

**ENVIRONMENT**

**Ecocide:**

**In context:** Recently, the Tribunal for the Rights of Nature said Mexico’s Maya train project has caused “crimes of ecocide and ethnocide”.

**About ecocide:**

- ✓ Ecocide is defined as “extensive loss, damage or destruction of ecosystems such that the peaceful enjoyment by the inhabitants has been or will be severely diminished.”
- ✓ “Inhabitants” here applies to all living creatures, not limiting crime to an anthropogenic legal view.
- ✓ **Destruction-** It destroys environment which include
  - Port expansion projects that destroy fragile marine life and local livelihoods
  - Deforestation
  - Illegal sand mining
  - Polluting rivers with untreated sewage etc.,
- ✓ **Crime-** In 1970, Biologist Arthur Galston is credited be the first to link environmental destruction with genocide, which is recognised as an international crime.
- ✓ It referred to the use of U.S. military’s use of *Agent Orange* during the Vietnam War.
- ✓ **1972-** Swedish Prime Minister, used the term in a speech at the United Nations, warning that unchecked industrialisation could cause irreversible damage to the environment.
- ✓ **2010-** British lawyer Polly Higgins urged the United Nations’ International Criminal Court (ICC) to recognise ecocide as an international crime.
- ✓ **ICC-** At present Rome Statute of the *ICC* deals with 4 atrocities.



- **War crime provision-** It is the only statute that can hold a perpetrator responsible for environmental damage.
- **Stop Ecocide Foundation-** It proposed ecocide as unlawful or wanton acts committed with knowledge that there is a substantial likelihood of severe and either widespread or long-term damage to the environmental being caused by those acts.

**Why should ecocide be a crime?**

- ✓ **International regulatory landscape-** Ecocide is a crime in 11 countries, with 27 other nations considering laws around criminalising environmental damage.
- ✓ **European Parliament-** It voted unanimously this year to enshrine ecocide in law.
- ✓ **Ukraine-** It penalises mass destruction of flora and fauna, poisoning of air or water resources, and also any other actions that may cause an environmental disaster.
- ✓ **Georgia-** It penalises and defines ecocide as contamination of the atmosphere, soil, water resources, mass destruction of fauna or flora, or any other act that could have led to an ecological disaster. It also penalises ecocide during armed conflict.
- ✓ **Role of ICC-** The ICC and Ukraine’s public prosecutor are investigating Russia’s role in the collapse of the Nova Kakhovka dam, which unleashed a catastrophic flood drowning 40 regions, and caused oil spillage and toxic leakage into the Black Sea.

**How is ecocide associated with Climate Change?**

- ✓ **Species loss-** Over one-third of the Earth’s animal and plant species could be extinct by 2050.
- ✓ **Increase in temperature-** Unprecedented heat waves have broken records globally.
- ✓ **Flood-** Changing monsoon patterns and anthropogenic causes have made floods the norm in States like Assam.
- ✓ **IPCC-** The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reiterated that global climate action is “insufficient”.
  - Indiscriminate burning of fossil fuels,
  - Polluting land and waterways with plastics and fertilisers, and
  - Species loss have pushed us to a new geological epoch, the Anthropocene.

- ✓ Hence, criminalising ecocide can lead to a shift in social norms.
- ✓ **Catalyst-** The amendment in the Rome Statute could have a 'catalysing' impact across nations to formulate their own laws.
- ✓ **Past events-** As per Stop Ecocide International, deforestation of the Amazon, deep-sea trawling or even the catastrophic 1984 Bhopal Gas tragedy could have been avoided with ecocide laws in place.
- ✓ **Accountability-** Laws will hold individuals and corporations accountable, it provides boundaries and sanctions for investment.
- ✓ **Analysis-** 2019 report found that the 20 fossil fuel companies were responsible for a third of carbon emissions despite being aware of the industry's hazardous impact.
- ✓ **Climate justice-** Small nation-states like Vanuatu and Barbuda are lobbying for the ICC to declare crimes against the environment as violations of international law.
- ✓ **India-** Some Indian judgments have affirmed the legal personhood of nature by recognising rivers as legal entities with the right to maintain their spirit, identity and integrity.

**What is India's position with respect to ecocide?**

- ✓ **T.N. Godavarman Thirumulpad vs Union of India & Ors Case-** The Supreme Court argued that "environmental justice could be achieved only if we drift away from the principle of *anthropocentric to ecocentric.*"
- ✓ **Single code-** India's environmental regime includes the Environmental (Protection) Act of 1986, Wildlife (Protection) Act of 1972, and Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act, 2016 (CAMPA) as well as separate rules to prevent air and water pollution.
- ✓ These separate laws have to be consolidated into a code, and institutions need to be streamlined, for debates like ecocide and rights of nature to find "their proper way through legal channels".
- ✓ **Widen the ambit of NGT-** National Green Tribunal, India's apex environmental regulatory body, does not hold jurisdiction to hear matters relating to the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, the Indian Forest Act, 1927 and other State-enacted laws.
- ✓ **Loss of forest areas-** Recently passed Forest Conservation (Amendment) Bill, 2023 and Biodiversity (Amendment) Bill, 2023, can dilute current legal protections and will lead to the loss of 20%-25% of forest area in the country.
- ✓ **Liability-** Critical challenge is to tackle problems of liability and compensation. The survivors of Bhopal gas tragedy are still fighting for compensation.

**Conclusion:** India needs to first bring its environmental laws in tune with ecocide idea before the ecocide laws come up internationally. An ecocide law should be a part of the broader process of changing public consciousness, recognising that we are in a relationship with our environment, we are dependent for our well-being on the wellbeing of the environment. There is a need to use various instruments, political, diplomatic but also legal to achieve the protection of the environment.

**GOVERNMENT POLICIES**

**ASBA-like Facility for Secondary Market Trading**

**In context:** Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) is now planning to implement one-hour settlement of trades first. Earlier, in July 2023, SEBI had announced it was working to launch real-time settlement of trades..It also announced that the Application Supported by Blocked Amount (ASBA)-like facility for trading in the secondary market will likely be launched in January 2024.

**ASBA-like facility for secondary trades**

- ✓ **About**
  - Application Supported by Blocked Amount (ASBA) was first introduced by SEBI in 2008.
  - It is a process for making initial public offerings (IPOs) or rights issue subscriptions.
  - ASBA is a facility provided by banks that allows investors to apply for an IPO or rights issue by blocking the application amount in their bank account instead of transferring the money to the issuer.
    - Under ASBA, the investor's application money remains in their bank account, and only a block is created on the funds for the IPO application amount.
    - This blocked amount remains in the investor's bank account until the allotment process is completed.
    - Once the shares are allotted to the investor, the block is released, and only the amount for the allotted shares is deducted from the investor's account.
  - In public issues and rights issues, all investors have to mandatorily apply through ASBA.
- ✓ **Importance**
  - ASBA is a more convenient and efficient way of applying for IPOs as it eliminates the need for the investor to transfer funds to a separate account for IPO subscription.
  - It also reduces the time taken for refunds in case of unsuccessful allotments.

**ASBA-like facility for secondary market trading**

- ✓ As per recent announcement by SEBI, ASBA-like facility for trading in the secondary market will likely be launched in January 2024.
  - At present, ASBA is available for the primary market.
    - The primary market transactions involve the sale of new securities to investors for the first time.
    - The secondary market provides liquidity to investors by allowing them to buy and sell securities on an ongoing basis.
- ✓ The facility will be based on the blocking of funds for trading in the secondary market through UPI (Unified Payments Interface).

**How will the ASBA facility benefit retail investors in the secondary market?**

- ✓ **Earning of interest till fund gets debited**
  - ASBA in secondary market trading will ensure that clients will continue to earn interest on the blocked funds in their savings account till the debit takes place.
- ✓ **Client-level settlement visibility**
  - There will be direct settlement with Clearing Corporation (CC), without passing through the pool accounts of the intermediaries.
  - Hence, it will provide client-level settlement visibility to CC, and help avoid the risk of comingling of clients' funds and securities.
- ✓ **Hassle-free transaction**
  - It will eliminate the custody risk of client collateral, which is currently retained by the members, and is not transferred to the CC.
  - There will be hassle-free and immediate unblocking of client's funds and/ or return of securities in case of member default.
- ✓ **Efficiency in the secondary market**
  - The facility will bring efficiency in the secondary market ecosystem by allowing usage of the same blocked amount towards margin and settlement obligations.
    - Margin refers to the amount of money or securities that an investor needs to deposit with their broker to buy or sell securities on margin.
    - Settlement obligations refer to the process of delivering securities and making payment for them in a securities transaction.
  - It will result in lower working capital requirements for members.

**One-hour settlement**

- ✓ **Background: Trade settlement**
  - Settlement is a two-way process which involves the transfer of funds and securities on the settlement date.
  - A trade settlement is said to be complete once purchased securities of a listed company are delivered to the buyer and the seller gets the money.
- ✓ **Current cycle of trade settlement**
  - Currently, Indian stock market follows the cycle of T+1.
  - It means trade-related settlements happen within a day, or 24 hours of the actual transactions.
  - The migration to the T+1 cycle came into effect in January 2023 and **India became the second country in the world** to start the T+1 settlement cycle in top-listed securities after China.
- ✓ **One-hour settlement**
  - A one-hour settlement typically refers to a short settlement cycle where securities transactions are settled within one hour of trade execution.
  - This means that the actual transfer of securities and funds between the buyer and the seller occurs quickly, usually within 60 minutes, after the trade is executed.
  - As per SEBI, this is the precursor to instantaneous settlement.
    - The technology for implementation of one-hour trade settlement exists. However, for instantaneous trade settlement, the system needs some additional technology development, which may take more time.

**What are the benefits of one-hour trade settlement?**

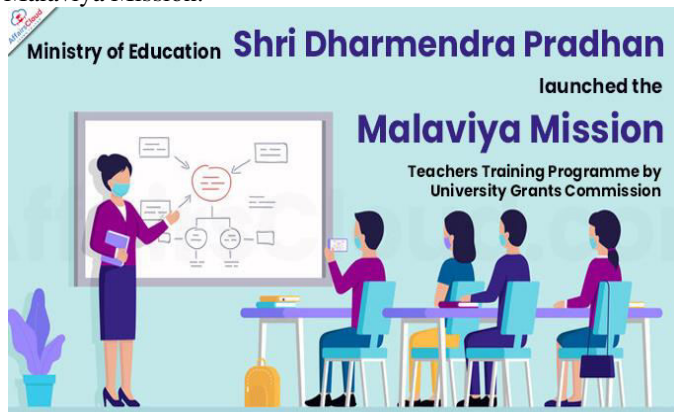
- ✓ **Reduced Counterparty Risk:** A shorter settlement cycle reduces the exposure to counterparty risk, as the parties involved in the trade settle their obligations more quickly.
- ✓ **Enhanced Liquidity:** Faster settlement can improve liquidity in the market, as investors can access their funds sooner after selling securities.

- ✓ **Lower Margin Requirements:** Traders may require lower margin or collateral when they know that settlement will occur rapidly, potentially reducing the cost of trading.
- ✓ **Reduced Market Risk:** Shorter settlement cycles can help minimize market risk, as the market price of the security is less likely to change significantly between the trade execution and settlement.

**PRELIM FACTS**

**1. MALVIYA MISSION:**

**In context:** The Union Minister for Education and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship has launched the Malaviya Mission.



**About:**

- ✓ It is a Teachers Training Programme by the University Grants Commission (UGC) at Kaushal Bhawan, New Delhi.
- ✓ The program is aimed at enhancing the quality of education by providing specialized training for teachers in higher educational institutions.
- ✓ The Minister announced the renaming of Human Resource Development Centres (HRDCs) as Madan Mohan Malaviya Teachers' Training Centres.
- ✓ The Malaviya Mission - Teachers Training Programme is a component of the government's attempts to improve educational quality at all levels.
- ✓ The Malaviya Mission attempts to improve faculty members' competencies in higher education institutions. It is intended to offer customized training programs to address the various needs of instructors.
- ✓ The program would seek to develop the skills of 15 lakh (1.5 million) instructors in India's higher education institutes (HEIs). To achieve widespread coverage, 111 Malaviya Mission centers will be established across the country.
- ✓ The program coincides with the goals of the National Education Policy (NEP) and strives to prepare educators for the future, improve teacher training quality, and build teacher leadership skills.
- ✓ The Malaviya Mission's capacity building will be linked to a credit structure to give educators with career advancement pathways, highlighting the significance of continual professional development.

**2. 'Project Naman'**

**In context:** The Indian Army has initiated a new initiative called 'Project Naman' to provide support and assistance to the ex-servicemen and the families of the martyrs.



**About:**

- ✓ The project aims to facilitate the rehabilitation and reintegration of veterans into civilian society, as well as to honour the sacrifices of the brave soldiers who laid down their lives for the nation.
- ✓ **Veterans and their Families:** The project focuses on the welfare of army veterans and their families, particularly the relatives of those who have given the ultimate sacrifice for the country. It recognizes and answers the needs and concerns of those who have served their country.
- ✓ **Facilitation and Grievance Redressal:** 'Naman' builds facilitation and grievance redressal centers to provide veterans and their families with a one-stop solution. These centers will offer help and support in a variety of areas, including government services and grievance resolution.
- ✓ **Access to Services:** The 'Naman' Common Service Centre will provide government-to-customer services. This means that veterans and their families can easily access a variety of vital services, making it easier for them to negotiate bureaucratic red tape.
- ✓ **Digital Integration:** The project's goal is to make it easier for retirees to update their accounts on the SPARSH portal. This digital integration is critical because it speeds the process of updating pension-related information, ensuring that veterans receive their correct and timely payments.
- ✓ **Expansion Plans:** In Phase II, the program intends to expand by establishing 13 more centers at other military bases across India. This development demonstrates the Indian Army's commitment to broadening its support network for veterans and their families.
- ✓ **Collaboration:** 'Project Naman' is a joint venture between the Indian Army, HDFC Bank Limited, and CSE e-Governance India Limited. Such collaborations can lead to more efficient project implementation and a broader reach.

**3. Comet Nishimura:**

**In context:** A newly discovered comet is making its way through our cosmic neighborhood for the first time in over 400 years.



**Concerning Comet Nishimura:**

- ✓ Amateur astronaut Hideo Nishimura detected the comet in mid-August by taking 30-second exposures using a regular digital camera.
- ✓ Since then, the comet, formally known as C/2023 P1 Nishimura, has grown brighter as it moved through the inner solar system.
- ✓ Because the comet is angularly close to the Sun, it will only be visible early before sunrise or late before sunset.
- ✓ Currently, the comet is in the constellation Leo.
- ✓ Every 435 years, it completes an orbit around the Sun.

**Definition of Comets**

- ✓ Comets are celestial objects primarily composed of ice, dust, and rocky material.
- ✓ They are often described as "dirty snowballs" or "icy dirtballs" due to their mixture of volatile and non-volatile components.
- ✓ Comets typically have highly elliptical orbits that take them from the distant regions of the solar system into the inner solar system, where they become visible to observers on Earth.
- ✓ Typically, they range from a few kilometres to tens of kilometres wide. But as they orbit closer to the Sun, they spew out gases and dust, which forms the tails that they are famous for.

**Constellation:** A constellation is a group of stars that, when viewed from Earth, appear to form a specific pattern or shape in the night sky. These patterns are the result of the human imagination, as people from various cultures throughout history have associated groups of stars with mythological figures, animals, and objects.

#### 4. Indian Green Building Council:

**In context:** Vijayawada Railway Station was awarded the 'Green Railway Station' certification with the highest rating of Platinum by the Indian Green Building Council (IGBC).

##### **About Indian Green Building Council:**

- ✓ The Indian Green Building Council (IGBC) is part of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) which was formed in the year 2001.
- ✓ It is India's Premier certification body.
- ✓ The council offers a wide array of services which include developing new green building rating programmes, certification services and green building training programmes.
- ✓ The council also organises Green Building Congress, its annual flagship event on green buildings.
- ✓ It is also among the 5 countries that are in the board of World Green Building Council discussing global issues at COP and similar global platforms.
- ✓ The rating is based on six environmental categories which include sustainable station facility, health, hygiene and sanitation, energy efficiency, water efficiency, smart and green initiatives and innovation and development.
- ✓ Headquarter: Hyderabad.

#### 5. The Pradhan Mantri Dakshata Aur Kushalata Sampanna Hitgrahi (PM-DAKSH) Yojana

**In context:** The government recently informed the Parliament about PM-Daksh Scheme.

##### **About the Scheme:**

- ✓ Nature: The Pradhan Mantri Dakshata Aur Kushalata Sampanna Hitgrahi (PM-DAKSH) Yojana is a Central Sector Scheme.
- ✓ Aim: The main objective of the Scheme is to enhance competency level of the target groups to make them employable both in self-employment and wage-employment for their socio-economic development.
- ✓ Target groups:
  - Scheduled Castes (SCs),
  - Other Backward Castes (OBCs),
  - Economically Backward Castes (EBCs),
  - Denotified Tribes (DNTs)
  - Safai Karamcharis including waste pickers etc.
  - Women
- ✓ Age criteria: The age criterion of scheme between 18-45 years.
- ✓ Income criteria:
  - There is no income limit for SCs, Safai Karamcharis Including wastepicker and DNT.
  - The annual family income should be below Rs.3 lakh for OBCs
  - For EBCs (Economically Backward Classes) annual family income should be below Rs.1 lakh.
- ✓ Nodal ministry: This scheme introduced by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

#### 6. The Kunbis

**In context:** The Maharashtra government recently decided that Kunbi caste certificates will be issued to members of the Maratha community.

##### **About:**

- ✓ The certificates will be issued for those Marathas who hail from the Marathwada region and possess revenue or education documents from the Nizam era that recognise them as Kunbis.
- ✓ The Marathwada region was part of the erstwhile Hyderabad kingdom before it became a part of Maharashtra.
- ✓ A five-member panel headed by (retired) judge Sandeep Shinde will determine the Standard Operating Procedure for giving caste certificates to members of the community referred to as Kunbis in Nizam-era documents.

##### **About Kunbis:**

- ✓ Kunbis (the community associated with agriculture) are grouped under the Other Backward Class category in Maharashtra.
- ✓ When Marathwada was part of Hyderabad province till the 1960s, Marathas there were counted as Kunbis.
- ✓ When the region became part of Maharashtra, many were counted as Marathas and not OBCs.
- ✓ Kunbi (alternatively Kanbi, Kurmi) is a generic term applied to castes of traditional farmers in Western India.
- ✓ These include the Dhonoje, Ghatole, Hindre, Jadav, Jhare, Khaire, Lewa (Leva Patil), Lonare and Tirole communities of Vidarbha.

- ✓ Most of the Mavalas serving in the armies of Shivaji came from this community.
- ✓ The Shinde and Gaekwad dynasties of the Maratha Empire are originally of Kunbi origin.
- ✓ The communities are largely found in the state of Maharashtra but also exist in the states of Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala and Goa

**ANSWER WRITTING**

**Q. Stating the significance of traditional water harvesting systems in India, enumerate the need to re-introduce them.**

**Introduction:**

Historical evidences show that both floods and droughts were regular occurrence in throughout the history of India. Perhaps this is why every region in the country has its own traditional water harvesting techniques that reflect the geographical peculiarities and cultural uniqueness of the regions. The basic concept underlying all these techniques is that rain should be harvested whenever and wherever it falls.

They are called kuhals in Jammu, kuls in Himachal Pradesh and guls in Uttarakhand. The Maharashtrians call them pats. In Ladakh, they are called zings, and in Nagaland, zabo. Tamilians call them eris, Kannadigas, keres, Rajasthanis have tankas, kundis, bawdis, jhalaras and a host of others. Traditional water harvesting systems exist all over India, but after serving the nation for several millennia, they are dying a slow death.

**Traditional water harvesting system in India:**

- Jhalaras are typically rectangular-shaped stepwells that have tiered steps on three or four sides. These stepwells collect the subterranean seepage of an upstream reservoir or a lake. Jhalaras were built to ensure easy and regular supply of water for religious rites, royal ceremonies and community use. The city of Jodhpur has eight jhalaras, the oldest being the Mahamandir Jhalara that dates back to 1660 AD.
- Talabs are reservoirs that store water for household consumption and drinking purposes. They may be natural, such as the pokhariyan ponds at Tikamgarh in the Bundelkhand region or manmade, such as the lakes of Udaipur.
- Bawaris are unique stepwells that were once a part of the ancient networks of water storage in the cities of Rajasthan. The little rain that the region received would be diverted to man-made tanks through canals built on the hilly outskirts of cities. The water would then percolate into the ground, raising the water table and recharging a deep and intricate network of aquifers.
- Taanka is a traditional rainwater harvesting technique indigenous to the Thar desert region of Rajasthan. A Taanka is a cylindrical paved underground pit into which rainwater from rooftops, courtyards or artificially prepared catchments flows. Once completely filled, the water stored in a taanka can last throughout the dry season and is sufficient for a family of 5-6 members. An important element of water security in these arid regions, taankas can save families from the everyday drudgery of fetching water from distant sources.
- AharPynes are traditional floodwater harvesting systems indigenous to South Bihar. Ahars are reservoirs with embankments on three sides that are built at the end of diversion channels like pynes. Pynes are artificial rivulets led off from rivers to collect water in the ahars for irrigation in the dry months. Paddy cultivation in this relatively low rainfall area depends mostly on aharpynes.
- Johads, one of the oldest systems used to conserve and recharge ground water, are small earthen check dams that capture and store rainwater. Constructed in an area with naturally high elevation on three sides, a storage pit is made by excavating the area, and excavated soil is used to create a wall on the fourth side.

**Need to re-introduce traditional rain water technologies in India:**

- The large water supply systems built around mega-dams have proved to be extremely capitalintensive, with long gestation periods, and rather low returns in terms of increased crop productivity, largely because the water supplied by these systems is determined more by bureaucracies controlling these systems rather than the farmers.
- Irrigation efficiency of tubewells, since they are farmer-controlled, has been much better. But the rapid increase in tubewells in dry areas, without the supplemental groundwater recharge that used to be ensured by traditional water harvesting systems, is leading to a depletion of groundwater aquifers and will become a severe problem in the years to come.
- Traditional rainwater harvesting systems require small sums of money, a large part of which can come from local communities, thus avoiding an undue drain on the state exchequer.
- They can be built within months (instead of years like large dams); they will be under the control of farmers themselves; and, they can be used conjunctively with tubewells as they can recharge the groundwater aquifers.

**Conclusion:** These traditional systems are ecologically safe, viable and cost-effective alternatives to rejuvenate India's depleted water resources. Productively combining these structures with modern rainwater saving techniques, such as percolation tanks, injection wells and subsurface barriers, could be the answer to India's

perennial water woes. With about five-10 per cent of India's land area set aside for rainwater collection, most of India's irrigation and household water needs can be met.

**MCQs**

- “Project Naman” is frequently seen in the news, the project is launched for:
  - Enhancing border security
  - Providing support to ex-servicemen and families of martyrs**
  - Promoting military recruitment
  - Modernizing military equipment
- Recently, The Justice Amitava Roy Committee was in news due to which report?
  - This report highlighted the need for reforms in the correctional justice system to make it more inclusive of women.**
  - This report highlighted the need for reforms in the collegiums justice system.
  - This report highlighted the need for reforms in the OBC reservation system.
  - None of the above

- Considered the following statement regarding Kunbis community.
  - Kunbis are grouped under the Other Backward Class category in Maharashtra.
  - The communities are largely found in the state of Maharashtra only.

Which of the above statement is/are correct?

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

- Considered the following statement regarding PM-DAKSH Yojana.
  - The Pradhan Mantri Dakshata Aur Kushalata Sampanna Hitgrahi (PM-DAKSH) Yojana is a Central Sector Scheme.
  - The main objective of the Scheme is to enhance competency level of Scheduled Castes (SCs) and women only for employment.
  - This scheme introduced by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

How many of the above statement is/are correct?

- a) Only 1                      b) **Only 2**                      c) Only 3                      d) None

- Recently, ports of Odesa, Chornomorsk and Pivdennyi are in news, these parts are located in

- Mediterranean Sea
- Red sea
- Caspian Sea
- Black sea**

- MQ-9B Predator Drone, recently seen in the news, is developed by:

- France
- Germany
- United States of America**
- China

- Consider the following statements regarding the Indian Green Building Council:

- It works under the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).
- It awards Green Railway Station certification.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

- With reference to the Chitala Fish, consider the following statements:

- It is a nocturnal freshwater fish.
- It is found in India only.
- It is categorized as Near Threatened under the IUCN Red List.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

- a) Only one                      b) **Only two**                      c) All three                      d) None

- The term “Balfour Declaration” sometime seen in the news is related to the affairs of:

- North Korea                      b) Turkey                      c) Germany                      d) **Israel**

- Consider the following statements regarding the Zero draft developed by the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC):

- It is an international legally binding instrument to end plastic pollution.
- India is not a party to the instrument.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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