

**WATER CONSERVATION**

- **What was the U.N. water conference and what happened there?**
- **CONTEXT: The United Nations 2023 Water Conference held in New York on March 22-24 was the first such meeting on water after 46 years.**
  - The conference coincided with the mid-term comprehensive review of the International Decade for Action. In a report entitled 'Water for Sustainable Development 2018–2028', the U.N. recognised the urgent need for action given that we are not on track to meet the 2030 Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) no. 6 for water: "Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all".
  - Before the conference began, it had lofty ambitions:
    - ✓ To identify game-changing ideas
    - ✓ To make recommendations to policymakers on how to speed- and scale-up change through capacity development, data and information, innovation, financing, and governance
    - ✓ To place water at the centre of the climate agenda in activities building up to the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) in New York in July and the COP28 climate talks to be held in Dubai later 2023.
- **What is the water conference?**
  - Such international conferences serve to better align activities by governments, companies, NGOs, and funders around a few grand challenges. They also help countries learn from the experiences of others, transfer technology, and invest.
  - The water sector is particularly prone to fragmentation because water problems tend to be local ( like, say, a particular lake is polluted, a particular area gets frequently flooded or a particular slum doesn't receive drinking water ) and need local solutions. So there is an inherent problem of how we can mobilise globally to solve local water problems.
  - The last U.N. Water Conference was held in 1977, and it was groundbreaking in achieving just this. In particular, it resulted in the first global 'Action Plan' recognising that "all peoples, whatever their stage of development and social and economic conditions, have the right to have access to drinking water in quantities and of a quality equal to their basic needs."
  - This declaration led to several decades of global funding and concerted effort to provide drinking water and sanitation for all. These actions substantially reduced the population without access to safe drinking water in much of the developing world, in fact.
- **Was the new conference similarly effective?**
  - Negotiating such a declaration is singularly hard because, unlike 50 years ago, today's problems are more complex.
  - While addressing access to safe drinking water and sanitation (SGD 6.1 and 6.2) was and is challenging, extending services to underserved populations is relatively uncontroversial: it comes down to finding the money to pay for it. Indeed, this is already occurring in India through government programmes such as Swachh Bharat Mission and Jal Jeevan Mission.
  - The challenge is that improving access to water and sanitation no longer translates directly to sustained access to water and sanitation. For example, many drinking-water projects that have already failed because they drew too much groundwater or their water sources were contaminated. This in turn resulted in communities "slipping back" into having no access.
  - Groundwater over-abstraction is mostly driven by agricultural pumping. But if we are to solve this over-abstraction problem in heavily irrigated places like Punjab or the Cauvery delta, there is just no other way than to pump less. There simply isn't enough rainfall for everyone to grow paddy year-round; and while paddy has a minimum support price, other less water-intensive crops do not.
  - Farmers aren't going to change their behaviour until agricultural policies change, which in turn requires many agencies and ministries to work together.
  - As such, the water problem is no longer about access to water and sanitation; these represent only two of the eight water-related SDGs. The remaining SDG 6 targets address the need to sustain agriculture, industry, and natural ecosystems. They have metrics that track better governance, improve efficiency of irrigation water use, restore the water quality in lakes and rivers, and improve wastewater management.
  - These problems are inherently harder because they can't be fixed by better infrastructure. They require tough political choices, empowering agencies, and strengthening democratic processes.
- **What were the conference's outcomes?**
  - There were 713 diverse voluntary commitments by philanthropic donors, governments, corporations, and NGOs; 120 of these were relevant to India.
  - They included a \$50-billion commitment from the Indian government to improve rural drinking water services under its Jal Jeevan Mission.

- The following are some commitments announced at the event, with examples of projects that showed potential:
- **Technology** – There were specific innovations in wastewater treatment or solar treatment of water in remote areas, and a number of proposals for incubation platforms, including the IBM Sustainability Accelerator, focused on water management.
- **Data and models** – Before every large investment, we must anticipate potential impact. Simulations are often important to do this, and they need large amounts of input data. Cost-effective approaches to data-generation included sensors and satellite data. Other efforts, like the World Meteorological Organisation’s Hydrological Status and Outlook System, offered data analysis tools.
- **Knowledge sharing** – Solutions to most of these problems already exist, but each region and country often reinvents the wheel. We need to accelerate cross-learning. One useful tool here was the W12+ Blueprint, a UNESCO platform that hosts city profiles and case studies of programs, technologies, policies that addresses common water security challenges.
- **Capacity building** – Many people lack access to basic services because they are unable to advocate for themselves and because infrastructure projects are designed for and by powerful actors in society. Efforts like the Making Rights Real initiative offered to help marginalised communities and women understand how to exercise their rights. Similarly, the ‘Water for Women Fund’ offered support mechanisms for more effective and sustainable water, sanitation, and hygiene outcomes for women.
- **Civil society** – There were several platforms for collective action by civil society groups lobbying for changes in regulations, e.g. creating transnational networks to advocate for national and international bodies to criminalise the use of certain pesticides harmful to aquatic life.
- **Environmental, social, and corporate governance** – The conference concluded that a big barrier to farmers and industries using water more efficiently is that they have no incentive. Specifically, farmers aren’t becoming more efficient or going pesticide-free unless consumers are willing to pay a premium for more sustainably produced goods.
- ✓ Effective water governance hinges on these broad areas ,and weaving them into the Water Action Agenda is a step. But time will tell how we carry these commitments forward as we move into the HLPPF and COP processes.

## SOCIETY

- **A ‘casteless’ society: an aspiration or a myth to cover up privilege?**
- Despite attempts to create an egalitarian and modern society, the caste system remains a prominent feature of Indian society. Historically, castes, which are often associated with certain occupations, were arranged in a hierarchy, with some castes considered superior to others and thus accorded more power and privileges than others. This system of social stratification and power relations has been a major problem in India as it has led to discrimination and inequality for those belonging to lower castes.
- **The idea of a ‘casteless’ society**
- The word ‘casteless’, simply refers to ‘an individual who does not have a caste or is an outcaste’. Yet, its implications and manifestations as a social concept run much deeper.
- The term ‘casteless’ refers to the ‘absence of caste’ in society. It advocates for a society free of caste-based discrimination and oppression. It aims to create an inclusive society that provides equal opportunity for every individual regardless of inheritance and birth.
- In a ‘casteless’ society, people from different backgrounds would be treated with dignity and respect. People would interact and work together freely, without caste-based discrimination or prejudices and everyone would have access to quality education, healthcare, and job opportunities irrespective of their caste or social status. Here a person’s worth and success would be solely judged based on their abilities, character, and hard work rather than their social position
- The idea of such a casteless society has been a goal that many, including social reformists, have aspired to achieve. However, the reality is that the caste system remains deeply ingrained in our society with roots that extend back thousands of years.
- **Is being casteless a myth?**
- The term ‘casteless’, as a sociological concept was popularised by M. N. Srinivas, an Indian sociologist who has written immensely about caste, sanskritisation and social stratification.
- Srinivas in his book Caste in Modern India argues that caste is a complex social structure that has adapted and changed throughout history but remains a powerful force in modern Indian society.
- One of Srinivas’s key arguments is that the notion of being “casteless” is a myth in the Indian context. He explains that even though some people may claim to be casteless or advocate for a casteless society, they are often still influenced by caste in various ways.

- For instance, many media houses, universities and corporate organisations are filled with people belonging to upper castes, especially in higher positions. Despite many claims to be casteless, employers belonging to upper castes tend to prefer hiring people of their own castes than people from the so-called lower castes.
- **The reality of caste**
- The concept of castelessness is a response to the discriminatory practices of the caste system. Yet, Indian sociologist Satish Deshpande, in his article “Caste and Castelessness: Towards a Biography of the ‘General Category’”, argues that only upper castes are enabled to think of themselves as “casteless,” while the under-privileged lower castes are often restricted to their caste identities.
- The ideology of castelessness has successfully interpellated upper-caste subjects, enabling them to see their caste identities as incidental or irrelevant to their claims. However, it is presumptive because, in actuality, they do not have to give up their caste identities. They would automatically be presumed to be casteless if they did not explicitly invoke their caste. Therefore, they can retain their power and privilege while appearing to be casteless.
- Glimpses of caste pride among upper castes are witnessed in the caste surnames they carry, in their insistence to marry within their castes as well as through the caste associations and clubs they create. Caste identity and pride can be so deeply ingrained in an individual’s upbringing and socialisation, that they may not even realize the extent to which it affects their thoughts and actions.
- Upper-caste individuals are often able to attain better education and employment opportunities due to their sociocultural and economic privileges. It enables them to be seen as individuals who have achieved success through their hard work and merit while hiding the caste identity that helped them achieve it.
- On the other hand, lower caste individuals often face discrimination and barriers while accessing education and employment opportunities due to their caste identity. Moreover, in most cases, their caste identity overwrites all other identities, and thus, despite hard work, society may not grant them equal opportunities. This forces them to rely on their caste identity as a means of asserting their rights and claiming social and economic opportunities.
- As the Chief Justice of India, D. Y. Chandrachud said at the B.R. Ambedkar Memorial Lecture, “Castelessness is a privilege that only the upper caste can afford because their caste privilege has already translated into social, political and economic capital”.
- Claims of castelessness, among the upper castes, thus seem like attempts to resist affirmative action policies that aim to redress historical injustices and promote social and economic equality for lower castes. Upper caste individuals claim the need for a casteless society by superficially arguing against reservation policies on claims that it encourages certain castes to identify primarily with their caste identity, rather than as citizens of a unified nation, and that it works against meritocracy.
- In making claims of castelessness, dominant caste individuals seem to be oblivious to the caste-based discrimination and inequality that still prevails in society. For many lower-caste individuals, reservation policies have provided a pathway to education and employment opportunities that they might not have otherwise had.
- Therefore, castelessness is now viewed as a new disguise for caste power and privilege, while at the same time it is also an aspiration for people subject to caste-based discrimination.
- **Dr. Ambedkar’s vision**
- Dr. Ambedkar acknowledged that caste was deeply entrenched in Indian society and that it would require significant effort to uproot it.
- Education, according to him, was key to annihilating caste. Education could empower individuals socially, economically and politically. It could help them escape the cycle of poverty and oppression through economic independence. It could also help them to be more politically represented, giving them a voice in the democratic process to advocate for their rights.
- Economic and political freedom would help them in challenging the existing social order and breaking down barriers that had been erected to maintain caste-based discrimination.
- According to him, another important step towards creating a casteless society was inter-caste marriages. He argued that marriage was a means of reproducing caste privileges and maintaining the existing social order. Inter-caste marriage could break down caste barriers, as individuals born through such marriages cannot be associated with a single caste, challenging the traditional notion of caste purity. He believed that inter-caste marriages would help to create a sense of unity and shared identity, which would be necessary to achieve a casteless society.

### IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

- **After Finland joins NATO, why is Turkey making Sweden wait?**

- **CONTEXT: Sweden's path to NATO membership remains blocked by Turkey and Hungary as neighbour Finland officially joined the 30-member alliance recently after its application was ratified in record time.**
- **Background**
  - Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 convinced Sweden and Finland to ditch long-held policies of military non-alignment.
  - Both countries see NATO, with its collective defence clause, as the best way to ensure their security.
  - The majority of NATO members have quickly ratified their applications, arguing that Finland ( which shares a 1,300-km (810-mile) border with Russia ) and Sweden would strengthen the alliance in the Baltic.
  - After initial objections, the Turkish parliament gave its approval for Finnish membership recently.
  - But Turkey has dragged its heels over Sweden saying it does not take Turkey's security concerns seriously and has not lived up to its side of a bargain, struck in Spain in 2022, that laid out a number of issues Sweden needed to address.
  - Hungary has followed Turkey's lead in delaying ratification, which must be unanimous.
- **Why does Turkey object to Swedish NATO membership?**
  - Sweden has criticised Turkey for human rights abuses and over democratic standards, irking politicians in Ankara.
  - Turkey says Sweden harbours members of what it considers terrorist groups (a charge Sweden denies ) and has demanded their extradition as a step toward ratifying Swedish membership.
  - Sweden's courts have blocked some expulsions.
  - In recent time, Turkey has objected to protests in Stockholm during which the Muslim holy book, the Koran, was burned and, on a separate occasion, an effigy of Erdogan was hanged upside down. Turkey says these are hate crimes. Sweden says they are covered by freedom of speech laws.
  - Turkey holds an election on May 14, presenting Erdogan with his biggest political challenge during two decades in power. The NATO issue may help divert voters' attention away from a cost-of-living crisis.
  - An opposition win ( a real possibility ) would boost Sweden's chances of a quick accession.
- **Why has Hungary not ratified membership?**
  - Hungary says Sweden has had a hostile attitude to Hungary for years. It is angry about Swedish criticism of Prime Minister Viktor Orban over the perceived erosion of rule of law. Orban denies such erosion.
  - Unlike Turkey, Hungary does not have a list of demands, but says grievances need to be addressed before it can ratify Sweden's accession to NATO.
- **When will turkey agree to Swedish NATO membership?**
  - Once the election is out of the way, Sweden's path may be clearer. But there is no time-table and approval is not guaranteed.
  - Sweden says it has implemented the Madrid agreement ( including tougher anti-terrorism laws ) and that some of Turkey's other demands are impossible to meet.
  - Turkey has had previous run-ins with NATO allies and backed down.
  - A shift could come after the election, or Erdogan may want to see further evidence from Sweden it has listened to Ankara's security concerns.
- **Is Sweden's security threatened by the delay?**
  - Sweden has said its security position is better now than prior to its application to NATO. Sweden has received assurances of support from countries including the United States, Britain and Germany.
  - NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg has said it would be inconceivable that the alliance would not support Sweden if it were threatened.
  - Sweden already cooperates closely with NATO and integration measures are moving forward. Sweden has a strong air force and a submarine fleet tailored to Baltic Sea conditions – a boost for NATO in the region.

## PRELIMS

### 1. India Justice Report

- **CONTEXT: Indian courts are jammed with cases and are seeing pendency increase by the day. At the same time, they are also functioning with fewer judges than the sanctioned number, the India Justice Report (IJR), 2022 said.**
- As of December 2022, against a sanctioned strength of 1,108 judges, the High Courts were functioning with only 778 judges. The subordinate courts were found functioning with 19,288 judges against a sanctioned strength of 24,631 judges.
- Correspondingly, the number of cases pending per judge is rising in most States over the past five years, while the sanctioned strength has remained more or less the same.

- “At High Court level, Uttar Pradesh has the highest average pendency; cases remain pending for an average of 11.34 years, and in West Bengal for 9.9 years. The lowest average High Court pendency is in Tripura (1 year), Sikkim (1.9 years) and Meghalaya (2.1 years),” the report said.

- The number of cases a judge has to deal with has steadily increased. Between 2018 and 2022, the caseload per judge increased in 22 States and Union Territories, the report said.

- The case clearance rate (CCR), or the number of cases disposed of in a year measured against the number filed in that year, is a common metric used to determine

the rate at which cases are disposed of. A CCR of more than 100% indicates that the number of pending cases is reducing. The report found that the High Courts are clearing more cases annually than the subordinate courts. Between 2018-19 and 2022, the national average improved by six percentage points (88.5% to 94.6%) in High Courts, but declined by 3.6 points in lower courts (93% to 89.4%), IJR said.

- At the same period, Tripura is the only State where the CCR in district courts remained above 100%, with the exception of 2020 — the year of the pandemic.

- In 2018-19 only four High Courts had a CCR of 100% or more. In 2022, this more than doubled to 12 High Courts. The High Courts of Kerala and Odisha have higher case clearance rates (156% and 131% respectively) while the High Courts of Rajasthan (65%) and Bombay (72%) have the lowest case clearance rates,” the IJR said.

- Nationally, the number of court halls appears sufficient for the number of actual judges, the IJR said. However, it added that space will become a problem if all the sanctioned posts are filled.

- In August 2022, there were 21,014 court halls for the 24,631 judges’ posts sanctioned at the time — a shortfall of 14.7%.

- In Delhi, West Bengal, and Uttarakhand, there were no court halls for the 86, 82, and 35 serving judges, respectively.

- According to the report “If every State appointed each of its sanctioned judges, only four States and four Union Territories would have enough court halls. In 11 States/Union Territories, there would be a shortfall of more than 25%.

- The India Justice Report is a collaborative effort undertaken in partnership with DAKSH, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, Common Cause, Centre for Social Justice, Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy and TISS-Prayas.

## 2. International Conference on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (ICDRI) 2023

- **CONTEXT: India attended the International Conference on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (ICDRI).**

- The International Conference on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (ICDRI) is an annual international conference and platform.

- Its aim is to continue building an engaged global community for disaster and climate resilient infrastructure.

- It was launched the Prime Minister of India at the 2019 UN Climate Summit.

- Theme 2023: ‘Delivering Resilient and Inclusive Infrastructure: Pathways for Risk Informed Systems, Practices and Investments’.

- It is being organized in New Delhi.

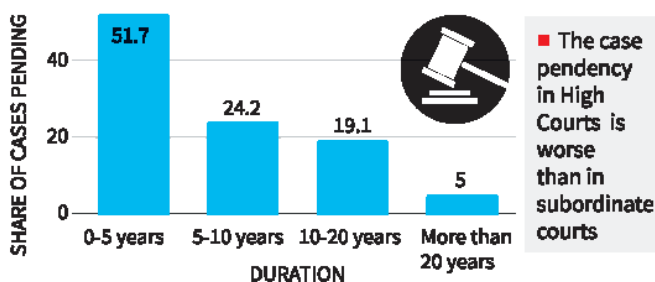
- The Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) includes: Afghanistan, Argentina, Australia, Bhutan, Chile, Fiji, France, Germany, India, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Maldives, Mauritius, Mongolia, Nepal, Netherlands, Peru, Sri Lanka, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. They have all endorsed the CDRI Charter.

- Six organizations are supporting partners:

- ✓ The World Bank Group,
- ✓ The Asian Development Bank,
- ✓ The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP),
- ✓ The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR),
- ✓ The Private Sector Alliance for Disaster Resilient Societies (ARISE) and
- ✓ Coalition for Climate Resilient Investment (CCRI).

## Piling up

The chart shows the share of cases pending in High Courts across various years. The share of cases pending for more than five years, across 25 High Courts in the country was 48.3%.



**3. Nagri Dubraj rice**

➤ **CONTEXT: The Geographical Indication Registry granted Chhattisgarh's aromatic rice, Nagri Dubraj, a geographical indication (GI) tag.**

✓ The Morena and Rewa Mango (both Madhya Pradesh) have also given the Tag.

➤ **About**

- It is produced by a women's self-help group. The women's self-help group "Maa Durga Swasahayata Samuh" of Nagri in Dhamtari district has been harvesting Dubraj.
- It is an indigenous variety and has small grains, is very soft to eat after cooking, and is known as the Basmati of Chhattisgarh because of its fragrance.

➤ **GI Tag**

- GI or Geographical Indication Tag is used for products which have specific geographical origin or have qualities that can be attributed specifically to the region. A GI is primarily an agricultural, natural or a manufactured product (handicrafts and industrial goods) originating from a definite geographical territory.
- The GI tags are issued as per the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, of 1999.
- It is a part of the intellectual property rights that comes under the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property.
- This tag is valid for a period of 10 years following which it can be renewed.

➤ **Benefits of Getting GI Tag**

- It confers legal protection to Geographical Indications in India
- Prevents unauthorised use of a Registered Geographical Indication by others.
- It provides legal protection to Indian Geographical Indications which in turn boost exports.
- It promotes the economic prosperity of producers of goods produced in a geographical territory.

**4. Einstein Tile**

➤ **CONTEXT: Recently Mathematicians have discovered an "einstein tile"**

• An "einstein tile" – a shape that could be singularly used to create a non-repeating (aperiodic) pattern on an infinitely large plane. Here, "einstein" is a play on German ein stein or "one stone" – not to be confused with Albert Einstein, the famous German physicist.

• A periodic tiles are a set of tile-types whos copies can form Patterns without repetition

• In 1961, mathematician Hao Wang conjectured that aperiodic tilings were impossible. But his student, Robert Berger, disputed this, finding a set 104 tiles, which when arranged together will never form a repeating pattern.

• In the 1970s, Nobel prize-winning physicist Roger Penrose found a set of only two tiles that could be arranged together in a non-repeating pattern ad infinitum. This is now known as Penrose tiling and has been used in artwork across the world.

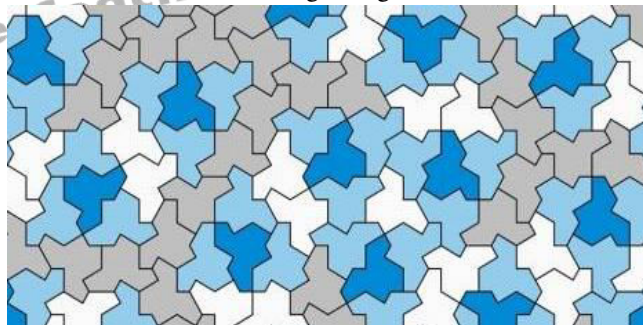
• But since Penrose's discovery, mathematicians have been looking for the "holy grail" of aperiodic tiling – a single shape or monotile which can fill a space up to infinity without ever repeating the pattern it creates.

• Mathematicians call this the einstein problem in geometry. This problem has stumped mathematicians for decades and many felt that there was simply no answer to this problem.

• The recent discovery named "the hat" answers this problem.

➤ **Applications:**

- aperiodic tiling will help physicists and chemists understand the structure and behaviour of quasicrystals, structures in which the atoms are ordered but do not have a repeating pattern
- The newly discovered tile might become a springboard for innovative art.



**ANSWER WRITING**

**Q. An important aim of monetary policy is to bring down inflation by raising interest rates in the economy. Nevertheless, there are both pros and cons attached to this policy of increasing interest rates. Critically evaluate.**

Monetary policy is the macroeconomic policy laid down by the central bank. It involves the management of money supply and interest rate and is used to achieve macroeconomic objectives like inflation, consumption, growth and liquidity. RBI has been repeatedly raising the repo rate since May last year in its bid to contain

inflation. Raising rates is the first tool for monetary intervention, as it is the quickest way to drain excess liquidity in the market. However, there is an opportunity cost involved with this policy stance.

**Pros/advantages of increasing interest rates:**

- Rising interest rates are important for controlling inflation: Inflation has hit record highs due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which reduced the international supply of energy and food commodities. Therefore, central banks throughout the globe are targeting inflation reduction to reduce the impact of rising prices of commodities.
- Advantages for banks: When interest rates are higher, banks can make more money by taking advantage of the difference between the interest banks pay to customers and the interest the bank can earn by investing.
- Advantages for savers: The current rationale behind raising interest rates is that the cost of borrowing rises whenever they are raised, and the incentive to save and invest rather than consume increases due to better yields. Therefore, higher interest rates mean people receive better returns on their savings.

**Cons/disadvantages of increasing interest rates:**

- Does not lead to an increase in the supply of goods and services: The current inflation in the economy is fuelled by costlier crude oil and rising food prices. However, interest rate hikes per se cannot improve the supply of these goods and services.
- Higher borrowing costs: Higher central bank interest rates affect the cost of borrowing for banks, which then pass those costs onto businesses, consumers and even governments. This makes home loans and education loans expensive.
- Tighter monetary policy in the long term leads to greater inequality: When the central bank raises interest rates, it places something as basic as home ownership out of the reach of common people. This reduces the people's ability to have access to an asset that creates wealth and this "wealth inequality" impact the poorer people with a lag.
- Dampens growth prospects: Interest rate increases and rising inflation are generally predicted to dampen economic growth and have associated negative implications for banks through increases in provisioning needs, increases in distressed loans and reduced valuations on securities.
- Reduced confidence: Interest rates affect consumer and business confidence. A rise in interest rates discourages investment; it makes firms and consumers less willing to take out risky investments and purchases.

Therefore, given the pros and cons of increasing interest rates, monetary policy, if properly managed, can promote greater economic stability and prosperity by mitigating the effects of recessions on the labour market and keeping inflation low and stable.

**MCQs**

1. With reference to "Global Commission on the Economics of Water (GCEW)"
  1. The Commission is convened by the UN General Assembly.
  2. It was launched in May 2022 with a two-year mandate.
  3. The GCEW is executed by an independent and diverse group of eminent policy makers and researchers in fields that bring novel perspectives to water economics, aligning the planetary economy with sustainable water-resource management.

Which of the above statement/s is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only**
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1,2 and 3

2. With reference to Sustainable Development Goal 6 consider the following

1. It calls for ensuring universal access to safe and affordable drinking water, sanitation and hygiene, and ending open defecation
2. It also aims to improve water quality and water-use efficiency and to encourage establishment of desalination plant to minimise ground water extraction

Which of the above statement/s is/are correct?

- a) 1 only**
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

3. With reference to North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), consider the following statements:

1. The aim of the organisation is to guarantee the freedom and security of its members through political and military means
2. The organisation is established based on Washington Treaty
3. Recently Finland and Sweden Officially joined NATO
4. Maximum funding to is done by US.

5. It is headquartered in New York.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) 1,2 and 3 only
- b) 2,3, and 4 only
- c) 1,2 and 5 only
- d) 1,2 and 4 only**

4. Regarding the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI), consider the following statements:

- 1. At present, it is not an intergovernmental organization, which are ordinarily treaty-based organizations.
- 2. The ICDRI is an annual international conference and platform.
- 3. The CDRI Secretariat is based in New Delhi, India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1,2 and 3**

5. Which of the following Ministry or Organisation initiated the India Justice Report (IJR)?

- a) Union ministry of law and justice
- b) Law Commission of India
- c) Tata Trusts**
- d) PRS Legislative Research

6. Nagri Dubraj rice recently got GI Tag belongs to which of the following state?

- a) Odisha
- b) Maharashtra
- c) Chhattisgarh**
- d) Bihar

7. Consider the following mountain passes recently seen in news

- 1. Nathu La
- 2. Jelep La
- 3. Naku La
- 4. Dongkha la

Which of the above mountain passes connect India with Tibetan region?

- a) 1,2 and 3 only
- b) 2,3 and 4 only
- c) 1 and 4 only
- d) 1,2,3 and 4**

8. Prosopis chilensis, recently seen in news is?

- a) An invasive plant from South America**
- b) A gecko (lizard) found in Nilgiri hills
- c) A plant fungus infecting human beings
- d) A newly found bagworm moth species of Kerala

9. National Maritime Day observed every year on which of the following Date?

- a) 5<sup>th</sup> April**
- b) 6<sup>th</sup> April
- c) 10<sup>th</sup> April
- d) 3<sup>rd</sup> April

10. Consider the following statements about the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013:

- 1. The Act provides for establishing a Lokpal headed by a Chairperson, who is or has been a Chief Justice of India, or is or has been a judge of the Supreme Court, or an eminent person who fulfills eligibility criteria as specified.
- 2. The Lokpal's jurisdiction involves inquiry into allegations of corruption against a current or former Prime Minister, a Union Minister, an MP and officials of the Union government under Groups A, B, C and D.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2**
- d) Neither 1 nor 2