

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

In Context: Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent U. S. visit will boost bilateral ties and deepen strategic defence & technology collaboration.

Defence & technology collaboration between India & USA

❖ **The recent announcements that will take the defence ties between the countries to a new high:**

✓ Potential joint manufacture of General Electric (GE) Aerospace's F414 engines in India by GE and Hindustan Aeronautics Limited to power India's indigenous Light Combat Aircraft MK2 & the twin-engine Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft MK1.

✓ The purchase of 31 high-altitude, long-endurance Predator-MQ-9B armed unmanned aerial vehicles.

❖ **Deepened Military cooperation:**

India has bought from the U.S.

- The C-130 and C-17 Globemaster transport aircraft,
- AH-64E Apache attack helicopters
- CH-47 Chinook and MH-60R multi-role helicopters,
- P-8I maritime patrol aircraft and
- M777 ultra light howitzers, among others.

✓ The U.S. has been aggressively pitching its fighter jets, the F-16 and F/A-18, for the Indian Air Force and the Indian Navy.

✓ India and the U.S. had tried and shelved an earlier engine development effort under the Defence Technology and Trade Initiative some years ago. But now, the new jet engine deal is an investment in each other to address the shared security concerns, while continuing to navigate the disagreements.

Significance

➤ **Geopolitical:**

✓ Top among their shared concerns is China and its expansion in the Indo-Pacific.

✓ The U.S. also wants to wean India away from its defence partnership with Russia in the long term.

➤ **Technological:**

✓ From a technological perspective, the newly announced joint initiatives in jet engine production, semiconductors and space technology present an opportunity for India to develop a defence industry of its own, and improve its technological competence across the board.

India-USA Relations

About: India and the US share values of democracy, rule of law, human rights, and religious freedom that bind the countries together.

Bilateral engagement:

✓ India and the United States enjoy a comprehensive global strategic partnership covering almost all areas of human endeavour, driven by shared democratic values, convergence of interests on a range of issues, and vibrant people-to-people contacts.

✓ Regular exchanges at the leadership-level have been an integral element of the expanding bilateral engagement.

✓ Despite COVID-19 pandemic, India-U.S. cooperation witnessed intense engagement under various bilateral dialogue mechanisms in a wide range of areas including defence, security, health, trade, economic, science & technology, energy and people-to-people ties.

Defence and Security:

✓ India-US defence cooperation is based on "New Framework for IndiaUS Defence Cooperation", which was renewed for a period of ten years in 2015.

✓ In 2016, the defence relationship was designated as a Major Defence Partnership (MDP).

✓ The MDP recognizes a shared desire to build a comprehensive, enduring and mutually beneficial defence partnership.

✓ Several defence agreements have also been signed in recent years.

✓ Bilateral military exercises and defence exchanges are important aspects of deepening military-to-military cooperation.

Quad:

✓ The four Quad partners (India, Japan, United States & Australia) first formed a "Core Group" in 2004, to swiftly mobilise aid during the joint response to the 2004 Tsunami. Since 2017, Quad engagements have increased and intensified.

✓ In 2019, the first Quad Foreign Ministerial Meeting was held in New York (December 2019).

Counter Terrorism Cooperation: Cooperation in counter-terrorism has seen considerable progress with information exchange, operational cooperation and sharing of counterterrorism technology and equipment. India-U.S. Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism oversees the expanding CT cooperation.

Cyber Security Cooperation: The India-US Cyber Framework signed in September 2016, provides for expanding cooperation in the cyber domain.

Trade & Economic Relations:

✓ The rapidly expanding trade and commercial linkages form an important component of the multi-faceted partnership between India and the United States.

✓ The U.S. is India's second largest trading partner and a major destination for our exports of goods and services.

- ✓ The US is one of the top 5 investment destinations for Indian FDI.
Indian Diaspora: About 4.2 million Indian Americans/Indian origin people reside in the US. The Indian Americans [3.18 million] constitute the third largest Asian ethnic group in the US.
Challenges
- ✓ India's preference to its strategic autonomy:
- ✓ While its embrace with the U.S. is getting stronger, deeper and more comprehensive, India is also cognisant of the need to maintain its strategic autonomy.
- ✓ U.S. strategy at the moment is focused on creating a new bipolarity in the world, which India is not comfortable with.
Conflicting positions:
- ✓ **India's position on Ukraine war:**
- ✓ India's muted criticism of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 expectedly led to some frustration in the West, raising questions over India's credibility as a security partner.
- ✓ Even with converging Indo-US strategic interests in the Indo-Pacific, differences persist between Washington and New Delhi.
Position on Indo-Pacific region:
- ✓ The US views the Indo-Pacific as a region where rules-based liberal international order needs to be preserved vis-à-vis China's assertive rise and even the Russian threat.
- ✓ By contrast, India does not see the Indo-Pacific as an exclusive group of actors in a region that is against any country.
- ✓ New Delhi considers it an "inclusive" region and has, at times, even signalled the inclusion of China and Russia within its definition of the Indo-Pacific.
Way ahead: Overall, India-US strategic and security ties are not perfect and are unlikely to be so in the coming future. The spectre of divergences will continue to exist within the role compatibility the two enjoy. India's desire to protect its borders and sovereignty aligns with U.S. interests. This is a new era of mutual trust between the two countries, and it should act as a force for stability in the region.

ENVIRONMENT

Indian Ocean Dipole

In Context: With the **El Nino phenomenon** almost certain to affect the Indian monsoon this year, high hopes are pinned on the **development of a positive Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD)** and its ability to counterbalance the El Nino effect.

About

- While **El Nino is already firmly established** in the Pacific Ocean this year, the IOD is still in the neutral phase.
- According to the **India Meteorological Department (IMD)**, the probability forecast for IOD indicates about **80% probability for positive IOD** conditions and **15% of a neutral IOD** during June-August 2023 season. **All international climate models** surveyed also suggest a positive IOD event may develop in the coming months.

Indian Ocean Dipole

- The IOD is an ocean-atmosphere interaction very similar to the El Nino fluctuations in the Pacific Ocean, playing out, as the name shows, in the Indian Ocean.
- It is also a **much weaker system than El Nino**, and thus has relatively limited impacts.
- But a **positive IOD does have the potential to offset the impacts of El Nino** to a small measure in neighbouring areas, and it has, at least once in the past (1997), delivered admirably on this potential.
- **How?**
- IOD, sometimes referred to as the Indian Nino, is a phenomenon similar to ENSO, playing out in the relatively smaller area of the Indian Ocean between the Indonesian and Malaysian coastline in the east and the African coastline near Somalia in the west.
- One side of the ocean, along the equator, gets warmer than the other.
- **Positive & Negative IOD:**
- IOD is said to be positive when the western side of the Indian Ocean, near the Somalia coast, becomes warmer than the eastern Indian Ocean.
- It is negative when the western Indian Ocean is cooler.
- **Relations of ENSO & IOD:**
- A positive IOD event is often seen developing at times of an El Nino, while a negative IOD is sometimes associated with La Nina.
- During El Nino, the Pacific side of Indonesia is cooler than normal because of which the Indian Ocean side also gets cooler. That helps the development of a positive IOD.
- Many studies suggest that IOD events are **actually induced by ENSO**.
- But according to others, **IOD events can have an independent existence**.
- **Impact of IOD:** A positive IOD helps rainfall along the African coastline and also over the Indian sub-continent while suppressing rainfall over Indonesia, southeast Asia and Australia. The impacts are opposite during a negative IOD event.

El Niño

- El Niño is the warming of seawater in the central-east Equatorial Pacific that occurs every few years.

- **In a normal year**
- The eastern side of the Pacific Ocean, near the northwestern coast of South America, is cooler than the western side near the islands of Philippines and Indonesia.
- This happens because the prevailing wind systems that move from east to west sweep the warmer surface waters towards the Indonesian coast.
- The relatively cooler waters from below come up to replace the displaced water.
- **An El Niño event** is the result of a weakening of wind systems that leads to lesser displacement of warmer waters.
- This results in the eastern side of the Pacific becoming warmer than usual.

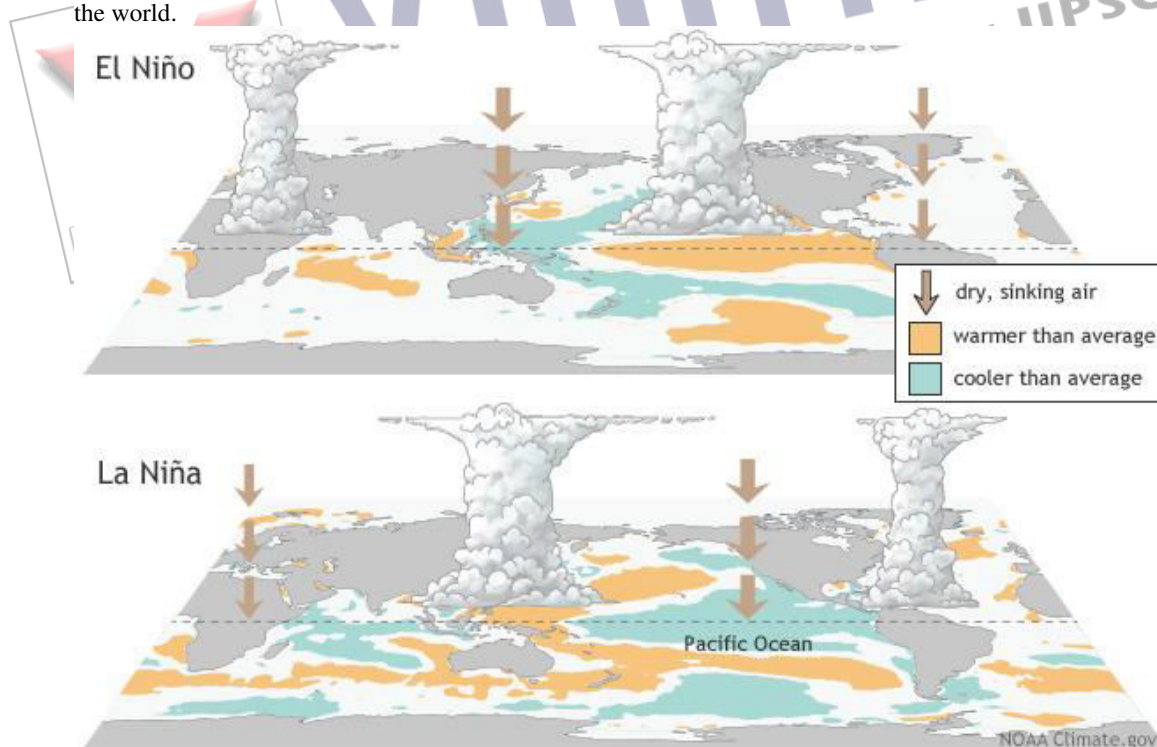
Outcomes

- **Disruptions in the food chain:** The phenomena of upwelling, where nutrient-rich waters rise towards the surface, is reduced under El Niño. This in turn reduces phytoplankton.
- Thus, fish that eat phytoplankton are affected, followed by other organisms higher up the food chain.
- **Disruptions in the overall ecosystem:** Warm waters also carry tropical species towards colder areas, disrupting multiple ecosystems.
- **Alterations in wind & weather patterns:** Since the Pacific covers almost one-third of the earth, changes in its temperature and subsequent alteration of wind patterns disrupt global weather patterns.
- El Niño causes dry, warm winters in the Northern U.S. and Canada and increases the risk of flooding in the U.S. gulf coast and southeastern U.S. It also brings drought to Indonesia and Australia.

La Niña

- La Niña is the opposite of El Niño. La Niña sees cooler than average sea surface temperature (SST) in the equatorial Pacific region.
- Trade winds are stronger than usual, pushing warmer water towards Asia.
- On the American west coast, upwelling increases, bringing nutrient-rich water to the surface.
- Pacific cold waters close to the Americas push jet streams — narrow bands of strong winds in the upper atmosphere — northwards.
- This leads to drier conditions in the Southern U.S., and heavy rainfall in Canada.
- La Niña has also been associated with heavy floods in Australia. Two successive La Niña events in the last two years caused intense flooding in Australia, resulting in significant damage.

ENSO: Both these conditions, together called **El Niño Southern Oscillation or ENSO**, affect weather events across the world.



Way ahead

- Compared to ENSO events, the **impacts of IODs are much weaker**.
- But, hope lingers, including this year when a strong El Niño is expected to develop in the Pacific Ocean.

PRELIM FACTS

1. Seven products from UP get GI Tag

In Context: Seven products from Uttar Pradesh have got the **Geographical Indication (GI) tag**.

Products that get GI tag are:

- **Amroha Dholak:** The Amroha Dholak is a musical instrument made of natural wood of **mango, jackfruit and teakwood**. Wood is used to carve the multiple sized and shaped hollow blocks, which are later fitted with animal skin, mostly **goatskin**, to create the instrument.



- **Baghpat Home Furnishings:** Baghpat is famous for their exclusive handloom home furnishing product and running fabrics in cotton yarn for generations, and only cotton yarn is used in the handloom weaving process.
- **Barabanki Handloom Product:** Barabanki is known for fabric knitting through handloom. The main products are scarves, shawls, stoles and the basic raw materials are silk, zari, cotton, polyester, jacquard loom and dori.



- **Kalpi Handmade Paper:** Kalpi has historically been a centre of handmade paper manufacturing. Munnalal 'Khaddari', a Gandhian, formally introduced the craft here in the 1940s. The craft is made from waste paper and cloth strings. This paper is used to make a variety of products such as office files, carry bags, absorption papers, visiting cards and more.



- **Mahoba Gaura Patthar Hastashlip:** It is a stone craft and is made of radiant white-coloured stone (Pyro Flight Stone) that is predominantly found in this region. It is cut into several pieces, which are then used for making various craft items.



- **Mainpuri Tarkashi:** Tarkashi is a technique of inlaying brass, copper or silver wires in wood. Usually, Sheesham wood is used for this art.
- It is used for decorating jewellery boxes, name plaque ,door panels, lamps, sandook, decorative pieces, tables, flower pots etc.It was mainly used for *khadaous* (wooden sandals), since leather was considered unclean.



- **Sambhal Horn Craft:** Sambhal offers a wide range of decorative horn-bone handicrafts.The raw material used for making these craft items is procured from **dead animals** that makes this industry environment friendly.



2. ‘Sagar Samajik Sahayyog’

IN CONTEXT: The Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways launched ‘Sagar Samajik Sahayyog’.

About ‘Sagar Samajik Sahayyog’

- ✓ It is the new guidelines of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways.
- ✓ It empowers ports to undertake CSR activities directly.
- ✓ It allows ports to initiate, undertake and expedite projects for community welfare through a framework where local communities can also become partners of development & change.

Features:

- ✓ It will impact projects and programmes relating to activities specified in Section 70 of the Major Port Authorities Act, 2021.
- ✓ For the purpose of planning and implementing CSR projects, a Corporate Social Responsibility Committee shall be constituted in each major port.
- ✓ The Committee shall be headed by the Dy. Chairperson of the Major Port and shall have 2 other Members.
- ✓ CSR Budget will be mandatorily created through a Board Resolution as a percentage of net profit.
- ✓ A port with an annual net profit of ₹100 crores or less can fix between 3% - 5% for CSR expenses.
- ✓ Similarly, ports with a net profit between ₹100 crores to ₹1500 crores annually, can fix its CSR expenses between 2% and 3% of its net profit, subject to a minimum of ₹13 crores.
- ✓ For ports, whose annual net profit is above ₹1500 crores per year, the CSR expenses can be between 0.5% and 2% of its net profit.

Objectives:

- ✓ The guidelines aim to empower ports to address local community issues in a more cooperative and swift manner.
- ✓ CSR has the ability to become a major agent of change in a location or on an activity to bring positive change in the lives of the people.
- ✓ It aims to ensure that ports of all sizes contribute to community welfare initiatives.

3. Greedflation

IN CONTEXT: Latest financial reports from the US and Europe continue to show that firms — across the board — seem to be making more profit than what their overall sales should merit - leading to Greedflation.

About :

- **Inflation:** Inflation or the inflation rate is the rate at which the general price level rises. When it is reported that the inflation rate was 5% in June it implies that the general price level of the economy (as measured by a representative basket of goods and services) was 5% more than what it was in June 2022.
- ✓ There are two main ways in which inflation happens.
- ✓ Either prices get pushed up because input costs have risen — this is called cost-push inflation.
- ✓ Or they are pulled up because there is excess demand — this is called demand-pull inflation.
- **Disinflation:** Disinflation refers to the trend when the inflation rate decelerates.
- ✓ Suppose it was 10% in April, 7% in May and 5% in June. This is disinflation.
- ✓ In other words, disinflation refers to a period when even though prices are rising (or inflation is happening), it is happening at a slower rate each passing month.
- **Deflation:** Deflation is the exact opposite of inflation. Imagine if the general prices level in June was 5% lower than what it was in June last year. That's deflation.
- **Reflation:** Reflation typically follows deflation as policymakers try to pump up economic activity either by government spending more and/or interest rates being reduced.

About Greedflation:

- ✓ Imagining a scenario: What if prices were going up not because workers were getting higher wages but because their companies — were making more profits?
- ✓ If the input costs have gone up, a businessman or a company will be forced to raise their prices otherwise they cannot sustain their business.
- ✓ In such a case, higher sales in terms of rupees do not lead to higher profits because even the input costs have increased.
- ✓ Explains Greedflation: Greedflation simply means (corporate) greed is fuelling inflation. In other words, instead of the wage-price spiral, it is the profit-price spiral that is in play.
- ✓ In essence, greedflation implies that companies exploited the inflation that people were experiencing by putting up their prices way beyond just covering their increased costs and then used that to maximise their profit margins.
- ✓ That, in turn, further fuelled inflation.
- ✓ Observed in developed countries: In the developed countries — in Europe and the US — there is a growing consensus that greedflation is the real culprit.

Examples:

- ✓ Europe: While the biggest driver of high inflation that Europe witnessed in 2022 (since the start of the war) was the spike in energy costs but there was very little contribution of higher wages. There was, however, an extra and significant injection of inflation from rising profits of firms.
- ✓ India: The Indian corporate sector has generated superlative profits in the post pandemic period. Profits during recent times have been nearly thrice the profits corporations earned earlier.

Suggestions & Way ahead: Profit margins should shrink and the share of corporate sector income going to labor compensation (or the labor share of income) should rise as unemployment falls and the economy heats up. One effective way to prevent corporate power from being channeled into higher prices in the coming year would be a temporary excess profits tax

4. Global Environment Facility (GEF)

IN CONTEXT: Recently, at the 64th Global Environment Facility (GEF) council meeting in Brazil, the governing body approved the disbursement of \$1.4 billion to accelerate efforts to tackle the climate, biodiversity and pollution crises. About Global Environment Facility (GEF):

- ✓ It was established on the eve of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit of UNFCCC to help tackle our planet's most pressing environmental problems.
- ✓ It is a family of funds dedicated to confronting biodiversity loss, climate change, pollution, and strains on land and ocean health.
- ✓ It provides financial assistance for five major international environmental conventions:
- ✓ The Minamata Convention on Mercury.
- ✓ The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs).
- ✓ The United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD)
- ✓ The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).
- ✓ The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).
- ✓ It has 184 member countries, including India.
- ✓ The governing council is the main governing body of GEF which comprises 32 members appointed by constituencies of GEF member countries (14 from developed countries, 16 from developing countries, and two from economies in transition).
- ✓ Its secretariat is based in Washington, D.C.

5. Meira Paibis

IN CONTEXT: Recently, the Indian Army's Spear Corps accused women activist Meira Paibis in Manipur of deliberately blocking routes and interfering in the Operations of Security Forces as the state struggles to contain weeks of rioting and unres.

About Meira Paibis:

Who are they?

- ✓ The most visible organised face of civil society activists have been the Meira Paibis or “women torch bearers”, so called because of the flaming torches that they hold aloft while marching in the streets, often at night.
- ✓ They, also known as Imas or Mothers of Manipur, are Meitei women who come from all sections of society in Manipur.
- ✓ Members of this group are widely respected and represent a powerful moral force.
- ✓ The Meira Paibis are loosely organised, usually led by groups of senior women, but have no rigid hierarchy or structure or any overt political leanings.

What social role does the Meira Paibis play?

- ✓ The Meira Paibi was formed in 1977; presently, it is one of the largest grassroots movements in the world.
- ✓ Its initial focus on fighting alcoholism and drug abuse has now expanded to countering human rights violations and the development of society at large.
- ✓ National Statistics Day is commemorated annually on June 29 to honor the significant contributions made by Professor Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis in the fields of statistics and economic planning. Often hailed as the ‘father of Indian statistics,’ Professor Mahalanobis is renowned for developing the Mahalanobis distance, a statistical measure utilized to determine the disparity between a point and a distribution.

6. The Statistics Day: 29 JUNE

- ✓ The Statistics Day 2023 event is taking place at the Scope Convention Centre, Scope Complex, Lodhi Road in New Delhi. Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Rao Inderjit Singh, will grace the occasion as the Chief Guest.

The theme of National Statistics Day, 2023 is “**Alignment of State Indicator Framework with National Indicator Framework for Monitoring Sustainable Development Goals**”.

About Prof. Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis (1893-1972):

- ✓ He is considered the father of modern statistics in India, founded the Indian Statistical Institute (ISI), shaped the Planning Commission (which was replaced by the NITI Aayog on 1st January 2015) and pioneered methodologies for large-scale surveys.
- ✓ He introduced innovative techniques for conducting large-scale samplesurveys, calculated acreages and crop yields, using the method of random sampling.
- ✓ He also devised a statistical method called ‘Fractile Graphical Analysis’, used to compare socio-economic conditions of varied groups.

ANSWER WRITTING

Q. Although the Attorney General of India doesn't enjoy the right to vote in Parliament, he plays a vital role both inside and outside the house with respect to role played ingovernance. Analyze.

Introduction: The Attorney General of India derives its power from Indian constitution from Article 76. He is the highest law officer in the country appointed by president and his duties include –

- ✓ To give advice to government of India upon such legal matters which are referred to him by president.
- ✓ To perform such other duties of a legal character those are assigned to him by the president.
- ✓ To discharge the functions conferred on him by the constitution or any other law.

Role played by Attorney General inside the parliament:

- ✓ He has the right to speak and take part in the proceedings of both the houses of Parliament.
 - ✓ He enjoys all the privileges and immunities that are available to a Member of Parliament.
- Thus he enjoys all the rights available to the members of Parliament except the right to vote. This makes him an important part of parliamentary proceedings whereby he can analyze and comment on the day to day perspective of the parliament based on legal perspective of bills and discussions. This constitutes important aspect of democracy when viewed through legal prism of an expert.

Role played outside Parliament:

- ✓ To appear on behalf of government of India in all cases in the Supreme Court and High Court in which the government is concerned.
- ✓ To represent the government of India in any reference made by president to the Supreme Court under Article 143 of constitution.

Thus he is the chief legal advisor to the government of India whereby the government consults him on issues related to legal matter. Although he is not a full time counsel for the government, doesn't fall under the category of government servants and is not debarred from private legal practice.

How changing governance requires role modification:

- The office of Attorney General was created decades back when the role of government was majorly to manage day to day aspects of governance. But the changing times has brought new aspects to the governance like multiplicity of stakeholders, increased role of private players, increased role of e-governance and need for better public service delivery to promote good governance to aware citizenry.

Conclusion: Thus it should be ensured that the office of Attorney General is free from political influence and it discharges its duty as per mandates of constitution. Creation of multiple organs within the body of Attorney General so as to deal with legal aspects of matters individually for better expert advice could also be thought of. Thus the Attorney General's role should be adaptive with changing nature of governance and whichever party be in government.

MCQs

1. Considered the following statement regarding **Mahoba Gaura Patthar Hastashlip**, which get GI tag recently:
 1. It is a stone craft and is made of radiant Pyro Flight Stone.
 2. Use only white-coloured stone.
 Which of the above statement is/are correct?
 - a) Only 1
 - b) Only 2
 - c) **Both 1 and 2**
 - d) None
2. Considered the following statement:
 1. The Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways launched 'Sagar Samajik Sahayog'.
 2. It empowers ports to undertake Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities directly.
 Which of the above statement is/are correct?
 - a) Only 1
 - b) Only 2
 - c) **Both 1 and 2**
 - d) None
3. Consider the following statements:
 1. The Meira Paibis are also known as Mothers of Meghalaya.
 2. Meira Paibis role as society's conscience keepers is widely acknowledged.
 Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
 Which of the above statement is/are correct?
 - a) Only 1
 - b) **Only 2**
 - c) Both 1 and 2
 - d) None
4. Consider the following statements regarding the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD):
 1. IOD is a much stronger system than El Nino, and thus has stronger impacts over El Nino.
 2. IOD is said to be positive when the western side of the Indian Ocean, near the Somali coast, becomes warmer than the eastern Indian Ocean.
 Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
 - a) Only 1
 - b) **Only 2**
 - c) Both 1 and 2
 - d) None
5. Considered the following statement regarding About Prof. Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis
 1. He is considered the father of modern statistics in India,
 2. He founded the Indian Statistical Institute (ISI).
 3. He Honoured with the Padma Vibhushan.
 How many statement is/are correct?
 - a) Only 1 pair
 - b) Only 2 pair
 - c) Only 3 pair
 - d) None.
6. Considered the following statement regarding Greedflation
 1. Greedflation situation arise due to workers were getting higher wages.
 2. Companies profit does not impact the greedflation.
 Which of the statements given above is/are incorrect?
 - a) Only 1
 - b) **Only 2**
 - c) Both 1 and 2
 - d) None
7. Tam Pa Ling cave, which was recently seen in the news is located in which country?
 - a) India
 - b) **Laos**
 - c) Myanmar
 - d) Syria
8. CHAMPIONS Portal, which was recently seen in the news is launched by which Union Ministry?
 - a) Ministry of Education
 - b) Ministry of Textiles
 - c) Ministry of New and Renewable Energy
 - d) **Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises**
9. Consider the following statements regarding Critical Minerals:
 1. It has metallic or non-metallic characters.
 2. It including lithium and vanadium, which are largely used in the manufacturing of batteries.
 Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
 - a) Only 1
 - b) Only 2
 - c) **Both 1 and 2**
 - d) None
10. With reference to sea lion, consider the following statements:
 1. It is mainly found only in the Pacific Ocean region.
 2. It is a semi-aquatic carnivorous mammal.
 Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
 - a) Only 1
 - b) **Only 2**
 - c) Both 1 and 2
 - d) None