FWD ▶

FORTUNE WEEKLY DIGEST

› Nuclear Disarmament   › Toxic Work Culture   › Kurukshethra: E-Learning

22ⁿᵈ SEPTEMBER - 28ᵗʰ SEPTEMBER, 2024

FWD
FORTUNE WEEKLY DIGEST

EDITOR'S NOTE

As UPSC aspirants, it is essential to stay updated on current affairs to excel in the examination. This **Fortune Weekly Digest (ForWarD)** brings you the latest news and developments from around the world, carefully curated and analyzed to help you prepare for the Civil Services (Main) Examination.

We understand that time is precious, and we have made sure to present the information in a concise and easy-to-understand manner.

The magazine is divided into different sections. Mains relevant topics have been covered in detail with a UPSC previous year question perspective. The jot downs are examples and interesting facts to enrich your answer writing. Cherrypicks has some key words from the week, helpful again in answer writing and essay. We have also included essay topics and sample questions to help you guage your preparation.

We have designed this magazine to best supplement the daily current affairs notes we have launched by the name of **FIND (Fortune IAS News Daily)** and **FINDER (Fortune IAS News Daily Explainer)** and the **Fortune Prelims Precise** monthly compilation. This magazine will be explained in detail and your queries addressed in a live class we conduct.

At a time when there is no dearth of current affairs materials, our hope is help you get a one-stop solution for all your current affairs needs.

This magazine is a work in progress and your feedback will be appreciated.

We hope that this magazine will serve as a valuable resource for your exam preparation and contribute to your success in the UPSC examination.

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FIRST ATTEMPT TOPPERS FROM OUR PRELIMS CUM MAINS BATCH

KASTURI SHA AIR 68

MANJIMA P AIR 235

FABI RASHEED AIR 71

SWATHI S BABU AIR 522

OORMILA J S AIR 561

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TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

Syllabus: GS III - Urbanization; Infrastructure

PYQ MAPPING

Q) *What are 'Smart Cities'? Examine their relevance for urban development in India. Will it increase rural-urban differences? Give arguments for Smart Villages' in the light of PURA and RURBAN Mission.* **(2016)**

Q) *"Investment in infrastructure is essential for more rapid and inclusive economic growth. "Discuss in the light of India's experience* **(2021)**

Q) *Why is Public Private Partnership (PPP) required in infrastructure projects? Examine the role of PPP model in the redevelopment of Railway Stations in India.* **(2022)**

WHY IN NEWS

The Finance Minister, in the Union Budget 2024-25, proposed a transit-oriented development plan for 14 major cities with populations exceeding 3 million.

INTRODUCTION

- **Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)** is a city planning approach that places housing, stores, and jobs near high-quality public transportation. These areas are designed to be pedestrian-friendly, with safe sidewalks and a mix of shops and restaurants. People can easily walk or bike to their destinations, making it convenient to live, work, and play in these neighbourhoods.

- TOD, seeks high-density layouts where residential, commercial, and other developments are strategically positioned within the city. TOD envisions vibrant urban spaces that facilitate living and working within walking distance of efficient rapid transit systems.

SHORT TAKES

➢ **National Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Policy:**

o It is a strategy to promote the use of public transportation, walking, and cycling, and to develop compact, walkable communities.

o The policy was adopted in 2017 by the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA).

o **Key components:**

- **Land-Transport Integration:** Aligns land use with transport infrastructure.

- **High Density:** Encourages dense development near transit hubs.

- **Mixed-Use Spaces:** Promotes residential and commercial diversity close to transit.

- **Walkable Infrastructure:** Enhances pedestrian pathways and cycle tracks.

- **Sustainable Transport:** Supports efficient public transport systems.

- **Policy Guidelines:** Provides a framework for state and local TOD policies.

- **Public-Private Partnerships:** Encourages collaboration for project funding and implementation.

- **Environmental Focus:** Emphasises green building practices and green space preservation.

- **Equity in Development:** Ensures affordable housing options to promote inclusivity.

BENEFITS

➡ **Reduced Traffic Congestion:**

o Studies show that TOD can reduce vehicle miles travelled (VMT) by 30-50%, leading to less traffic congestion in urban areas.

➡ **Lower Carbon Emissions:**

o TOD can decrease CO_2 emissions by up to 45%, as public transport and walking reduce reliance on cars.

➡ **Increased Public Transport Use:**

o Residents living in TOD areas are 5-10 times more likely to use public transport, contributing to a reduction in car usage.

➡ **Economic Growth and Property Value:**

o Property values in TOD areas can increase by 10-20%, due to their proximity to public transport and walkable amenities, attracting businesses and residents.

➡ **Improved Public Health:**

o Walkable communities can reduce obesity rates by 12-15% and encourage healthier lifestyles through increased physical activity.
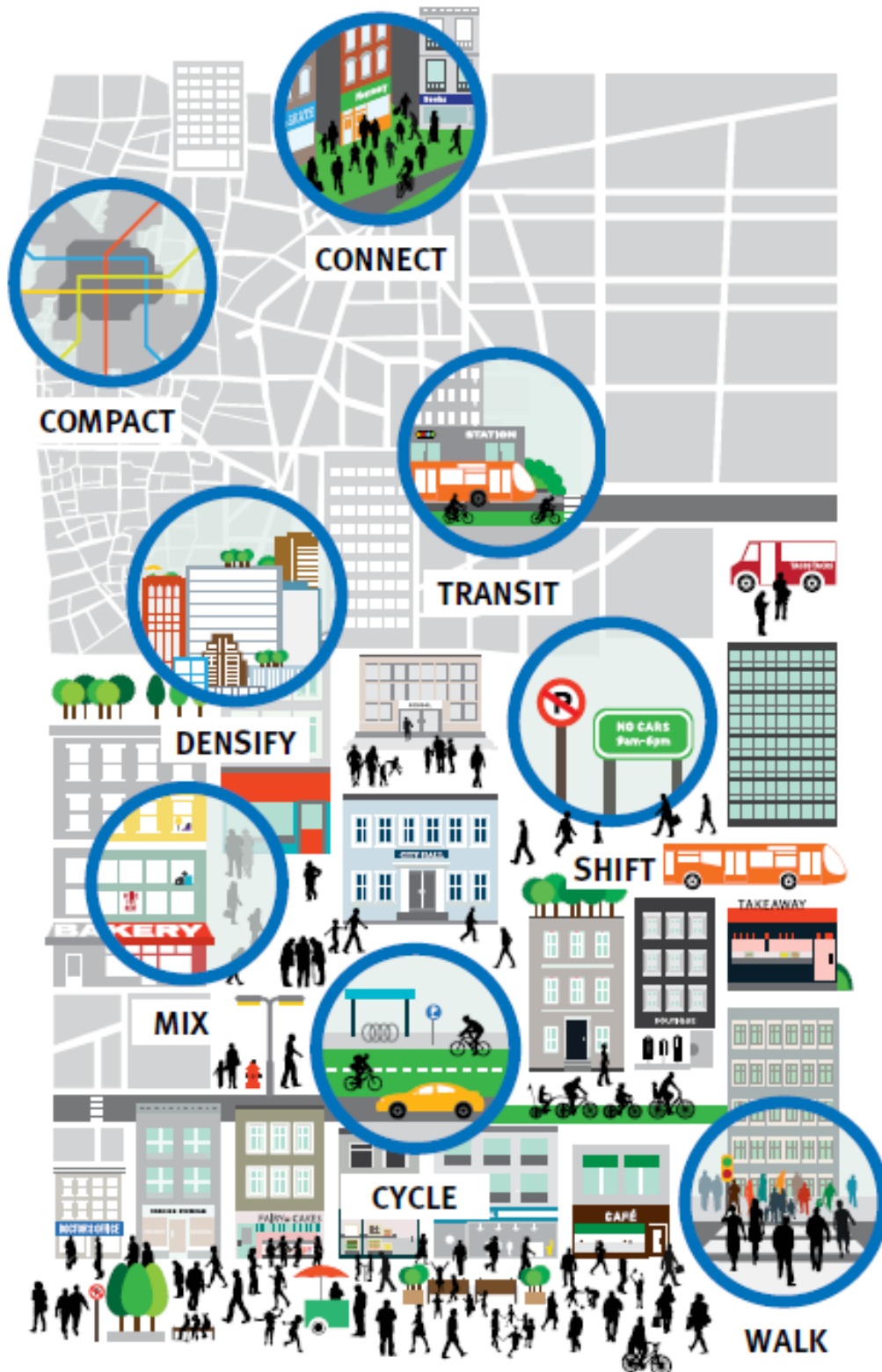
➡ **Affordable Housing Opportunities:**

o TOD projects often integrate affordable housing, with cities like Denver and San Francisco ensuring up to 20% of new TOD housing is affordable.

➡ **Cost Savings for Residents:**

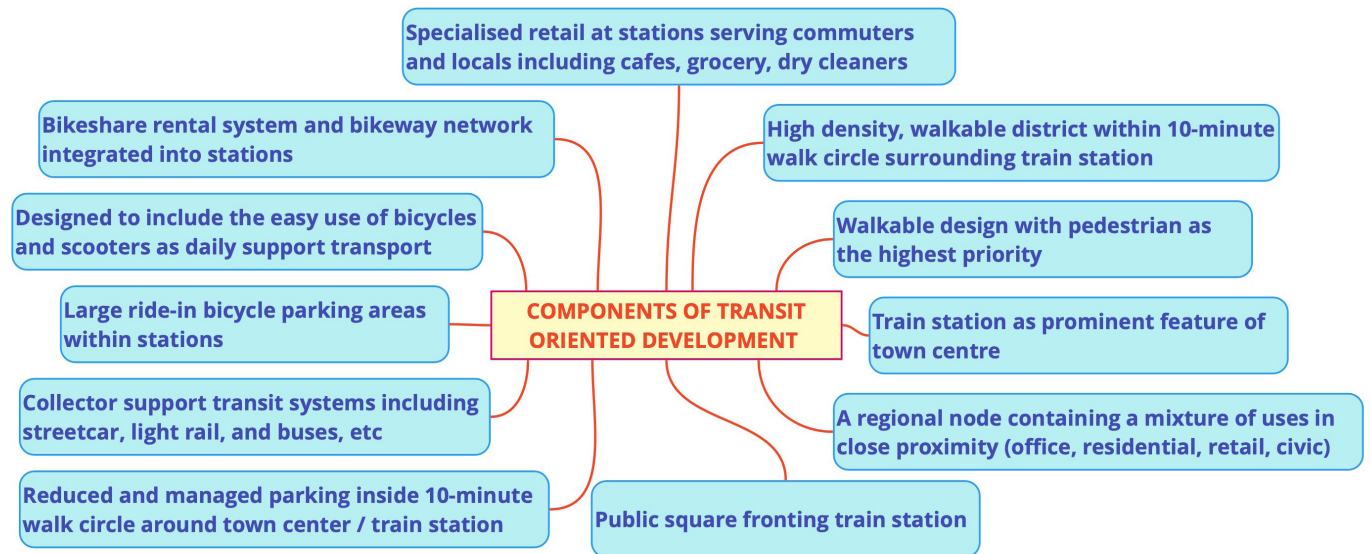o Households in TOD areas can save an average of 20-30% on transportation costs, as they rely less on car ownership.

➡ **Sustainable Land Use:**

o TOD promotes efficient land use, reducing urban sprawl by 50-75%, conserving green spaces and reducing infrastructure costs for cities.

Growing desire for more walkable lifestyles away from traffic

Growing national support for Smart Growth

FACTORS DRIVING THE TREND TOWARD TOD

Rapidly growing, mind-numbing traffic congestion nation-wide

Growing distaste for suburbia

Growing desire for quality urban lifestyle

Specialised retail at stations serving commuters and locals including cafes, grocery, dry cleaners

Bikeshare rental system and bikeway network integrated into stations

Designed to include the easy use of bicycles and scooters as daily support transport

Large ride-in bicycle parking areas within stations

Collector support transit systems including streetcar, light rail, and buses, etc

Reduced and managed parking inside 10-minute walk circle around town center / train station

COMPONENTS OF TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

High density, walkable district within 10-minute walk circle surrounding train station

Walkable design with pedestrian as the highest priority

Train station as prominent feature of town centre

A regional node containing a mixture of uses in close proximity (office, residential, retail, civic)

Public square fronting train station

SIGNIFICANCE FOR INDIA

Urbanization and Population Growth:

o   India's urban population is projected to reach 600 million by 2030, up from around 480 million in 2020.

o   TOD can help manage this rapid urban growth by creating compact, well-planned cities that reduce the strain on infrastructure and resources.

Reduce Social Cost:

o   TOD can help address socio-spatial inequality by making it possible for people of all income levels to live near jobs, basic services, and transit.

o   Bengaluru, for instance, is among the world's most traffic-congested cities, with the social cost estimated to be ₹38,000 crore annually (5% of the city's GDP) as per 2018 figures.

Reducing Traffic Congestion and Pollution:

o   In cities like Delhi, Mumbai, and Bengaluru, traffic congestion leads to economic losses of over ₹1.5 lakh crore annually, along with severe air pollution.

o   TOD can reduce vehicle use by 20-30%, cutting congestion and emissions.

Increased Public Transport Use:

o   Indian cities like Ahmedabad and Delhi have adopted Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and Metro systems under TOD principles, with public transport use increasing by 10-15% in these areas.

o   Expanding TOD can further enhance this trend across more cities.

Affordable Housing and Inclusivity:

o   Around 18.78 million urban housing units are needed by 2022 under India's "Housing for All" mission.

o   TOD projects can integrate affordable housing, offering better access to jobs and services, with 15-20% of TOD developments in cities like Delhi allocated for affordable housing.

Economic Boost and Real Estate Growth:

o   Research indicates that public transportation

investments can generate thousands of jobs and yield economic returns 5-7 times greater than the initial expenditure.

o Property values near metro stations in cities like Delhi, Hyderabad, and Bengaluru have risen by 15-25% due to TOD, driving economic growth.

o TOD attracts private investments and boosts real estate development, contributing to urban regeneration.

Reducing Dependency on Cars:

o With 22 cars per 1,000 people, India's vehicular population is rising rapidly.

o TOD can reduce car dependency, promoting public transport and walking as primary modes of

INDIAN GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

☀ Union Budget 2024-25:

o The Finance Minister, in the Union Budget 2024-25, proposed a transit-oriented development plan for 14 major cities with populations exceeding 3 million.

o The government will formulate a framework for the creative redevelopment of cities.

o Central assistance of ₹**2.2 lakh crore for urban housing** over the next five years as well as an interest subsidy scheme to facilitate loans at affordable rates for urban housing works.

CHALLENGES

Fragmented Urban Planning:

o TOD requires coordinated efforts between transport authorities, urban planners, and housing agencies.

o Conflicts and coordination issues between state and local authorities can delay TOD projects.

o Differing priorities, misallocation of funds, and bureaucratic delays are common problems that slow down implementation.

High Land Costs and Acquisition Issues:

o Land prices in urban India have skyrocketed, making land acquisition expensive.

o Complex legal procedures and delays in acquiring land pose significant challenges for developing TOD projects around transit hubs.

Inadequate Public Transport Infrastructure:

o Although cities like Delhi and Bengaluru have metro systems, most Indian cities lack extensive

transportation.

Environmental Sustainability:

o India ranks third globally in carbon emissions.

o TOD can reduce urban sprawl by 30-50%, lowering deforestation and carbon emissions, contributing to India's climate targets under the Paris Agreement.

Health and Quality of Life:

o India faces a growing burden of lifestyle diseases like obesity and diabetes.

o TOD promotes active transport modes like walking and cycling, potentially reducing lifestyle diseases by 10-15%.

o Scheme to support the development of 100 weekly haats or street food hubs in select cities.

☀ National Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Policy:

o The Government of India approved the **National Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Policy** and **Metro Rail Policy** in 2017.

• These policies promote **TOD** as a crucial strategy for urban planning and growth management.

public transport networks.

o Expanding metro, BRT, and bus systems is critical for TOD success, but these projects often face delays and funding shortages.

Funding and Investment Constraints:

o Large-scale TOD projects require significant financial resources.

o There is also a lack of robust public-private partnerships (PPPs) to support such projects.

Public Awareness and Acceptance:

o Many people are unaware of TOD's benefits, such as reduced car dependency, improved walkability, and sustainable living.

o There is resistance to lifestyle changes, especially reducing car use, which slows TOD adoption.

Displacement and Social Impact:

o TOD projects, particularly around transit hubs, can lead to increased land prices and the displacement

of low-income communities.

Environmental and Social Sustainability:

While TOD aims to reduce urban sprawl and

promote sustainability, ensuring that projects follow environmentally friendly construction practices and consider social equity can be difficult, especially in rapidly urbanising areas.

WAY FORWARD

* **Integrated Planning:** Strengthen coordination between urban planners, transport authorities, and housing agencies to ensure seamless project execution.

* **Land Reforms:** Simplify land acquisition processes and promote land pooling schemes to make land more affordable for TOD projects.

* **Expand Public Transport:** Invest in metro, BRT, and bus systems to create robust public transport networks that support TOD.

* **Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs):** Encourage private investments and partnerships to fund large-scale TOD projects.

* **Update Regulatory Framework:** Modernise zoning laws and building codes to support mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly, high-density development.

* **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Educate citizens about TOD benefits to increase acceptance and reduce resistance to car dependency.

* **Affordable Housing:** Ensure TOD projects include affordable housing to prevent displacement and promote inclusivity.

* **Government Coordination:** Enhance collaboration between state and local governments to fast-track project approvals and fund allocations.

SUCCESSFUL INDIAN INITIATIVES

Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC):

o Delhi Metro is a leading example of TOD in India. Areas around metro stations, such as Dwarka, Noida City Centre, and Nehru Place, have seen significant commercial and residential development, with improved pedestrian access and reduced traffic congestion.

Kochi Metro:

o The **Kochi Metro** has become a model TOD initiative by promoting mixed-use development around its stations, such as Aluva and Edappally. With the introduction of **Kochi Smart City**, TOD principles are further enhancing urban mobility and sustainable living.

Ahmedabad Bus Rapid Transit System (BRTS):

o Ahmedabad's BRTS, also known as Janmarg, is a successful TOD model integrating bus corridors with urban development.

Kerala government's City Circular Bus

o It service is an innovative public transport initiative aimed at improving urban mobility, especially in

cities like Thiruvananthapuram.

o The service is designed to complement the existing public transport network by connecting major destinations, reduce carbon emission by using **electric public transport systems, reduce traffic congestion, and promote the use of public transport.**
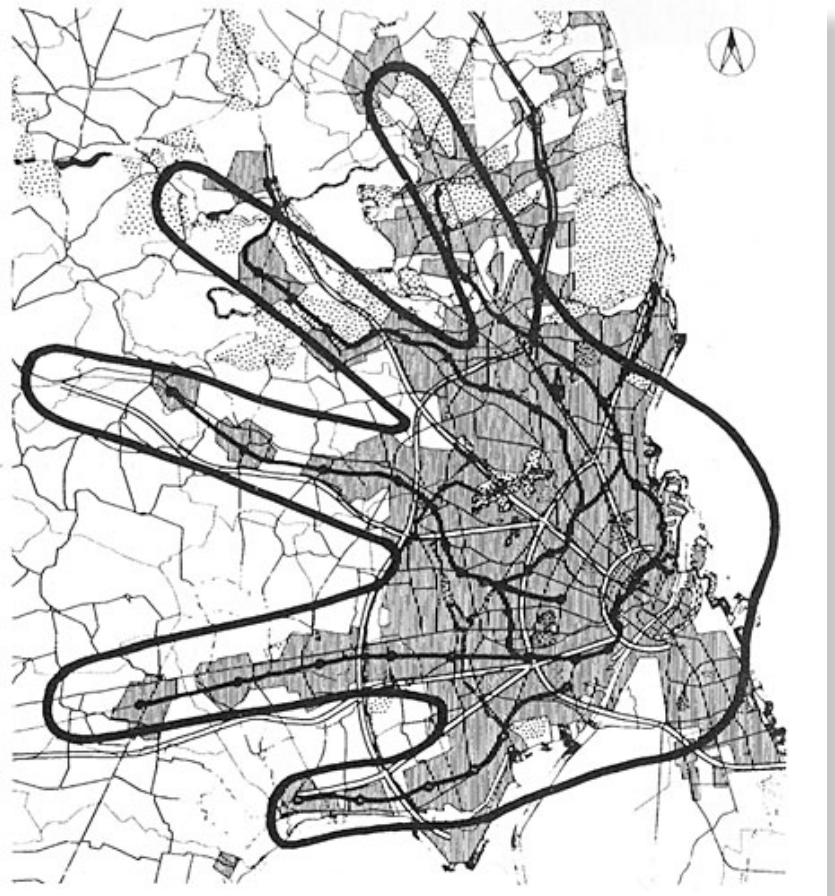
GLOBALLY SUCCESSFUL SYSTEM

⭐ **Copenhagen, Denmark:**

o Known for its "Finger Plan," which integrates rail transit with urban development. The city expanded along five corridors, with dense development near train stations, encouraging public transport use and reducing car dependency.

⭐ **Curitiba, Brazil:**

o Known for its pioneering Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system, Curitiba's TOD model includes high-density development along BRT corridors, reducing the need for cars and supporting sustainable urban growth.

⭐ **Hong Kong, China:**

o A global leader in TOD, Hong Kong's Mass Transit Railway (MTR) connects high-density residential and commercial developments.

o The city's compact design promotes public transport use, and TOD is a central strategy for managing urban growth.

CONCLUSION

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) is essential for fostering sustainable, inclusive, and efficient cities. Aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—**particularly Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and Goal 13 (Climate Action)**—TOD helps create resilient urban environments. For rapidly urbanising countries like India, TOD can significantly improve mobility, ensure affordable housing, and promote sustainable practices, ultimately enhancing the quality of life for millions and supporting global sustainability efforts.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) In what ways does Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) support the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals in rapidly urbanising countries like India, and what challenges does it face in this context? **(15 marks)(250 words)**

NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

> *Syllabus: GS II - Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.*

PYQ MAPPING

Q) *Give an account of the growth and development of nuclear science and technology in India. What is the advantage of the fast breeder reactor programme in India?* **(2017)**

Q) *In what ways would the ongoing US-Iran Nuclear Pact Controversy affect the national interest of India? How should India respond to this situation?* **(2018)**

SHORT TAKES

➤ Conference on Disarmament (CD): A multilateral forum for negotiating disarmament and arms control agreements. The CD was established in 1979 by the United Nations General Assembly and is based in Geneva at the Palais des Nations. The CD meets annually in three separate sessions.

➤ No first use (NFU) policy: A commitment by a nuclear power to not use nuclear weapons first. Instead, the country would only use nuclear weapons in response to a nuclear attack by an enemy

INTRODUCTION

Nuclear disarmament has long been a critical goal for global peace and security, aimed at reducing the risk of catastrophic destruction. As the world faces rising geopolitical tensions, the presence of nuclear weapons poses an ever-present threat, intensifying conflicts and fostering instability. With international efforts like the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the more recent Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), the quest for a world free of nuclear arms remains urgent, requiring renewed commitment and cooperation among nations to ensure a safer future for all.

WHY IN NEWS

The International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, observed on September 26, aligns with discussions at the UN General Assembly this year on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), also known as the Ban Treaty. Amid global tensions, including the war in Ukraine and other conflicts, the TPNW's goal of total nuclear disarmament is a focal point.

VARIOUS AGREEMENTS ON NUCLEAR DISARMAMENTS

Agreement	Objective	Key Features	Current Status	India's Stance
Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)	Prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, promote disarmament	• 3 pillars: non-proliferation, disarmament, peaceful use of nuclear energy. • Nuclear-armed states commit to disarmament, but no timeline	• In force since **1970**. • 191 parties. • Not fully achieved disarmament.	India has **not signed**, calling it discriminatory as it recognizes only a few countries as nuclear states
Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)	Prohibit all nuclear explosions for any purpose	Bans nuclear testing. Requires ratification by 44 specific states to enter into force	Adopted in **1996** but has not entered into force; 8 key states, haven't signed/ ratified	India has **not signed**, as it seeks a comprehensive approach to disarmament, not just test bans
Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)	Total elimination of nuclear weapons	• Prohibits development, testing, production, stockpiling, use, and threats of nuclear weapons. • Goes beyond NPT	Entered into force in **2021**. 70 states parties, 27 signatories	• India has **not signed**. • Views the treaty as lacking enforcement and without the participation of nuclear states

Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I & II)	Limit and reduce the number of nuclear warheads held by the US and Russia	**Bilateral treaty between the US and Russia** to reduce strategic offensive arms.	START I was signed in **1991**, and the START II treaty was signed in **1993**	India not involved, as it applies only to the US and Russia
New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START)	Reduce deployed strategic nuclear warheads to 1,550	Limits the number of deployed nuclear warheads and intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs)	In force **since 2011**; extended until 2026	India not a signatory, as it applies to the US and Russia
Partial Test Ban Treaty (PTBT)	Prohibit nuclear tests in the atmosphere, outer space, and underwater	Bans nuclear tests in all environments except underground	In force since **1963**. Key step in limiting testing, but underground tests continued	**India signed the treaty in 1963** but prefers a comprehensive approach covering all tests

WHY INDIA DID NOT JOIN

✨ **Perception of Discrimination:** India views the **NPT as discriminatory since it allows certain countries to maintain nuclear arsenals** while imposing strict restrictions on others.

✨ **Strategic Autonomy:** India believes that maintaining a **credible minimum nuclear deterrent** is necessary for its security, particularly in a volatile region with nuclear neighbours like Pakistan and China.

✨ **Concerns Over Disarmament Commitments:** There is scepticism that existing treaties adequately commit nuclear states to meaningful disarmament measures, leading to doubts about their effectiveness.

✨ **Sovereignty and National Security:** Joining nuclear treaties could compromise India's sovereignty and national security, particularly given its geopolitical context.

✨ **Exclusion of Key Players:** Treaties lacking the participation of nuclear-armed states, like the TPNW, are considered illegitimate, as they do not address the realities of global nuclear dynamics.

✨ **Desire for Comprehensive Frameworks:** India advocates for a multilateral approach to disarmament that includes all relevant stakeholders rather than treaties that exclude certain nations.

✨ **Need for Reliable Deterrence:** Concerns about maintaining a credible nuclear deterrent lead India to hesitate in committing to treaties that could restrict its testing and modernization capabilities.

WAY FORWARD

✳ **Inclusive Dialogue:** The global nuclear disarmament framework needs to involve nuclear-armed states. Future discussions should focus on bridging the divide between nuclear-possessing countries and proponents of the TPNW.

✳ **Strengthening Existing Frameworks:** While the TPNW may lack robust enforcement mechanisms, it has normative potential. The international community should strengthen complementary treaties like the CTBT and pursue reforms in the NPT to promote disarmament.

✳ **India's Role:** India can advocate for a comprehensive disarmament process by calling for equitable disarmament treaties that address the security concerns of nuclear and non-nuclear states alike.

✳ **Global Cooperation:** Multilateral efforts should focus on reducing nuclear arsenals, preventing nuclear proliferation, and addressing security concerns to ensure a global commitment to eventual nuclear disarmament.

✳ **Define "Minimum" Deterrence:** India should clearly outline what constitutes "minimum" in its Credible Minimum Deterrence posture, adapting it to the evolving geopolitical landscape.

✳ **Promote Regional Strategic Stability Dialogues:**
   o **Initiate Dialogues with Neighbors:** India can

propose regional strategic stability dialogues, focusing on risk reduction and crisis management with both nuclear and non-nuclear South Asian states.

o **Establish Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers:** Propose regular meetings with Pakistan for nuclear risk reduction, akin to the US-Russia model, to manage tensions and build confidence.

✳ **Showcase Civilian Nuclear Benefits:** Highlight projects like the Advanced Heavy Water Reactor (AHWR) with a thorium fuel cycle to demonstrate how nuclear energy can contribute to sustainable development goals, supporting both energy security and disarmament efforts.

✳ **Champion No First Use (NFU) Treaty:** India could lead efforts at forums like the Conference on Disarmament to develop a multilateral No First Use treaty, building on its existing NFU policy

CONCLUSION

India's cautious stance on nuclear treaties like the NPT and TPNW reflects its security concerns and perception of discrimination, but it has not actively undermined global non-proliferation efforts. While the TPNW lacks enforcement mechanisms, its potential to shift global norms against nuclear possession should not be overlooked. As discussions continue, the goal of delegitimizing nuclear weapons remains crucial for global security, though it may take years to achieve full disarmament.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) Can the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) truly achieve a nuclear-free world? Discuss the challenges faced by non-signatory states like India **(10 marks)(150 words)**

TOXIC WORK CULTURE

Syllabus: GS I - Indian Society

PYQ MAPPING

Q) *Explain why suicide among young women is increasing in Indian society* **(2023)**

WHY IN NEWS

The tragic death of 26-year-old chartered accountant Anna Sebastian Perayil, employed by Ernst and Young in Pune, has highlighted the harsh realities of modern corporate work culture, raising concerns about the severe impact of work stress, anxiety, and sleeplessness.

INTRODUCTION

Toxic work culture has become a pervasive issue, particularly in fast-paced economies like India, where long hours and relentless pressure are often seen as markers of dedication and success. This unhealthy glorification of overwork is taking a toll on both mental and physical well-being, leading to burnout, stress, and rising health issues among employees. To create a sustainable work environment, it's time to challenge these harmful norms and redefine what truly matters in achieving success and balance.

SHORT TAKES

➤ **International Labour Organization (ILO):** Established in 1919, is a unique tripartite U.N. agency that unites governments, employers, and workers from 187 Member States to advocate for social justice and uphold internationally recognized human and labour rights. Its mission focuses on promoting decent work for all individuals.

➤ **Hustle culture:** A societal trend that glorifies relentless work and long hours, often sacrificing personal well-being and work-life balance for professional success. Fueled by narratives from influential figures, it creates pressure to remain perpetually busy, prioritising productivity over health and personal fulfilment.

STATISTICS ON TOXIC WORK CULTURE

➡ **Long Working Hours:** In India, the average working hours are 48-50 hours a week, significantly higher than the global average of 34-36 hours **(ILO data)**. Women in India also face an additional six hours of unpaid labour per week, compared to men's one hour.

➡ **Extended Work Hours**: A recent **amendment to the Karnataka Shops and Commercial Establishment**

Act proposes increasing the maximum workday from 10 to 14 hours, a move that has drawn protests from IT workers in Bengaluru

➡ **Mental Burnout**: India ranks among the highest globally for mental burnout at 59%, compared to the global average of 20%, according to a **McKinsey Health Institute report.**

REASONS FOR TOXIC WORK CULTURE

♣ **Glorification of Hustle Culture**: The idea that relentless work leads to success, once **glorified by Silicon Valley**, continues to thrive in India. Despite the fading appeal of "hustle culture" globally, in India, the glorification of overworking remains deeply ingrained.

♣ **Lack of Work-Life Balance**: Many Indian companies demand long working hours, often with **little regard for employee well-being** and there's minimal focus on creating a balanced work environment, unlike

♣ **Cultural Perceptions**: Hard work is seen as a virtue, and **overworking is often interpreted as a sign**

of dedication, regardless of the toll it takes on employees' mental and physical health. Employees are sometimes considered resources to be exploited, rather than individuals with holistic needs.

♣ **Societal Pressure to Overachieve**: From an early age, individuals are pushed to pursue prestigious careers and this creates a culture where **people tie their self-worth to their job and societal validation**.

♣ **Callous Workforce Management:** Due to the oversupply of labour in India, companies become increasingly callous, knowing there are **many more workers available** to replace burned-out employees.

♣ **Detachment from Personal Life**: The obsession with career success often leads to an unhealthy work-life balance, where personal interests and well-being become secondary to the pursuit of professional achievement.

♣ **Gender Disparities**: Women, especially, bear the brunt of toxic work culture. In addition to long work hours, women in India face a **disproportionate burden of unpaid domestic labour,** leading to greater burnout and stress.

EXAMPLES OF HUSTLE CULTURE AND TOXIC WORK ENVIRONMENT

🌀 **Narayana Murthy's 70-Hour Work Week Suggestion**

o The **Infosys co-founder** advocated for young Indians to **work 70 hours a week** to boost economic growth, a stance criticised for promoting burnout and undervaluing work-life balance. His comments intensified the conversation about hustle culture in India's tech and corporate sectors.

🌀 **Bhavesh Aggarwal's Dismissal of Work-Life Balance**

o The **Ola CEO** stated he didn't believe in work-life balance, **equating happiness with total work immersion**. This attitude reflects a broader trend in start-ups and tech firms, where long hours and intense pressure are seen as the norm.

🌀 **Shantanu Deshpande's 18-Hour Workday Expectation**

o The **Bombay Shaving Company founder** advised young employees to work **18 hours a day for the first few years,** downplaying the negative impact of such a lifestyle on mental health. His remarks caused widespread backlash, drawing attention to the unrealistic demands placed on fresh graduates.

WAY FORWARD

✳ **Early Education on Balanced Success:** The mindset that career success defines personal worth needs to be addressed early on. Educational institutions should emphasise the importance of work-life balance and emotional well-being, rather than solely focusing on career accomplishments.

✳ **Challenge Hustle Culture**: There needs to be active resistance to glorifying overwork. Calling out colleagues or cultural narratives that praise excessive working hours can help disrupt toxic workplace norms.

✳ **Corporate Responsibility for Employee Well-Being**: Companies must take a more active role in protecting employee mental health. This could involve setting clear **boundaries around work hours, providing mental health resources, and actively discouraging overwork.**

✳ **Workplace Policy Reform**:

o A national conversation on implementing shorter work weeks, as being **trialled in countries like the UK and Germany,** is crucial.

o India could learn from **Scandinavian countries,** which prioritise shorter workweeks and a gentler work environment, emphasising sustainable growth while ensuring employees' mental and physical well-being are protected.

✳ **Cultural Shift**: The broader Indian work culture needs to move away from glorifying overwork and start valuing work-life balance. Shifting this mindset can help reduce toxic work environments.

✳ **Promote Employee Activism:** India's youth should push for constructive changes within their companies, advocating for better workplace cultures through engagement in culture audits and activism.

✳ **Gender-Sensitive Work Policies**: Addressing the unequal burden on women through gender-sensitive policies, such as **paid leave for caregiving and fair division of labour,** can mitigate some of the stress faced by women in the workforce.

✳ **Redefine Work-Life Balance**: The focus should shift from just balancing work and non-work hours to finding equal value in personal activities, relationships, and passions outside of work.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, toxic work culture, driven by the glorification of overwork, is not only unsustainable but also harmful to both employees and businesses in the long run. To break free from this cycle, we need to prioritise mental health, set healthy boundaries, and redefine success beyond relentless productivity. Only by embracing a balanced approach to work can we foster a healthier, more fulfilling professional life.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) *"Hustle culture is glorified exploitation." Analyse this statement in the context of modern work environments and the rise of mental health issues among employees* **(10 marks)(150 words)**

QUAD

Syllabus: GS II - Bilateral, Regional & Global Groupings & Agreements Involving India

PYQ MAPPING

Q) *Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad)' is transforming itself into a trade bloc from a military alliance, in present times – Discuss.* **(2020)**

Q) *How will I2U2 (India, Israel, UAE and USA) grouping transform India's position in global politics?* **(2022)**

WHY IN NEWS

Prime Minister Narendra Modi participated in the fourth Quad Leaders Summit which was held in Wilmington, Delaware on September 21 2024.
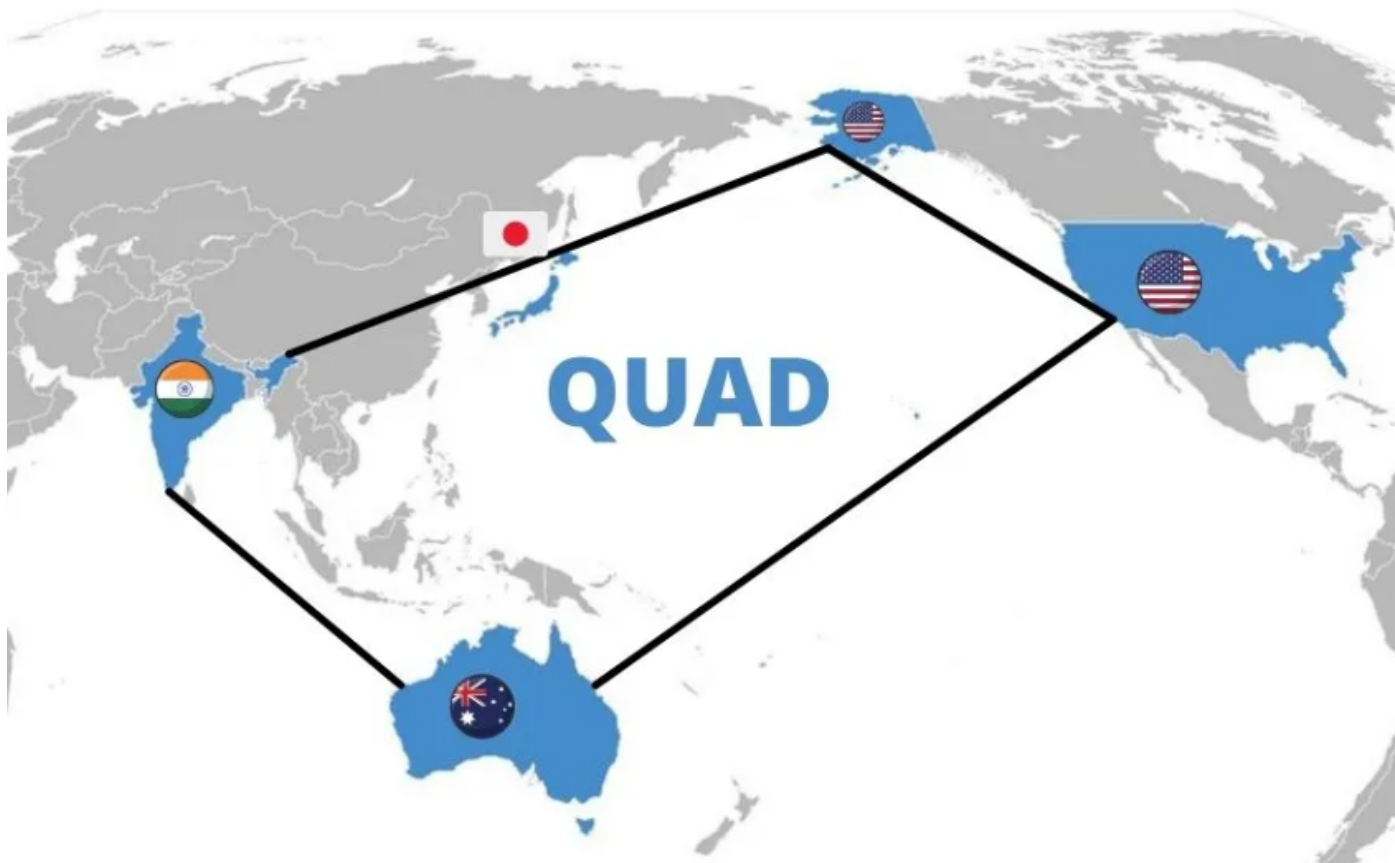
SHORT TAKES

➢ **QUAD+:**

o The QUAD grouping could also undergo expansion through a QUAD Plus Framework including countries like South Korea, New Zealand, and Vietnam, amongst others.
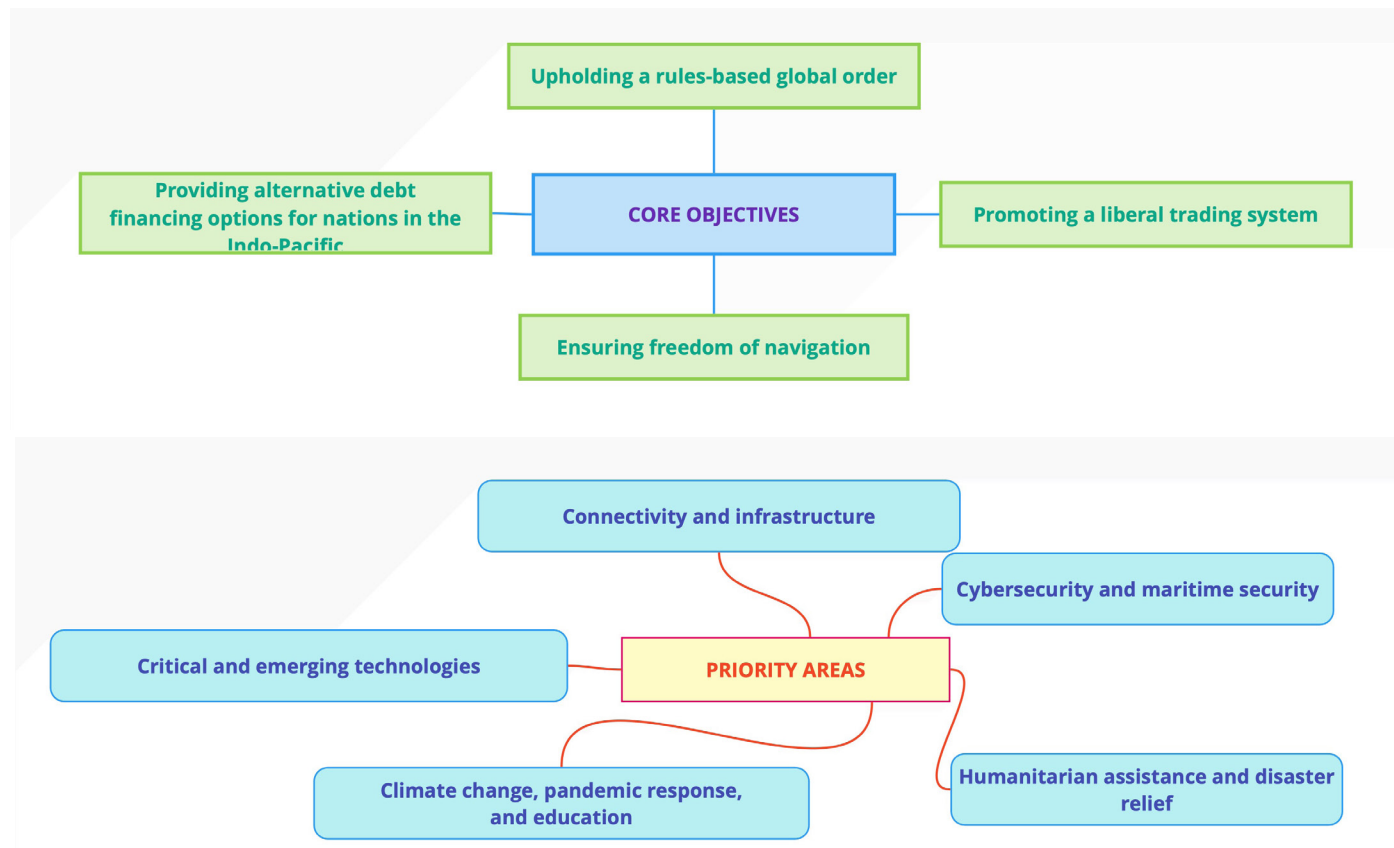
INTRODUCTION

'Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QSD), the Quad is an informal strategic forum comprising four nations, namely-- **United States of America (USA), India, Australia and Japan**. One of the primary objectives of the Quad is to work for a free, open, prosperous and inclusive Indo-Pacific region.

• The group met for the first time in 2007 on the sidelines of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean).

• It is considered an alliance of maritime democracies, and the forum is maintained by meetings, semi-regular summits, information exchanges and military drills of all the member countries.

• The QUAD doesn't host a secretariat or any permanent decision-making body like the EU or UN, instead focuses on expanding existing agreements.

PRINCIPLES OF QUAD

The primary aim of the **Quad** is to ensure that strategic sea routes in the **Indo-Pacific** remain free from military or political interference. It is largely viewed as a strategic alliance to counterbalance **China's growing influence**.

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                      │ Upholding a rules-based global order │
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│ Providing alternative debt│   │   CORE      │   │ Promoting a liberal trading  │
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│ nations in the Indo-Pacific│  └─────────────┘   └──────────────────────────────┘
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                      │   Ensuring freedom of navigation   │
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                │  Connectivity and infrastructure │
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    ┌──────────────────────────────┐        │ Humanitarian assistance and disaster│
    │ Climate change, pandemic      │        │ relief                              │
    │ response, and education       │        └──────────────────────────────────┘
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HISTORY

> **Quad 1.0 - Origin**

- o **2004**: The Quad traces its origin to 2004, when the four nations—**India, the US, Japan,** and **Australia**—came together to coordinate relief operations following the Indian Ocean tsunami.

- o **2007**: The concept of the Quad was first proposed by Japanese Prime Minister **Shinzo Abe** in 2007. However, the initiative was halted when **Australia withdrew** due to political pressure from China and increasing tensions between the US and China in the Asia-Pacific region.

> **Quad 2.0 Revival**

- o **2012**: Japanese Prime Minister **Shinzo Abe** reintroduced the idea of a **'Democratic Security Diamond'**, comprising the **US, Japan, India,** and **Australia** to safeguard regional security.

- o **2017**: The Quad was revived in 2017 amidst shifting geopolitical dynamics and **China's increasing assertiveness** in the **South China Sea** and along its border with India.

- o **2021**: The first formal Quad summit was held in 2021, and the official **Quad declaration** was released in **March 2021**. The declaration emphasised the Quad's commitment to creating a region that is **free, open, inclusive, healthy**, and anchored in **democratic values**, free from coercion.

KEY OUTCOMES QUAD 2024

The QUAD 2025 Summit: India will host the 2025 Quad Leaders Summit and The United States will host the 2025 Quad Foreign Ministers Meeting.

The QUAD Wilmington Declaration:

- o The Joint Statement reiterated the group nature as **"a force for good"** and signalled that it is now more

strategically aligned than ever to deliver real, positive, and enduring impact for the Indo-Pacific Region.

o Peace and Security: The Group vouch for the maintenance of peace and stability across the Indo-Pacific Region as an indispensable element of global security and prosperity

o The QUAD opposes any destabilising or unilateral actions that seek to change the status quo by force or coercion

o The Group condemned the recent illicit missile launches in the region and expressed serious concern over aggressions in the Indo-Pacific.

🔍 **Quad Caucus:**

o The USA Members of Congress announced the creation of a bipartisan, bicameral Congressional Quad Caucus as the Quad countries have decided to work with their respective legislatures to deepen inter-parliamentary exchanges.

🔍 **Expansion:**

o The Quad networking will expand to include the Commerce and Industry ministers meeting for the first time.

Category	Initiative	Description
Maritime Security	**MAITRI Maritime Initiative:**	• This is a new regional maritime program designed to train Quad partners in monitoring and securing their waters, enforcing laws, and deterring unlawful activities. • The inaugural symposium will be hosted by India in 2025.
	Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA):	The Quad will further develop this partnership to boost regional capabilities in countering illicit maritime activities by offering enhanced training and resources.
	Quad Coast Guard Cooperation:	This initiative aims to strengthen interoperability among the coast guard forces of Quad members. Additionally, a **Quad-at-Sea Ship Observer Mission** is set for 2025.
Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief	**Indo-Pacific Logistics Network Pilot:**	A joint airlift capability will be developed to improve the efficiency of humanitarian assistance and disaster response operations across the Indo-Pacific region.
	Aid for Cyclone Yagi:	The Quad has announced $4 million in humanitarian assistance to Vietnam in the aftermath of Typhoon Yagi.
Health Initiatives	**Quad Cancer Moonshot Initiative:**	This program is focused on combating cervical cancer by promoting greater access to HPV vaccinations, expanding screenings, and enhancing treatment options across the Indo-Pacific.
Education and Research	**Quad Scholarships:**	India has introduced an initiative offering fifty scholarships worth $500,000 to students from the Indo-Pacific for studies in various disciplines.
	Quad BioExplore Initiative:	This collaborative research initiative aims to harness artificial intelligence to advance agricultural practices across Quad member nations.

Infrastructure and Connectivity	**Centre for Cable Connectivity and Resilience**:	This centre will focus on developing and managing undersea cable networks critical to global data traffic, boosting the region's digital infrastructure.
	Quality Infrastructure Development:	The Quad is committed to enhancing connectivity by investing in sustainable infrastructure projects, including telecommunications readiness training for South Pacific nations.
Climate Change and Clean Energy	**Quad Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Package (Q-CHAMP)**:	Q-CHAMP is designed to bolster regional resilience to the impacts of climate change, through adaptation and mitigation measures.

SIGNIFICANCE FOR INDIA

☼ **Global Influence and Diplomacy**:

   o India's active participation in the Quad has elevated its role as a key player in the Indo-Pacific region, increasing its influence on international platforms and among major global powers.

   o This has also strengthened India's position as the **Voice of the Global South**.

☼ **Supporting India's Vision for a Free and Open Indo-Pacific**:

   o The Quad aligns with India's **'Act East' policy** and the **Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI)**, promoting regional stability and prosperity in the Indian Ocean. This allows India to advance its strategic interests in Southeast Asia and beyond.

☼ **Strategic Balance and Counterweight to China**:

   o With China emerging as a dominant power, the Quad offers India a way to balance against China's regional influence. It brings together like-minded democracies to maintain stability, reducing the chances of any single power dominating the region.

   o The Quad's focus on countering China's **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)** and its associated political and economic pressures aligns with India's concerns over sovereignty and economic independence in the region.

☼ **Access to Advanced Technologies**:

   o Through the Quad's initiatives on building **resilient supply chains** for semiconductors and rare earth elements, India benefits by strengthening its tech sector and reducing reliance on imports.

☼ **Health and Vaccine Distribution**:

   o The **Quad Vaccine Partnership** supports expanding vaccine manufacturing in India and distributing vaccines across the Indo-Pacific, bolstering India's role as the **'pharmacy of the world'**.

☼ **Defence and Military Cooperation**

   o India benefits from enhanced military interoperability with major global powers through joint exercises like Malabar, strengthening India's naval presence and operational capabilities.

   o The Quad also enhances India's defence diplomacy by promoting stronger partnerships with its democratic allies in the Indo-Pacific, which boosts its ability to address maritime threats.

☼ **Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR)**

   o The Quad enhances India's disaster response capabilities in the Indo-Pacific region. Collaborative efforts in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations demonstrate a unified commitment to managing regional crises.

   o This cooperation helps India strengthen its image as a responsible regional power and a net security provider.

CHALLENGES

▼ **Managing Relations with China:**

o India's involvement in the Quad has led to **heightened tensions with China**, as Beijing views the Quad as a containment strategy against its rise.

o All Quad nations, particularly Australia, Japan, and India, maintain substantial economic ties with China. This economic interdependence often hampers their ability to align fully on anti-China strategies.

o **Perception as an Anti-China Alliance**: The Quad is often viewed as an 'anti-China coalition.' China has labelled it a 'mini-NATO' and accused the grouping of creating discord in the region.

▼ **Dependence on U.S. Leadership**

o The Quad's effectiveness is largely dependent on the U.S.'s willingness to lead and its strategic commitment to the Indo-Pacific region. Changes in U.S. foreign policy, such as a reduced focus on Asia-Pacific under different administrations, could impact the strength of the Quad.

o India's reliance on the U.S. could also lead to domestic criticism or concerns over sovereignty and unequal partnerships.

▼ **Lack of Institutionalization**:

o The Quad remains an informal coalition without a formal secretariat or institutional framework, which restricts its capacity to implement long-term strategic initiatives or uphold consistent policies.

▼ **Challenges in Membership Expansion**:

o The potential expansion of the Quad to include other like-minded nations, such as South Korea, Vietnam, or New Zealand, poses risks, including the dilution of the group's cohesion and focus.

▼ **Concerns from ASEAN**:

o Several ASEAN nations, such as Indonesia and Malaysia, have expressed concerns that the Quad could exacerbate regional polarisation.

o They perceive the Quad as a potential challenge to ASEAN's role as the main platform for dialogue and cooperation in the Indo-Pacific.

WAY FORWARD

✴ **Strengthening Institutionalisation:**

o The Quad should consider establishing a more formal institutional framework, such as a secretariat or regularised meetings at multiple levels (e.g., working groups, ministerial, and leaders' summits).

✴ **Fostering Economic Collaboration**

o Focus on economic cooperation that promotes resilient supply chains and reduces dependencies on China. This can include joint investments in technology, infrastructure, and research and development.

o Promote trade agreements among Quad members that minimise reliance on external powers while enhancing economic ties within the group.

✴ **Engaging with Regional Partners**

o Actively engage with ASEAN countries and other regional powers to address their concerns regarding the Quad. This can help mitigate perceptions of polarisation and promote a more inclusive security framework in the Indo-Pacific.

o Organise joint forums that include ASEAN members to discuss regional security and cooperation, fostering a sense of collective engagement.

✴ **Expansion of membership for better collaboration:**

o A 'Quad Plus' dialogue can be launched on infrastructure development which could include countries like South Korea, Vietnam, and Singapore.

✴ **Enhancing Military Cooperation:**

o Enhancing military and security cooperation could involve expanding the Malabar naval exercise to incorporate more advanced joint operations, including anti-submarine warfare and amphibious manoeuvres.

CONCLUSION

Quad represents a vital opportunity for India and its partners to respond to geopolitical shifts in the Indo-Pacific. By strengthening dialogue and engaging with regional players like ASEAN, the Quad can evolve into a cohesive alliance that fosters stability and security. This collaborative approach not only addresses challenges but also reinforces India's role as a **key voice of the Global South**, positioning it to influence the region's future effectively.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) How can the Quad enhance its effectiveness in addressing geopolitical shifts in the Indo-Pacific while reinforcing India's role as a voice of the Global South? **(10 marks)(150 words)**

KURUKSHETHRA - AUGUST 2024

E-Learning

INTRODUCTION

E-learning has revolutionised education by providing learners with digital access to courses and resources from anywhere in the world. It offers flexibility, allowing individuals to study at their own pace while using interactive tools and multimedia content. With the rise of technology, e-learning has become a key solution for modern education, bridging gaps in accessibility and convenience.

FROM CLASSROOMS TO SCREENS: FUTURE OF LEARNING WITH DIGITAL EDUCATION

- **PLATO (Programmed Logic for Automatic Teaching Operations)**
  - o It was one of the earliest computer-based learning systems, developed in the 1960s at the University of Illinois, US
  - o It offered interactive learning experiences and personalised instructions.

- **Edtech (Education Technology)**
  - o Refers to the integration of digital tools and technology in education to enhance learning, teaching, and educational administration

- **Microlearning**
  - o A learning method that delivers short, focused lessons, allowing quick understanding and immediate application. It's ideal for on-demand, flexible learning in digital formats.

- **Gamification**
  - o The use of game-like elements such as points, badges, and leaderboards in non-game contexts, like education or work, to engage and motivate users.
  - o It aims to enhance participation and learning by making tasks more enjoyable and rewarding.

- **NROER (National Repository of Open Educational Resources)**
  - o An initiative by the **Ministry of Education in India** aimed at creating a centralised repository of open educational resources.
  - o The repository offers a wide range of materials like textbooks, interactive content and videos, designed to support learning across different subjects and grades.

- **NDLI (National Digital Library of India)**
  - o It is a **project by the Ministry of Education** that offers books, articles, audio, video, and other digital content, supporting learning and research across various disciplines, catering to students, teachers, and researchers.

- **SWAYAM (Study Webs of Active-Learning for Young Aspiring Minds)**
  - o It is an online learning platform that provides massive open online courses(MOOCs) from universities and institutions across India.
  - o It is aimed at achieving the three cardinal principles of education policy, namely, **access, equity, and quality**.

- **DIKSHA (Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing)**
  - o Developed by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) under the Ministry of Education, Government of India.
  - o It aims to support the educational ecosystem by providing digital resources for teachers and students, facilitating a more interactive and engaging learning experience.

- **NDEAR (National Digital Education Architecture Repository)**
  - o Envisioned as a UPI for education
  - o It caters to five key personas: students, parents, teachers, administrators, and community members.
  - o NDEAR integrates three ecosystems—programs, assets, and solutions—across two core interactions: learning and administration.

E- LEARNING BARRIERS IN RURAL INDIA AND WAY FORWARD

> **Cyber Aware Digital Naagrik Program**

» A cyber awareness initiative to educate citizens on safe digital practices. under ISEA (Information Security Education and Awareness) which is a project of Ministry of Electronics and Information Security (MeitY)

» Aims to reinforce cyber hygiene, cyber security, and privacy at the national level across various segments of the population.

E- LEARNING: AI TRANSFORMING THE LEARNING LANDSCAPE IN INDIA

> **LLM (Large Language Models)**

» Advanced AI systems designed to understand and generate human language by learning from vast datasets

» They excel in various applications, including conversational agents, content creation, and language translation, due to their ability to produce contextually relevant responses

> **Miko**

» An AI-powered companion robot for children that can talk, respond, educate, entertain through interactive conversations, games, and learning activities.

» It can adapt to individual preferences, making it a personalised companion for young users.

> **Questt**

» An AI based platform that offers study planning tools for students.

» It offers study plans including timetable, quizzes and learning material.

> **INDIAai**

» Launched in 2020 as a one-step digital platform for AI- related developments in India.

» The initiative targets sectors like healthcare, agriculture, and education, positioning India as a global hub for AI advancements.

> **Bhashini**

» A government led project aimed at breaking language barriers through AI.

» It focuses on developing AI- driven tools that translate and interpret regional languages and makes digital content available in local dialects.

> **Atal Innovation Mission (AIM)**

» A flagship initiative launched by the Government of India in 2016 to promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in the country.

» It aims to foster innovative ideas and provide support for startups through various programs, such as the Atal Tinkering Labs and Atal Incubation Centers, which facilitate hands-on learning and mentorship.

E- GRAM SWARAJ: SIMPLIFIED WORK BASED ACCOUNTING APPLICATION FOR PANCHAYATI RAJ

➡ **eGramSwaraj**

» To strengthen e-Governance in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) across the country, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) launched eGramSwaraj, a user-friendly web-based portal.

» It aims to bring in better transparency in decentralised planning, progress reporting and work-based accounting.

➡ **Gram manchitra**

» A spatial planning application developed by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj.

» It facilitates creation of planning scenarios for facility planning and management.

SKILLING FOR THE FUTURE WITH E-LEARNING

➡ **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)**

» Flagship scheme of the **Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE)** implemented by National Skill Development Corporation.

» The objective of this Skill Certification Scheme is to enable a large number of Indian youth to take up industry-relevant skill training that will help them in securing a better livelihood.

➡ **Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA)**

» It aims to empower citizens by providing **digital education to 6 crore people**, particularly from households where none of the members are digitally literate.

» The program seeks to bridge the digital divide, ensuring that rural populations can access and use digital tools effectively.

➡ **Swayam Prabha**

» An initiative of the Ministry of Education to provide 80 High Quality Educational Channels through DTH (Direct to Home) across the length and breadth of the country on an everyday basis.

» It has curriculum-based course content covering

diverse disciplines.

➡ **e-Yantra**

» An educational program that aims to teach robotics and embedded systems to students in colleges.

» The program is hosted by the Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay (IIT Bombay) and is supported by the Ministry of Education, Government of India.
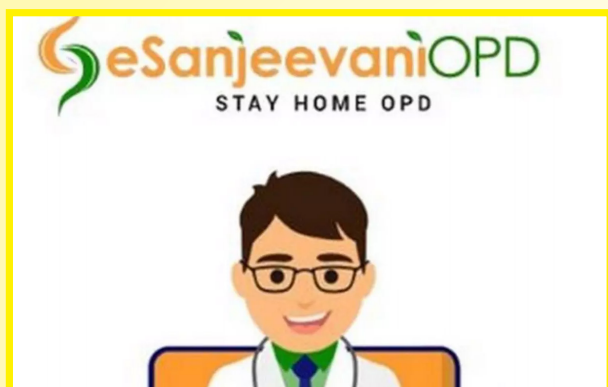
➡ **Swayam Plus**

o Launched in February 2024 by the union ministry of education .

o Run by IIT Madras, it is a collaborative effort of L&T, MS and CISCO.

o Aligning with the National Education Policy 2020, it includes courses supporting industry needs

BRIDGING THE GAP: E-LEARNING AS A CATALYST FOR HEALTH AND NUTRITION AWARENESS

➡️ **e-Sanjeevani**
- » Telemedicine service that connects patients in rural areas to urban health centres through video consultations.
- » It was launched in 2020 under the Ministry of health and family welfare.

➡️ **DigiLocker**
- » Online platform that enables individuals to securely store and share important documents.
- » Launched in 2015 under the Ministry of electronics and information technology.

➡️ **eRaktKosh**
- » A centralised blood bank management system developed by the Indian government in 2016 to ensure safe and adequate blood supply.
- » It integrates all blood banks across the country and helps track blood donations, availability, and supply efficiently

➡️ **HPR (Healthcare Professionals Registry)**

- » A part of the National Health Authority (NHA), which is under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India.
- » A comprehensive repository of all healthcare professionals involved in healthcare services.

➡️ **Swasth Bharat Prerak Programme**
- » Launched in 2018, it was a joint initiative of the Ministry of Women & Child Development and the Tata Trusts.
- » It supplements the POSHAN Abhiyaan or the National Nutrition Mission.
- » It aims at improving health and nutrition outcomes by employing technology driven solutions.

DIGITAL EDUCATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY: POSITIVE OUTLOOKS AND CHALLENGES

➡️ **E-Pustakalaya**
- » Launched by the Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Education.
- » A digital library initiative that provides access to non-academic books for children and adolescents across India.
- » Currently it has made over 1000 books available in 23 languages.

➡️ **e-Jaadui Pitara:**
- » The original Jaadui Pitara initiative was launched in February 2023 by the Ministry of Education and digital form was launched in November 2023.
- » It is a play based learning teaching materials for children in the age group of 3 to 8 years.

Digital Divide

➤ **Definition**: The digital divide refers to the gap between individuals with access to digital technology (smartphones, laptops, internet) and those without it.

➤ **Scope**: It includes both unequal access to digital devices and the internet, as well as the disparity in digital literacy—the ability to effectively use technology for understanding and benefiting from it.

➤ **Urban-Rural Disparity**: Despite progress in urban areas, there remains a significant divide in rural India. Only 24% of rural households have internet access compared to 66% in urban areas as per National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) data.

➤ **Internet Usage**: In rural areas, only 14% of people actively use the internet, compared to 59% in urban India, highlighting a stark difference in adoption rates.

➤ **Causes**: The divide is driven by factors such as poor network coverage, affordability issues, and a lack of content in local languages.

➤ **Gender Gap**: Women in India are 41% less likely than men to use mobile internet, as per the 2021 GSMA consumer survey

ETHICS - CASE STUDY

Q) You have recently been appointed as the Superintendent of Police in a region known for extremist activity and frequent ambushes. One day, your team intercepts a communication regarding the movement of extremists in a specific area of the village. It is commonly believed that extremists often send out such messages to mislead security forces; however, there are instances when these messages are genuine. Additionally, extremists sometimes exploit villagers as cover for their movements. In a recent ambush, many innocent people lost their lives due to actions taken by the forces, leading to a departmental inquiry that resulted in the dismissal of your predecessor.

a. Identify the ethical dilemmas.
b. What will be your course of action and also suggest some measures to prevent further extreme activities.

ETHICS - EXAMPLES

1. **Justice and Fairness:** Seventeen years after being kidnapped for ransom as a child, Harsh Garg, now a lawyer, successfully argued his own case in court, leading to the conviction of eight dacoits involved in his abduction. Harsh's involvement in the trial from 2015, including assisting the prosecution, ensured justice was served after years of hardship.

2. **Consumer Ethics**: Air India refunded the full fare to Anip Patel after his video showing the poor state of the first-class cabin on a Chicago-Delhi flight went viral, garnering over eight million views. The airline, currently upgrading its fleet, acknowledged the issues with the legacy aircraft used on the flight but has not officially commented on the refund.

3. **Social Justice:** The Supreme Court ruled that viewing or possessing child pornography, as well as failing to report it, constitutes an offence under the POCSO and IT Acts, overturning a Madras High Court ruling that permitted viewing without intent to share.The SC emphasised that "constructive possession" includes having control over the material.

4. **Altruism**: In Chandigarh, PGIMER has established a "memory lane" to honour individuals who donated their bodies for medical research, with 4,700 people pledging to do so through an awareness campaign. The critical shortage of cadavers for surgical training necessitates more donors to commit to this noble cause, as institutions like AIIMS received only 70 donations in the last two years.

5. **Ethics in Public Administration:** The Delhi High Court upheld a ruling that Mohit Kukadia cannot be denied a government scholarship for mistakenly uploading the wrong document while applying for the Central Sector Scholarship Scheme to study at Oxford. The court criticised the government's "hyper-technical" grounds for the denial and urged them to process Kukadia's application based on merit.

6. **Empowerment**: Indian Navy officers Lt Cdr Roopa A and Lt Cdr Dilna K will start an eight-month expedition to circumnavigate the globe, covering about 21,600 nautical miles (40,000 km) and aiming to be the first Indian women to achieve this in double-handed mode. This journey is part of Navika Sagar Parikrama II, following the success of the inaugural all-women circumnavigation in 2017.

7. **Environmental Ethics**: The Ministry of Road Transport & Highways (MoRTH) has issued guidelines to promote the use of urban solid waste and inert materials in the construction of National Highways, aiming to address environmental challenges and repurpose the 1,700 lakh tons of waste accumulated in 2,304 dump sites across the country.

MODEL ESSAY

"A national spirit is necessary for national existence"

Introduction

o   Quote by Mahatma Gandhi

o   Meaning: A national spirit is essential for the survival and prosperity of a nation.

o   Define national spirit/nationalism- A shared sense of identity, purpose, and belonging among a nation's people.

Need for Nationalism

o   **Unity in Diversity**: Promotes the idea that multiple cultures and ethnicities can coexist within a single nation- fostering respect and understanding

o   **Civic Responsibility and Engagement:**Instils a sense of duty among citizens, encouraging active participation in governance and community service.

o   **Economic Growth:** Drive economic initiatives that promote self-reliance and enhance local industries, leading to sustainable development. **Eg**: India's "Make in India" initiative -boost manufacturing and promote indigenous products

o   **Cultural Preservation:** Protection and celebration of cultural heritage, ensuring that traditional practices and customs are maintained.

Challenges to Nationalism

o   **Regionalism and Sectarianism:** Loyalty to a particular region over the nation -divisions based on religious or ethnic lines-threaten national unity. **Eg**: Demands for separate states in India

o   **Globalisation**: The exchange of goods, ideas, and cultures across borders, which can dilute local traditions and national identity. **Eg**: The proliferation of global fast-food chains, like McDonald's, can overshadow local cuisines

o   **Political Manipulation:**Leaders may exploit nationalist sentiments for political gains, often polarising communities and creating divisions.

o   **Social Inequality**: Socioeconomic disparities can lead to feelings of exclusion among marginalised groups, undermining the sense of belonging

Way Forward

o   **Promoting Inclusive National Identity:**Recognizing the diversity of cultures within a nation-ensuring that all citizens feel valued and represented.

o   **Encouraging Civic Engagement:**Awareness campaigns and programs that encourage citizens to participate in elections, community service, and public discussions can strengthen civic responsibility.

o   **Balancing Nationalism and Globalization**:Supporting local industries while fostering international partnerships

o   **Addressing Socioeconomic Inequalities:** Implementing policies aimed at uplifting marginalised communities, such as education and employment programs, can bridge the gap and enhance social cohesion.

Conclusion

o   Emphasise the importance of nurturing and preserving national spirit in modern society.

o   Call for efforts to promote unity, cohesion, and a shared sense of purpose among citizens.

Sample Quotes

o   *The strength of a nation derives from the integrity of the home. – Confucius*

o   *True patriotism hates injustice in its own land more than anywhere else-Clarence Darrow*

o   *A nation's culture resides in the hearts and in the soul of its people - Mahatma Gandhi.*

MAINS JOT DOWN

GS- I - *ART & CULTURE*

➡️ The **Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH)** has successfully mapped the course of the **Sahibi River.**
- » Originates in Rajasthan and flows through Haryana and Delhi.
- » It is a tributary of the Yamuna River.
- » Historically, it was known as the Drishadvati River.
- » Pollution and encroachment have greatly diminished its natural flow.
- » Today, the river is divided into various canals and drains, and it only flows during periods of heavy rainfall in the catchment areas.

GS- I - *GEOGRAPHICAL PHENOMENONS*

➡️ **Hurricane Helene**, which caused significant destruction along the U.S. coast, has been downgraded to a post-tropical cyclone.

➡️ **Post-Tropical Cyclone**
- » A post-tropical cyclone is a system that has lost enough tropical characteristics to no longer be classified as a tropical cyclone.
- » However, it can still bring heavy rains and strong winds.

GS- II - *SOCIAL JUSTICE*

➡️ The Department of Social Justice and Empowerment (DoSJE) and National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) launched SARTHIE 1.0.

➡️ **SARTHIE 1.0.**
- » Empower disadvantaged communities, such as Scheduled Castes, Transgenders, and Denotified and Nomadic Tribes, by raising awareness, providing legal support, and facilitating better access to welfare schemes.
- » This approach promotes collaboration between the executive and judiciary to advance social justice.

GS- II - *INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS*

➡️ **India, Brazil and South Africa (IBSA)** Forum of Foreign Ministers declared a **United Front against Global Terrorism.**
- » It calls for stringent actions against groups listed by the UN, including notorious organisations such as Al-Qaeda, etc.
- » Renewed commitment to accelerate the adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).
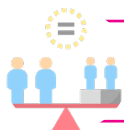
GS- II - *GOVERNMENT POLICIES & INTERVENTIONS*

➡️ The **Ministry of Panchayati Raj** launched the **People's Plan Campaign (Jan Yojana Abhiyan).**

➡️ Strengthening grassroots democracy and promoting inclusive development in Grameen Bharat.

➡️ It is themed as **'Sabki Yojana Sabka Vikas'**, launched for preparation of **Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDPs)** for 2025–26.

➡️ As part of this campaign, special Gram Sabhas are being organised in over **2.55 lakh** Gram Panchayats.

➡️ The **Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) marks its 10th anniversary**, having been launched on October 2, 2014, to coincide with the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

➡️ Implemented by the **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.**

➡️ **Key Initiatives:** Swachh Bharat Kosh, Swachh Survekshan, Swachhta Hi Seva campaigns, Swachh Vidyalaya Abhiyan etc.

➡️ **Impact of SBM**
- » Averted 60,000–70,000 infant deaths annually by reducing waterborne diseases.
- » Improved safety for women and women SHGs led waste management initiatives.
- » Achieving ODF status saves households about ₹50,000 yearly by lowering medical costs and travel time.

GS- III - *SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY*

→ **BharatGen**
- » It's a pioneering initiative in generative AI designed to revolutionise public service delivery and boost citizen engagement through developing a suite of foundational models in language, speech and computer vision
- » Launched by the **Ministry of Science & Technology**.
- » It is aligned with the goal of Making AI in India and Making AI for India.
- » It is the world's First Government-funded **Multimodal Large Language Model (MLLM)**
- » It aims to create generative AI systems that can generate high-quality text (including speech) and multimodal content in various Indian languages.
- » **Implementing Agency:** IIT Bombay under the National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber-Physical Systems (NM ICPS).

GS- III - *ENVIRONMENT & CONSERVATION*

→ The **Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change** has notified the **Ecomark Rules, 2024.**
- » To promote eco-friendly products in categories like food, cosmetics, soaps, and electronics, etc.
- » It aligns with the principle of LIFE (Lifestyle for Environment), focusing on sustainability and resource efficiency.

→ **Criteria:** A product must have a licence or a certificate of conformity with Indian Standards under the Bureau of Indian Standards Act and/or Quality Control Orders, and meet the environmental criteria prescribed in the rules to receive the Ecomark.
- » Products must meet specified environmental standards related to resource consumption and environmental impact to qualify for the Ecomark.

→ Manufacturers need to apply for the Ecomark through the **Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).**

→ The Ecomark will be valid for **three years.**

→ The Steering Committee, led by the Environment Secretary, will oversee and implement the system.

→ The India **BioEconomy Report 2024** was unveiled at the 4th Global Bio India Summit.

→ The **Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) for FY 2022-23** was also released by the **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).**

→ The report, published by the **Department of Biotechnology and BIRAC**, highlights the remarkable progress of India's bio-economy sector.

→ **Key Findings:**
- » India's BioEconomy reached $151 billion (2023) accounting for 4.25% of India's GDP & employing over 3.3 million people. Expected to reach $300 billion by 2030.

→ The **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)** released the 7th issue of the "**EnviStats India 2024: Environment Accounts**"

→ EnviStats provides data on the environment, highlighting key changes over time and across regions, as well as the primary factors influencing these changes.

→ **The publication covers four key areas**: Energy Accounts, Ocean Accounts, Soil Nutrient Index, and Biodiversity.

→ **Highlights**;
- » India emerged as a world leader in energy transition.
- » Around 72% increase in number and around 16% increase in area for Total Protected Area during 2000 to 2023.
- » Coverage of Mangroves has increased around 8% during 2013 to 2021.

CHERRYPICKS OF THE WEEK

CYBER SLAVERY

- Cyber slavery is a form of modern exploitation that begins with online deception and evolves into physical human trafficking.
- It's emerging as a form of organised crime of unprecedented severity and scale.
- Offenders target lure individuals by giving fake promises to offer them employment.

DIFFERENTIAL ROTATION OF SUN

- It refers to the difference in rotational speed of the Sun depending upon latitude.
- The Sun's equator spins much faster than its poles.
- It takes the equatorial region only about 25 days to complete one rotation, while the poles take around 35 days.
  - Reason is that the Sun is a ball of gas/plasma, it does not have to rotate rigidly like solid planets do.

ABHED (ADVANCED BALLISTIC FOR HIGH ENERGY DEFEAT)

- Recently, Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO), along with researchers of IIT Delhi has developed ABHED.
  - These are LightWeight Bullet Proof Jackets.
  - These jackets have been created from polymers and indigenous boron carbide ceramic material.
  - The design configuration is based on characterisation of various materials at high strain rate followed by appropriate modelling and simulation.

AMORTISATION

- The gradual reduction in the value of an asset (or a debt) over time.
- A debt (such as a mortgage) is amortised via regular repayments.
- Companies use amortisation to steadily reduce the value of intangible assets on their balance-sheets.

ASSET STRIPPING

- The practice of buying a company and rapidly selling off the component parts with the aim of making a profit.
- This often leads to great disruption in the business and a loss of jobs