations **Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD)** provisionally set aside **USD 21.6 million** for Nepal following devastating floods triggered by an ice-and-rock avalanche in August 2026. This was the Fund's first provisional allocation for a specific country.
- The proposed support includes **USD 20 million** for Nepal and **USD 1.6 million** for oversight fees payable to implementing organisations. Nepal had requested USD 20 million, although its estimated recovery and reconstruction requirements were approximately USD 4.71–4.75 billion.
- The decision was taken at the Fund Board's first-ever extraordinary meeting. A pilot arrangement allows Nepal to submit its funding request outside the regular submission period under the **Barbados Implementation Modalities (BIM)**.
- The allocation is **provisional, not a completed disbursement**. Nepal must submit a formal funding request, which the Board is expected to consider at its tenth meeting in Manila in December 2026.
- **Significance:** The decision represents a procedural breakthrough in operationalising international support for climate-related loss and damage, while exposing the gap between disaster recovery needs and available international finance.

Nepal Disaster: Causes and Consequences

Trigger and geographical impact:

- On **26 August 2026**, an ice-and-rock avalanche triggered debris flows and severe flooding across the **Bhotekoshi–Trishuli–Narayani river system** in Nepal.

- Climate attribution experts identified human-induced warming and permafrost degradation as factors that may have weakened the source rock, increasing the likelihood of its collapse. The event illustrates how rising temperatures can interact with mountainous terrain and geological instability to intensify disaster risks.

Economic consequences:

- Nepal estimated the disaster's economic losses and damage at a minimum of **USD 2.69 billion**, while the initial recovery and reconstruction requirement was estimated at approximately USD 4.71–4.75 billion.
- The provisional USD 21.6 million allocation is less than **0.5% of the estimated reconstruction requirement**, highlighting the limited capacity of the Fund to meet large-scale disaster recovery costs.

What Is the Loss and Damage Fund?

- The **Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage** is an international climate-finance mechanism intended to assist developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, including economic and non-economic losses.
- It operates within the financial architecture of the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)** and supports responses to climate-related disasters and other adverse climate impacts.
- The Fund addresses losses that cannot be adequately prevented through mitigation or managed through adaptation alone. Its intended support complements, rather than replaces, efforts to reduce emissions, build resilience and prepare for disasters.

Origin and institutional development:

- The Fund was agreed upon at **COP27 in 2022**, following prolonged demands by developing countries for dedicated financial support for climate-related loss and damage.
- Its governing instrument was adopted at **COP28 in 2023**, advancing the transition from a political commitment to an operational financial institution.
- The Fund's evolving arrangements seek to improve access to resources for vulnerable countries, including through the Barbados Implementation Modalities and mechanisms for submitting and assessing funding requests.

Funding Status and Access Mechanism

Contributions and available resources:

- As of **15 March 2026**, 27 partners had pledged approximately **USD 822.06 million** to the Fund. Of this amount, USD 629.70 million was reported as grant contributions in the supplied figures.
- The five largest donors identified in the supplied data were Italy, USD 110.31 million; France, USD 108.23 million; the United Arab Emirates, USD 100 million; Germany, USD 98.24 million; and the United Kingdom, USD 91.92 million.
- The Fund's initial allocation arrangements included a start-up package of approximately USD 342 million, with at least half intended for **least developed countries and small island developing States**.

Funding demand and approval process:

- The Fund's first call under the Barbados Implementation Modalities received **176 funding requests from 119 countries**, with total requests amounting to approximately USD 2.8 billion.
- The Board's initial funding decisions were scheduled for its tenth meeting in December 2026, demonstrating that demand substantially exceeds the resources available for allocation.

- In Nepal's case, the Board provisionally set aside resources and permitted an exceptional submission outside the normal funding window. The formal request, assessment and Board approval must still occur before the money can be released.
- The Fund's ability to disburse support also depends on the conversion of donor pledges into signed contribution agreements and actual transfers. Pledged amounts should therefore not automatically be treated as cash immediately available for disbursement.

Why the Nepal Decision Matters

From political commitment to implementation:

- The Nepal decision moves the Fund beyond general resource mobilisation towards a country-specific response to an identifiable disaster. It provides an early test of whether the institution can respond to urgent needs rather than operate solely through conventional funding cycles.
- The exceptional submission arrangement may offer lessons for establishing a **rapid-response mechanism** capable of providing timely support after catastrophic events.
- The case also highlights the need to balance emergency speed with financial oversight, eligibility assessment, transparency and accountability.

Implications for vulnerable countries:

- Developing countries face both sudden disasters, such as floods and cyclones, and slow-onset processes, such as sea-level rise, glacial retreat, desertification and biodiversity loss.
- Loss and damage may include destroyed infrastructure, lost livelihoods, cultural heritage damage, displacement and psychosocial distress. Effective assistance must therefore extend beyond rebuilding physical assets.
- **India's three requests to the FRLD**, as reported in the supplied material, indicate that climate-related financial support is relevant even for large developing economies with substantial domestic capacities.

The Wider Climate-Finance Gap

Unmet needs and funding commitments:

- Developed countries had previously committed to mobilising **USD 100 billion annually** in climate finance for developing countries. The target was first met in 2022, when reported climate finance reached USD 115.9 billion, although questions remained about its composition, accessibility and distribution.
- At **COP29 in 2024**, countries agreed on a new collective quantified goal calling on developed countries to take the lead in mobilising at least **USD 300 billion annually by 2035** for developing countries.
- The broader ambition is to scale up finance from all public and private sources to approximately **USD 1.3 trillion annually by 2035**. This wider goal is distinct from the USD 300 billion commitment led by developed countries.
- The large difference between estimated climate-finance requirements and negotiated commitments continues to generate concerns about adequacy, predictability, accessibility and the responsibility of developed countries.

Climate justice and international responsibility:

- Under the **UNFCCC** and the **2015 Paris Agreement**, climate finance is central to enabling developing countries to pursue mitigation and adaptation while managing climate impacts.

- The principle of **common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities** recognises that countries have shared responsibilities but differ in historical contributions to emissions and their financial and technological capacities.
- Developing countries argue that inadequate or delayed finance shifts a disproportionate share of climate-related costs onto populations that often have limited resources to recover from disasters.

Credibility Concerns and Implementation Challenges

Slow procedures and limited resources:

- Critics argue that the Fund's multi-stage approval process, involving project development, assessment and Board approval, may delay support when affected countries need immediate assistance.
- The World Bank serves as the Fund's interim trustee, while governance and access arrangements continue to evolve. The effectiveness of these arrangements will depend on whether they enable timely and equitable access without weakening financial safeguards.
- The provisional Nepal allocation is an important precedent, but its practical value will depend on the speed of final approval, the actual release of funds and the adequacy of support relative to the scale of damage.

Political commitment and trust:

- Climate-finance commitments depend on sustained donor participation and the conversion of pledges into actual contributions. Political withdrawals or reduced engagement by major contributors can undermine confidence in multilateral climate cooperation.
- A credible loss-and-damage system requires predictable resources, transparent allocation criteria, accessible application procedures and monitoring of outcomes.

Value Addition for UPSC

- **GS-II — International institutions:** Examine the UNFCCC, the Paris Agreement, multilateral climate negotiations and the challenges of implementing international commitments.
- **GS-III — Environment and disaster management:** Connect the Fund to climate resilience, mountain hazards, glacial and permafrost changes, disaster recovery and adaptation planning.
- **GS-IV — Ethics and climate justice:** Analyse intergenerational equity, distributive justice, differentiated responsibilities and the obligations of states towards vulnerable populations.
- **Key distinction: Mitigation** reduces greenhouse gas emissions, **adaptation** reduces vulnerability to climate impacts, and **loss and damage** addresses adverse impacts that cannot be fully avoided through mitigation and adaptation.
- **Way forward:** Establish predictable and additional grant-based finance, develop permanent rapid-response procedures, simplify access for vulnerable countries, strengthen early-warning systems and ensure transparent monitoring of disbursements.
- **Core takeaway:** Nepal's provisional allocation is a significant operational milestone, but the credibility of the global loss-and-damage framework will ultimately depend on timely disbursement, adequate funding and equitable support for climate-vulnerable countries.

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QUESTIONS

1. With reference to the PM-KUSUM Scheme, consider the following statements:

(1) Renewable energy plants under Component A can be installed on elevated structures above cultivated land.

(2) Component B provides subsidies for solarising existing grid-connected agricultural pumps.

(3) Component C allows farmers to sell surplus solar power generated from pump solarisation to DISCOMs.

(4) The scheme is implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

(A) 1 and 3 only

(B) 1, 2 and 4 only

(C) 2 and 3 only

(D) 1, 3 and 4 only

2. With reference to the constitutional and statutory framework governing media and journalism in India, consider the following statements:

(1) Freedom of the press is explicitly enumerated as a distinct fundamental right under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution.

(2) PIB accreditation confers a statutory right of publication upon journalists under the Working Journalists Act.

(3) The Press Council of India possesses statutory powers under the Press Council Act, 1978 to impose monetary fines for ethical violations.

(4) Intermediaries lose conditional safe harbour immunity under Section 79 of the Information Technology Act if they fail to exercise due diligence.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

(A) Only one

(B) Only two

(C) Only three

(D) All four

3. Consider the following statutory and policy milestones in India's anti-narcotics regulatory framework:

(1) Enactment of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act.

(2) Launch of the Nasha Mukt Bharat Abhiyaan by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

(3) Enactment of the Prevention of Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (PIT-NDPS) Act.

(4) Establishment of the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB).

Which one of the following represents the correct chronological order of the above milestones (from earliest to latest)?

(A) 1 - 3 - 4 - 2

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(B) 4 - 1 - 2 - 3

(C) 1 - 4 - 2 - 3

(D) 1 - 4 - 3 - 2

4. Consider the following institutional and administrative milestones in Indian executive governance:

(1) Creation of the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW) under the Cabinet Secretariat.

(2) Redesignation of the Executive Council Secretariat as the Cabinet Secretariat.

(3) Appointment of N. R. Pillai as the first Cabinet Secretary of independent India.

(4) Framing of the Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules under Article 77(3).

Which one of the following represents the correct chronological order of the above milestones (from earliest to latest)?

(A) 2 - 3 - 4 - 1

(B) 3 - 2 - 1 - 4

(C) 2 - 4 - 3 - 1

(D) 4 - 2 - 3 - 1

5. Consider the following comparative statements regarding international climate finance mechanisms:

(1) Unlike traditional adaptation funding, Loss and Damage allocations are designed to address both sudden-onset catastrophic events and slow-onset environmental processes like sea-level rise and glacial retreat.

(2) Financial pledges announced by donor countries at UNFCCC COPs automatically represent liquid cash immediately available for emergency disbursement to affected nations.

(3) The global demand for climate disaster recovery finance currently far exceeds the total financial resources pledged to the Loss and Damage Fund.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(A) 1 and 2 only

(B) 1 and 3 only

(C) 3 only

(D) 1, 2 and 3

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ANSWER KEY

1 – Answer (A), 2 – Answer (A), 3 – Answer (D), 4 – Answer (A), 5 – Answer (B)

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In today's fast-changing world, staying updated with current affairs is essential for both academic success and professional growth. Awareness of national and international events not only broadens general knowledge but also sharpens critical and analytical thinking skills. It enables individuals to form well-informed opinions, which are crucial for competitive examinations, group discussions, interviews, and impactful essay writing.

Being well-informed reflects adaptability, awareness, and intellectual curiosity—qualities that are highly valued in a competitive environment. A strong grasp of contemporary issues enhances confidence, widens perspective, and prepares individuals to tackle real-world challenges effectively, ultimately opening the door to better opportunities and long-term personal and career advancement.

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