

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

- On Finland's journey to join NATO
- CONTEXT: Recently Finland finally became the 31st country to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) after applying May 2022.
- The Finnish president, Sauli Niinistö, marked the event by stating that "the era of military non-alignment in our history has come to an end".
- The move to join the security alliance was precipitated by the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Finland's historical experience with Russia, and the changing nature of international geopolitics with a declining Russian influence.
- What has been Russia's response?
- The Russian spokesperson, Dmitry Peskov, responded to Finland joining NATO with "naturally, this forces us to take countermeasures to ensure our own tactical and strategic security".
- The Russian Foreign Ministry said that while it will respond with "military-technical measures", the specifics of its actions will depend on the terms under which Finland joins NATO.
- The Ministry deemed the now-defunct policy of non-alignment as a "wise decision" and said that Finland has now "lost its independence".
- It made clear, in no ambiguous terms, that this decision "will have a negative effect on the bilateral relations between Russia and Finland".
- How has Finland's security policy evolved via its neighbour?
- Before the First Soviet-Finnish War, Russia sought to establish a buffer zone along its western border as a means of protecting itself because of its history of being invaded by foreign powers through Finland. Lingering tensions from the Russian Revolution and the Finnish Civil War between 1917 and 1918 as well as unresolved issues from the Treaty of Dorpat in 1920 were responsible for the First Soviet-Finnish War.
- The Second Soviet-Finnish War, which took place between 1941 and 1944 ended with the defeat of Finland. Finland lost territories to the Soviet Union and had to pay war reparations. This, coupled with the independence process in 1917, the civil war between 1918 and 1919, and the Lapland War in 1944 impacted the collective psyche of the Finns. This made Finland pursue a pragmatic security policy which was flexible enough to balance its autonomy with the need for military cooperation with the West.
- It was careful of not taking overt actions which could be seen as a security threat by Russia. Finland made concessions to the Soviet Union, one of which was the Finno-Soviet Treaty of 1948. This treaty ensured that Finland would remain neutral and would not allow any foreign troops on its soil without permission from Russia. While this helped Finland boost trade with the Soviet Union, it became heavily dependent on Moscow thereby making it vulnerable to economic and political overtures from the Soviets.
- After the Second World War, Paasikivi's line emerged and began to morph into what would eventually become Finland's foreign policy strategy. Named after Juho Kusti Paasikivi, the president of Finland between 1946 and 1956, Paasikivi's line was based on the idea of peaceful coexistence with the Soviet Union with neutrality being its cornerstone. It helped Finland navigate complex international relations after the turbulent time of the Second World War.
- Why did the security policy change?
- Finland's experience during the Cold War shaped its approach to security policy. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, it sought to build closer ties with Russia while also pursuing greater integration with Europe.
- The country has been an active participant in European security initiatives such as the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and the Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFCO). At the same time, it has been able to maintain close economic ties with Russia. However, there were tensions between Finland and Russia as a result of the flux in domestic politics in both countries.
- For instance, Nikita Khrushchev was willing to negotiate with Finland and allowed for increased trade and cultural exchange between the two countries, despite the 1950s seeing Finland side with the West when the Soviet Union called for a boycott of the 1956 Summer Olympics in Australia.
- Could there have been an alternative to joining NATO?
- For Finland, an alternative to joining NATO could have been to develop its own military capabilities and pursue a deeper level of cooperation with other European countries, through arrangements like the CSDP and the NORDEFCO.
- However, the annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014, Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, and a declining Russian influence made the decision for the risk-averse Finns easy.
- What lies ahead?
- The continuation of the Ukraine invasion, a declining Russian might, and now a confirmed security umbrella by NATO gives the impression that Finland's security concerns are mostly assuaged.
- The extent to which this new cooperation between the Finns and the NATO countries pan out will dictate Russia's actions, but it seems that Moscow, under the leadership of President Vladimir Putin, might wish to further escalate by increasing troop presence along the Russo-Finnish border.

GEOGRAPHY/AGRICULTURE

- ElNiño and the monsoon
- CONTEXT: India has had four consecutive years of good monsoons and overall rainfall from 2019 to 2022.
- In these four years, the country as a whole received an average area-weighted rainfall of 1,268 millimetres (mm) annually and 933.1 mm over the four-month southwest monsoon season (June-September).

Annual**

1044.7 (-12.03)

1085.0 (-8.64)

1083.1 (-8.80)

1127.1 (-5.09)

1288.8 (9.51)

1289.6 (9.58)

1236.4 (5.06)

1257.0 (8.36)

El Nino Inte

No El Nino

Strong Strong

1020.8 (-14.05)

All-India Area-weighted Rainfal

Monsoon*

781.7 (-11.92)

765.8 (-13.71)

864.4 (-2.60)

845.9 (-4.69)

804.1 (-9.40)

971.8 (10.36)

961.4 (9.18)

874.5 (-0.69)

924.8 (6.47)

Drought Intensity

Major

Major

Major

All but one drought year in India was an El Nino year.

(millimeters)

2014

2015

2016

2017

2018

2019

2020

2021

2022

1957-58

1965-66

1966-67

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- By contrast, the preceding five years from 2014 to 2018 registered an average annual rainfall of just 1,072.1 mm and 812.4 mm during the southwest monsoon.
- The surplus precipitation (more than the "normal" or historical long period annual average of 1,160.1 mm and 868.6 mm for the monsoon season) during the last four years has helped deliver higher agricultural growth, relative to the previous period that recorded poor rain in three (2014, 2015 and 2018) out of the five
- According to the national accounts data, the farm sector has grown by an average of 4.3% per year during 2019-20 to 2022-23 as against 3.2% during 2014-15 to 2018-19.

The La Niña bounty

- The bountiful rainfall during 2019-22 has been significantly attributed to La Niña
 - An atmospheric wind and sea surface temperature (SST) variability phenomenon occurring over the equatorial Pacific, but causing worldwide weather disruptions.
 - La Niña basically refers to an abnormal cooling of the central and eastern Pacific Ocean waters off the coasts of Ecuador and Peru. Such cooling (SSTs falling 0.5 degrees Celsius or more below a 30-year average for at least five successive three-month periods) is a result of strong trade winds blowing west along the equator, taking warm water from South America towards Asia. The warming of the western equatorial Pacific, then, leads to increased evaporation and concentrated cloud-formation activity around that region, whose effects may percolate to India as well.
- The latest La Niña event was one of the longest ever, lasting from July-September 2020 to December-February 2022-23. And it brought copious rains to India – just as two previous "strong" La Niñas in 2007-08 and 2010-11, followed by one "moderate" episode in 2011-12, had done.
 - The most recent Oceanic Niño Index or ONI value (a three-2018-19 month running-average SST deviation from the normal in the east-central equatorial Pacific) was minus 0.4 degrees Celsius for January-March 2023. Since La Niña is characterised

1972-73 Major Strong 1976-77 Moderate Weak 1979-80 Major Weak 1986-87 Moderate Moderate 1987-88 Major Strong 1991-92 Major Moderate 2002-03 Moderate Weak 2004-05 Moderate Moderate Moderate 2015-16 Very Strong

by a negative ONI exceeding or equal to minus 0.5 degrees, it means that the so-called ENSO (El Niño-Southern

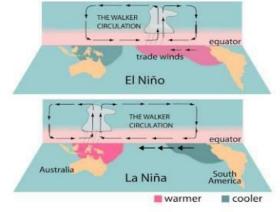
The El Niño threat

- While La Niña is associated with good rainfall in India, this isn't the case with El Niño the opposite "warm" phase of ENSO. During El Niño, the trade winds weaken or even reverse: Instead of blowing from east (South America) to west (Indonesia), they could turn into westerlies.
- As the winds blow from the west to east, they cause the masses of warm water to move into the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean. The rise in SSTs there, thus, produces increased rainfall along western Latin America, the

Caribbean and US Gulf Coast, while depriving Southeast Asia, Australia and India of convective currents.

Oscillation) cycle has entered a "neutral" phase.

- The ENSO cycle, as already pointed out, is currently in the "neutral" state. According to the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's most recent update, ENSO-neutral conditions are likely to "persist through the Northern Hemisphere early summer of 2023". In other words, at least till June 2023. However, "a transition to El Niño is favoured by July-September 2023", with its chances "increasing through the fall (September-November)".
- The Australian Bureau of Meteorology, has forecast "a 50% chance that an El Niño may develop later in 2023". This is "about twice the normal likelihood", the agency has said in its March 28 2023 report, adding that "warmer than average SSTs have already emerged in parts of the eastern tropical Pacific in recent weeks".
- The India Meteorological Department is scheduled to



The oscillation between El Niño & La Niña conditions in the equatorial eastern Pacific Ocean is called ENSO (El Niño Southern Oscillation).



> The implications

- Most global models are seeing the transition from ENSO-neutral to El Niño happening this year. But that would probably affect the monsoon only in the second half (August-September) of the season. There is a question will it translate into deficient rainfall (after four-in-a-row surplus years) and, by extension, low or even negative agriculture growth.
- The table below shows that practically all drought years in India since Independence – marked by large declines in foodgrain production or monsoon failures – have witnessed El Niño events of varying intensity.
- The sole exception was 1966-67, although the year before had recorded a "strong" El Niño
 - To elaborate, mean SSTs have to be at least 0.5 degrees Celsius higher than the average for a minimum of five overlapping three-month periods to qualify as an El Niño event. The positive ONI values or SST deviations have to be 1.5-1.9 degrees for categorisation as "strong", above 2 degrees for "very strong", 1-1.4 degrees for "moderate" and 0.5-0.9 degrees for "weak.
- While all drought years have invariably been El Niño years, the reverse doesn't hold true though.
- The El Niño years that weren't bad agriculture years the best examples are 1982-83 and 1997-98. Foodgrain output fell only marginally in these two "very strong" El Niño years.
- Agricultural GDP growth was similarly positive in 1951-52, 1963-64, 1968-69 and 1994-95; all of them saw "moderate" El Niño events.
- To sum up, 2023 could well end the run of good rainfall years since 2019. The statistical probability of that is high, whether or not there is an El Niño. Moreover, El Niño itself can turn out to be "weak".

El Nino years that were not drought years in India

100	57.6
Year	El Nino Intensity
1951-52	Moderate
1952-53	Weak
1953-54	Weak
1958-59	Weak
1963-64	Moderate
1968-69	Moderate
1969-70	Weak
1977-78	Weak
1982-83	Very Strong
1994-95	Moderate
1997-98	Very Strong
2006-07	Weak

Source: Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare and Golden Gate Weather Services.

PRELIMS

1. How is a 'national party' in India defined

- CONTEXT: The Election Commission recently recognised the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) as a national party, while revoking that status of the All India Trinamool Congress, Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and the Communist Party of India (CPI).
- The Commission also revoked the state party status granted to RLD in Uttar Pradesh, BRS in Andhra Pradesh, PDA in Manipur, PMK in Puducherry, RSP in West Bengal and MPC in Mizoram.
- The Commission said that NCP and Trinamool Congress will be recognised as state parties in Nagaland and Meghalaya respectively based on their performance in the recently concluded Assembly elections.
- It also granted "recognised state political party" status to the Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) in Nagaland, Voice of the People Party in Meghalaya, and the Tipra Motha in Tripura.
- The BJP, Congress, CPI(M), Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), National People's Party (NPP) and the AAP are the remaining national parties now.

What is a national party?

- The name suggests that a national party would be one that has a presence 'nationally', as opposed to a regional party whose presence is restricted to only a particular state or region.
- National parties are usually India's bigger parties, such as the Congress and BJP. However, some smaller parties are also recognised as national parties. A certain stature is sometimes associated with being a national party, but this does not necessarily translate into having a lot of national political clout.
- Some parties, despite being dominant in a major state (such as the DMK in Tamil Nadu, BJD in Odisha, YSRCP in Andhra Pradesh, RJD in Bihar, or TRS in Telangana) and having a major say in national affairs, remain regional parties.

> So how is a national party defined?

- The ECI has laid down the technical criterion for a party to be recognised as a national party. A party may gain or lose national party status from time to time, depending on the fulfilment of these laid-down conditions.
- As per the ECI's Political Parties and Election Symbols, 2019 handbook, a political party would be considered a national party if:
 - ✓ it is 'recognised' in four or more states; or
 - ✓ if its candidates polled at least 6% of total valid votes in any four or more states in the last Lok Sabha or Assembly elections and has at least four MPs in the last Lok Sabha polls; or
 - \checkmark if it has won at least 2% of the total seats in the Lok Sabha from not less than three states.

> To be recognised as a state party, a party needs:

- at least 6% vote-share in the last Assembly election and have at least 2 MLAs or
- have 6% vote-share in the last Lok Sabha elections from that state and at least one MP from that state or
- at least 3% of the total number of seats or three seats, whichever is more, in the last Assembly elections or
- at least one MP for every 25 members or any fraction allotted to the state in the Lok Sabha or
- have at least 8% of the total valid votes in the last Assembly election or Lok Sabha election from the state.
- Where does the AAP fit into this scheme?

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- The AAP is in power with big majorities (and very large vote shares) in Delhi and Punjab. In the Goa Assembly elections in March 2022, it received 6.77% of the vote.
- This meant that going into the Gujarat-Himachal elections towards the end of 2022, the party already fulfilled the criteria for recognition as a state party in three states. It then required 6% of the vote in the Assembly elections in either Himachal or Gujarat to be recognised in a fourth state — which would qualify it for recognition as a national party.
- While the AAP got only 1% of the vote in Himachal, the almost 13% vote it got in Gujarat was more than double required to be recognised as a state party there. That made it four states.
- **Draft Sagarmala Innovation and Start-up Policy**
- CONTEXT: The Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW) issued draft on 'Sagarmala Innovation and Start-up Policy
- This draft policy aims at nurturing start-ups and other entities to co-create the future of India's growing maritime sector. This entails intensive collaboration of the organizations to build a strong eco-system facilitating innovation and Startups in the country that will drive sustainable growth and generate large scale employment opportunities.
- The designed framework enables the distribution of responsibilities and benefits among the various stakeholders. This is not only limited to the existing stakeholders but also includes upcoming young entrepreneurs with innovative ideas.
- Draft policy has identified several key areas for the startup to flourish including decarbonization, optimizing processes through data, maritime education, multi-modal transportation, manufacturing, alternate/ advance materials, maritime cybersecurity, smart communication and marine electronics.
- Digital Portal based selection of startups ensuring a transparent process
- Grants to create a minimum viable product/ services (MVP), commercialization of proprietary technology including market entry or scaling up
- Creation of 'Launch pads' at Ports for carrying out trials, facilitating pilot projects, establishing working space and adopting products and solutions
- Annual Start-up Awards in the maritime sector recognizing distinguished efforts of innovation
- Organizing Buyer-Seller Meetings and providing Technical Knowledge Support for VCs
- Guidance to Non Registered Start-ups and Individuals with promising ideas in Maritime Sector including registration of start-up and availing Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) recognition
- Regulatory support in Tenders and Sub-contracting
- Legal and accountancy back up to start-ups for IP-Patent filing, Company registration, annual filings and closures
- The promotion of start-ups shall be through development of Maritime Innovation Hubs (MIH) which shall perform the following functions:
- Develop incubators and accelerators with state of the art facilities to cover all aspects of the startup journey from idea to scaled product.
- Develop centralized repository containing all pertinent information to assist emerging entrepreneurs
- Attract investment for eligible start-up businesses and innovative maritime technology
- Entrepreneur development through 'know-how' sessions about the various aspects of the maritime industry and launching of innovation focused programs
- Collaborate with national & international stakeholders for mentorship, knowledge sharing and facilitate access to global subject matter experts, serial entrepreneurs, business leaders, and investors with the potential to get their entry and scaling in the India
- **State Energy Efficiency Index 2021-22**
- CONTEXT: Union Minister of Power and New & Renewable Energy recently released the report of State **Energy Efficiency Index (SEEI) 2021-22.**
- The index developed by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) in association with Alliance for an Energy-Efficient Economy (AEEE), assesses, the annual progress of states and UTs in energy efficiency implementation, for FY 2020-21 and 2021-22.
- In SEEI 2021-22, 5 states Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Rajasthan and Telangana are in the Front Runner category (>60 points)
- 4 states Assam, Haryana, Maharashtra, and Punjab are in the Achiever category (50-60 points).
- Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Assam and Chandigarh are the top-performing states in their respective state groups.
- Telangana and Andhra Pradesh showed the most improvement since the last index.
- India is committed to achieving NDC goals and transitioning to a net-zero economy by 2070. This requires collaboration between central and state governments, judicious resource allocation, policy alignment, and regular progress tracking.
- **About BEE**
- The Government of India set up the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), on 1st March 2002 under the provisions of the Energy Conservation Act, 2001.
- The mission of the Bureau of Energy Efficiency is to assist in developing policies and strategies with a thrust on selfregulation and market principles, within the overall framework of the Energy Conservation Act, 2001 with the primary objective of reducing the energy intensity of the Indian economy.

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• BEE coordinates with designated consumers, designated agencies and other organizations and recognise, identifies and utilise the existing resources and infrastructure, in performing the functions assigned to it under the Energy Conservation Act. The Energy Conservation Act provides for regulatory and promotional functions.

ANSWER WRITTING

Q. Illustrate the role of Indian cinema and its contribution to India's soft power. Discuss its relevance in the context of India's cultural diversity and global aspirations. Introduction

- Indian cinema, also known as Bollywood, is a significant cultural phenomenon in India and globally. Indian cinema
 is not only a source of entertainment but also a reflection of Indian society, culture, and values.
- Indian cinema's appeal and popularity have made it an essential component of India's soft power, contributing to the country's global image and cultural diplomacy.

Body

- Indian cinema has become an essential part of Indian culture, shaping the Indian identity and influencing the country's social, political, and economic discourse. Indian cinema's contribution to India's soft power has been immense, making it an essential tool of cultural diplomacy.
- Role in Increasing Soft Power:
- ✓ Soft power is a concept coined by Joseph Nye, which refers to a country's ability to influence other nations through non-coercive means. India's soft power rests on its rich cultural heritage, yoga, Ayurveda, music, dance, and cuisine. Indian cinema has played a significant role in projecting India's soft power globally.
- Indian films are popular in many countries, including the United States, the United Kingdom, China, and Russia. They are watched by millions of people worldwide, providing a glimpse into Indian culture, values, and way of life.
- ✓ Indian cinema has helped create a positive image of India globally. It has projected India as a country of cultural richness, diversity, and tradition. Indian cinema has also helped in promoting Indian values such as family, love, and social harmony. The themes of Indian films resonate with people from all cultures, making them relatable and accessible.
- Unique Storytelling Techniques and Genres: Indian cinema's unique storytelling techniques and genres have contributed significantly to its global appeal.
- Indian cinema is known for its vibrant music, dance, and colorful costumes, making it an entertaining experience for the
 audience
- Indian cinema's genres range from action, drama, romance, comedy, and social issue-based movies, making it a diverse
 and inclusive industry.
- Indian cinema's themes and stories are rooted in Indian culture and society, making it an authentic representation of Indian life and values.
- Global Appeal and Cultural Influence: Indian cinema's global appeal can be attributed to its unique storytelling techniques, themes, and genres. Indian cinema's global influence can be seen in the popularity of Indian movies and stars worldwide
- Indian cinema has transcended cultural boundaries, creating a niche for itself globally.
- The impact of Indian cinema on shaping global cultural trends can be seen in the increasing popularity of Indian fashion, music, and dance worldwide.
- Relevance of Indian Cinema in the Context of India's Cultural Diversity and Global Aspirations: Indian cinema's relevance in the context of India's cultural diversity and global aspirations cannot be overstated.
- ✓ It has been a significant contributor to India's soft power, promoting Indian culture, society, and values globally.
- ✓ Indian cinema has been a bridge between India and the world, fostering cultural understanding and diplomatic relations.
- ✓ Indian cinema has also played a critical role in promoting Indian tourism, creating a positive image of India globally.
- Furthermore, Indian cinema has also been a significant contributor to the Indian economy. Bollywood is one of the largest film industries in the world, generating revenue through film production, distribution, and exhibition. The film industry also provides employment to millions of people, ranging from actors, producers, directors to technicians and crew members.

Conclusion

- Indian cinema's contribution to India's soft power and global image cannot be underestimated. Indian cinema's unique storytelling techniques, themes, and genres have contributed significantly to its global appeal and cultural influence.
- Indian cinema has played a vital role in shaping the Indian identity and promoting India's cultural diversity and global aspirations. It is essential to recognize Indian cinema's importance in promoting India's soft power and global image and support its continued growth and development.

MCQs

- 1. With reference to Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) consider the following
 - 1. It was established under the provisions of the Energy Conservation Act, 2001.
 - **2.** The mission of the Bureau of Energy Efficiency is to assist in developing policies and strategies with a thrust on self-regulation and market principles.

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

- 2. On which of the following can you find the Bureau of Energy Efficiency Star Label?
 - 1. Ceiling fans
 - 2. Electric geysers

Tubular fluroescent lamps

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 3 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3
- The Paasikivi-Kekkonen doctrine was a foreign policy doctrine often mentioned in news recently is associated with which of the following country?
 - a) Australia
- b) New Zealand
- c) Ukraine
- d) Finland
- 4. Initiative called Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) recently seen in news is related to which of the following organisation?
 - a) Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO)
 - **European Union** b)
 - c) NATO
 - d) Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFCO)
- Consider the following statements
 - 1. All the Nordic countries are member of NATO.
 - All the Nordic countries are member of European Union.
 - All the European Union countries are Member of NATO.

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) None of the above
- Consider the following statements about the Sagarmala Project.
 - Sagarmala project aims to foster "port-led development" throughout India's 7500-kilometre-long coastline.
 - The Union Ministry of Shipping has been designated as the initiative's nodal ministry.
 - National Sagarmala Apex Committee is chaired by cabinet secretary

Which of the following statements above is/ are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1,2 and 3
- Recently Election commission of India recognised the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) as a national party, with reference to this news consider the following statement
 - 1. Once recognised as a national or a state party, a political party retains that status irrespective of its performance in the next elections.
 - 2. It loses the given status only if it fails to fulfil any of the conditions for two successive Assembly and two successive Lok Sabha elections.
 - National parties can have upto 40 star campaigners while other can have upto 20 star campaigners Choose the correct statement/s from above given using the codes given below Exclusive Cod
 - 1 and 2 only
 - 2 and 3 only
 - 1 and 3 only c)
 - 1,2 and 3 **d**)
- Consider the following statements with reference to geographical terms like El Nino and La Nina frequently mentioned in news recently
 - 1. El Nino and Indian monsoon are inversely related.
 - Not all El Nino years led to a drought in India.
 - La Niña conditions favour cyclone formation in the Atlantic Ocean and the Bay of Bengal.

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

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- 1 and 3 only c)
- d) 1,2 and 3
- Exercise Cope India 2023 is a bilateral Air exercise between India and which of the following country?
 - a) USA
 - b) Japan
 - Australia c)
 - d) France
- 10. With reference to Vibrant Village Programme consider the following
 - 1. It is a Centrally sector scheme for development of villages on the northern border, thus improving the quality of life of people living in identified border villages in North East.
 - 2. It is a sub scheme under the umbrella initiative Border Area Development Programme.

Which of the above statement/s is/are not correct?

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