



**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b><u>A. GS 1 Related</u></b>
<b><u>B. GS 2 Related</u></b>
<b><i>INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS</i></b>
1. <a href="#">On Quad; its origins, goals and future plans</a>
<b><u>C. GS 3 Related</u></b>
<b><u>D. GS 4 Related</u></b>
<b><u>E. Editorials</u></b>
<b><i>POLITY</i></b>
1. <a href="#">A new road for India's Fiscal Federalism</a>
<b><i>SOCIAL JUSTICE</i></b>
1. <a href="#">Serving those who serve</a>
<b><i>INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS</i></b>
1. <a href="#">Lessons from Russia for India</a>
<b><u>F. Prelims Facts</u></b>
1. <a href="#">60% e-waste recycling likely by 2023</a>
<b><u>G. Tidbits</u></b>
<b><u>H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions</u></b>
<b><u>I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions</u></b>

A. GS 1 Related

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## B. GS 2 Related

### Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

#### 1. On Quad; its origins, goals and future plans

*Syllabus: Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and Agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.*

*Prelims: Quad initiatives*

*Mains: Significance of the grouping*

#### Context:

- India, U.S., Australia, and Japan are meeting for the second in-person summit of the [Quadrilateral Security Dialogue](#) or **Quad** in Tokyo.

#### Background:

- The Quad is an informal multilateral grouping of India, the U.S., Australia, and Japan aimed at cooperation for a **free and open Indo-Pacific region**.

#### **Origins and growth of the grouping:**

- India took up large scale humanitarian and disaster relief work in the aftermath of the **Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004**. It helped its maritime neighbours: Sri Lanka, the Maldives and Indonesia. The other three naval powers of the region— the U.S., Australia and Japan also joined in the efforts. This marked an important moment in the coming together of the four countries that led to the birth of a new framework: the Quadrilateral or Quad.
- The then Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe promoted the idea of an “**arc of prosperity and freedom**” that brought the Quad countries closer together in cooperation and collaboration.
- The dynamism between the member countries got an impetus with the 2007 **Indo-U.S. Malabar naval exercise** which saw participation from Japan, Australia and Singapore apart from India and the U.S.
- The Quad lost momentum post-2007 meeting and was only revived later in 2017 amid increasing assertiveness of China and revised assessments of the China challenge. Though regular meetings were taking place between leaders of the four countries, the meetings were termed the ‘**India-**

**Australia-Japan-U.S.’ dialogue** and not referred to as a Quad dialogue to avoid the perception of it being a “gang-up” against China. The grouping thus far had failed to come up with an explicit set of objectives, areas of cooperation, and even the definition of Indo-Pacific.

- It was in March 2021 that the leaders met virtually, for the first time as an official Quad summit, releasing a set of objectives for the grouping called the ‘**The Spirit of the Quad**’ and outlined actionable goals, and formed expert working groups in multiple areas.

### **Objectives of the grouping:**

- The realization of a free, open, rules-based order, rooted in international law and ensuring security and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific was the main objective of the grouping.
- Though unstated, a major basis for the grouping is to check China’s growing influence in the Indo-Pacific region. This was evident in the emphasis laid on rule of law, territorial integrity, freedom of navigation and overflight, peaceful resolution of disputes, and democratic values. This was an indirect reference to China’s actions in the region.

### **Notable initiatives of the grouping:**

- The grouping sought to strengthen equitable vaccine access for the Indo-Pacific, through the **Quad Vaccine Initiative (QVI)**, which sought to manufacture and distribute at least a billion COVID-19 vaccines for the Asia region by the end of 2022.
- In the domain of emerging and critical technologies, the four countries aimed to work on the **development of 5G telecommunications** with an emphasis on diversification. They also aimed at the creation of supply chains for critical minerals and technologies for making semiconductors used in smartphones. Notably, China has been a leader in these areas.
- Quad nations have agreed to build **joint connectivity projects and transparent infrastructure funding** for countries in the region. This is aimed to counter China and its [Belt and Road Initiative \(BRI\)](#).
- The Quad has also created a **working group for climate action** with a major focus on fostering green shipping by decarbonising maritime supply chains and promoting the use of clean hydrogen.

### **Future of the Quad:**

- The **ongoing [Russia-Ukraine crisis](#) has triggered geopolitical shifts**. Notably, India is the only member of the Quad that has not imposed sanctions against Russia and has in fact ramped up its intake of Russian oil.
- The newly unveiled ‘**[Indo-Pacific Economic Framework](#)**’ (**IPEF**) offers an opportunity to bind the countries in closer economic cooperation.

**For more information on this topic refer to the following article:**

**CNA dated May 24, 2022: India to join Biden's new initiative for Indo-Pacific region**

At the ongoing meeting, Quad members have also launched a maritime monitoring plan to curb illegal fishing in the Indo-Pacific. This seems to be directed at countering illegal and unsustainable fishing practices of the Chinese in the region.

**Nut Graf**

*The second in-person meeting of the leaders of the Quad grouping marks an important point for the grouping. Quad offers India a unique platform to engage with powers which are seeking to counter Chinese aggressiveness in the Indo-Pacific region with India having had to face Chinese aggression along its northern borders.*

**C. GS 3 Related**

*Nothing here for today!!!*

**D. GS 4 Related**

*Nothing here for today!!!*

**E. Editorials**

**Category: POLITY**

**1. A new road for India's Fiscal Federalism**

*Syllabus: GS II, Polity, Issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure*

*Prelims: GST, IGST*

*Mains: Reforms required in India's fiscal federalism.*

**Context:** The Supreme Court has delivered a ruling on the levy of Integrated Goods and Services Tax (IGST). As a consequence of the new ruling, a new road has been carved out for India's fiscal federalism.

**The Background:**

- The apex court, in the case of Union of India vs Mohit Minerals, questioned the validity of a levy of IGST on ocean freight paid by foreign sellers to foreign shipping lines.
- This tax has been declared illegal by the Gujarat High Court.
- According to the Supreme Court, the tax levied on importers constituted double taxation.
- Therefore, it was asserted by the apex court that the importers who were already paying tax on the composite supply of goods could not be charged with additional taxes on a perceived service.
- The judgement was delivered by taking into account the technical readings of various laws, especially the Central GST Act.

**Points to be considered:**

- The court's ruling cannot be interpreted as the limited purview of a legislature (whether Parliament or the States) to make the recommendations of the [GST Council](#) binding on the executive bodies through statutory laws.
- However, in the court's ruling, constitutional power cannot be limited through statute.
- It must be noted that Article 246A, which was introduced by the 101st Constitutional Amendment Act, consists of the provision that empowers equal powers to both Union and the States to legislate on GST. It does not discriminate based on the allocation of authority.
- The court pointed out that the provisions in the Constitution are not clear about treating the recommendations of the GST Council as a binding decision and transforming them into legislation.
- The court defined Indian federalism as a dialogue between cooperative and uncooperative federalism where the federal units have the liberty to employ different means of persuasion ranging from collaboration to contestation.
- The judgement of the Mohit Minerals case has paved the way for states to exercise their independent powers to legislate on GST freely.

**Addressing the concerns:**

- Awarding the states the liberty to legislate on GST might have the possibility of further complicating the taxation regimes and a rising discontent between the centre and the states.
- The judgement on GST is perceived as contradictory to the idea of 'One Nation One Tax' with which the new tax regime was introduced.

**Way Ahead:**

- More clarity is required to define the qualification of the GST Council to act as a decision-making authority and to what extent their recommendations are to be considered.
- GST was introduced with the perception of establishing a pooled sovereignty. Such sovereignty has been contested with the major allegation of having a centralising tendency.

- The judgement of the Supreme Court that has conferred liberty to the States to make laws on GST can open the doorway to more [cooperative federalism](#), reforming and simplifying the existing tax regime.

**Nut Graf**

*The liberty to legislate on GST, conferred to the state governments, will open a new avenue for strengthening India's fiscal federalism.*

**Category: SOCIAL JUSTICE****1. Serving those who serve**

*Syllabus: GS II, Social Justice, Issues relating to health*

*Prelims: WHO, about ASHA workers*

*Mains: The necessity to address the challenges of healthcare workers and assure them of a safety net.*

**Context:** The WHO Director General's Global Health Leaders Awards 2022 recognised and felicitated the contributions of India's healthcare workers (ASHA - Accredited Social Health Activists).

**Details:**

- The acknowledgement of healthcare workers by the [WHO](#) has been a remarkable expression of gratitude and encouragement to nurture the confidence of those workers.
- Oftentimes the efforts of the healthcare workers go unnoticed and unrecognised. However, this recognition by an international organisation is much appreciated and was much needed.
- The relentless efforts of the ASHA workers to deliver healthcare services in rural areas were witnessed prominently during the pandemic.
- These workers are always at the forefront of combating any disease or infection faced by the country.
- ASHA workers from India were honoured for playing a crucial role in linking the community with the health system ensuring access for rural people to primary healthcare.
- The healthcare workers are the backbone of developing an inclusive healthcare system.
- They render their services in difficult hours of an unprecedented convergence of inequity, conflict, food scarcity, climate crisis/disasters, and pandemics.

**Who are ASHA Workers?**

- These are workers who act as volunteers from within the community and are trained to provide information and aid to people for availing benefits of various healthcare schemes of the government.
- They function as the bridge between marginalised communities and primary health centres, sub-centres and district hospitals.
- The role of these volunteers has been defined by the National Rural Health Mission ([NRHM 2005](#)).
- The ASHA workers are primarily married, widowed or divorced women between the ages of 25 to 45 years from within the community.
- Eligibility criteria include good communication skills, and leadership skills, and should have studied at least till the 8th standard, as per the programme guidelines.

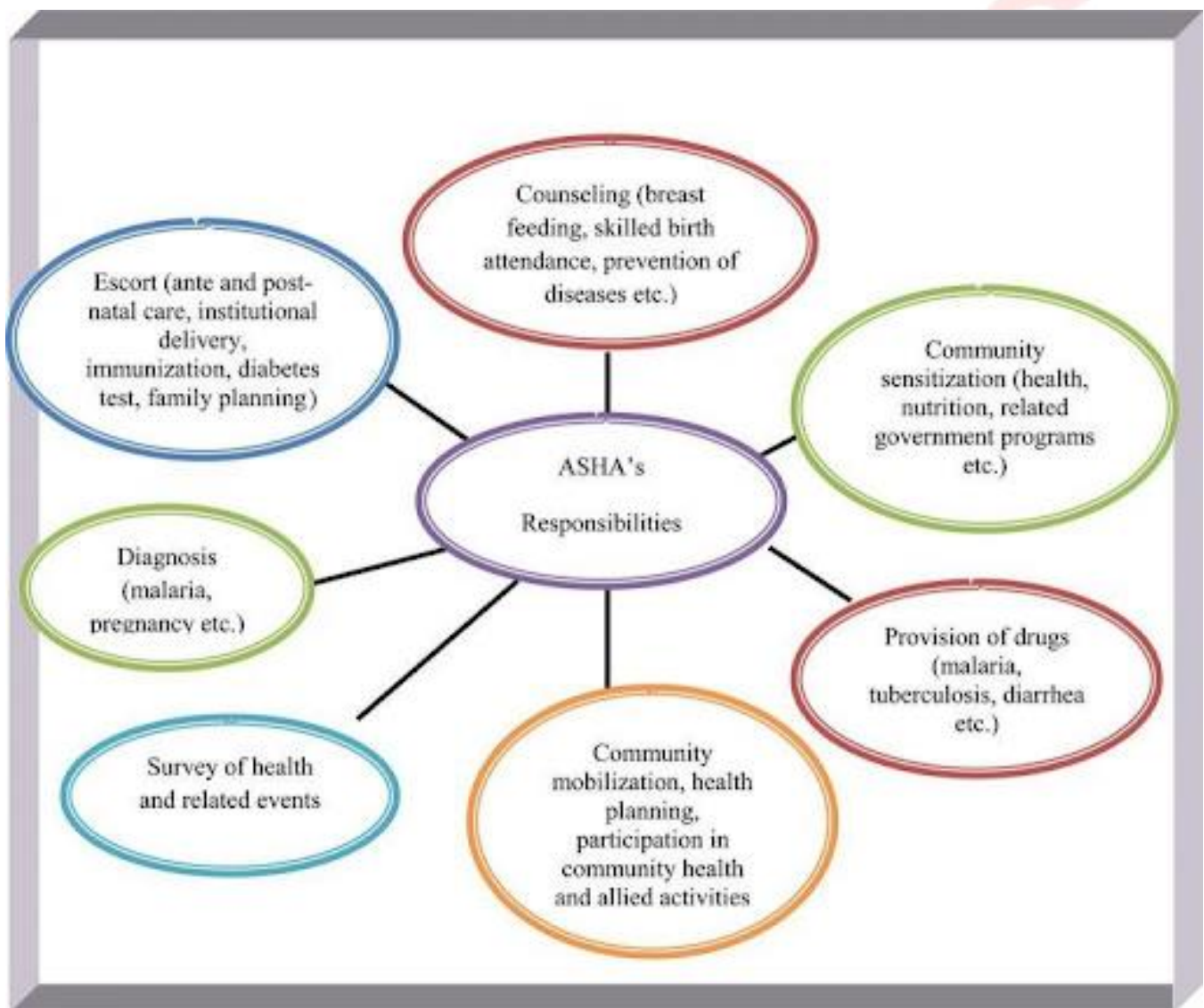


Image source: [www.mhtf.org](http://www.mhtf.org)

### Challenges faced by the healthcare workers:

- Very low remuneration
- Lack of health benefits assured to them
- Lack of job security
- Many female healthcare workers are prone to harassment
- Vulnerability to violence especially during emergencies like the pandemic
- Inadequate protection is provided to workers who are exposed to hazardous public health works

### Ways Suggested:

- The Government must act responsibly to employ the healthcare workers for a fixed tenure and with job security.
- The government agencies need to ensure the welfare, safety and security of the ASHA workers and healthcare workers.
- The women healthcare workers must be provided with hygienic conditions of sanitation and other facilities.
- The ASHA workers must be provided with pension and health insurance.

#### **Nut Graf**

*It shall be the moral duty of the government to extend the social security benefits to the healthcare workers ensuring high remuneration, job security and health benefits. This will serve as a significant way to recognise the relentless service provided by these workers.*

### Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

#### 1. Lessons from Russia for India

**Syllabus:** *GS II, International Relations, Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests*

**Mains:** *Interventions required for a powerful military weapons system in India.*

**Context:** The article analyses the implications of the failure of Russian weaponry on the Indian military weapons system.

**The perspective:**



- The Russian invasion of Ukraine has unveiled major loopholes in the Russian military forces and can act as the clarion call for India to upgrade its weaponry as it uses a significant amount of Russian-origin weapons systems.
- A corollary to this is the low morale among Russian soldiers consisting of a large number of conscripts and poor command.
- The military effectiveness of Russia has been declining over the years with weak command competence.

**Key Takeaways for India:**

- Russia's ineffective military performance makes it necessary for India to invest more in sensors, electronic warfare, greater digitisation, satellite communications and unmanned systems.
- These advanced technologies in the defence sector must not only be used for reconnaissance and surveillance but also for attack operations.
- All these will require precise military competence and coordination among the troops.

**Read about [Defence Reforms in India](#) in the linked article.**

- India will also need to develop greater missile forces for the enhancement of its offensive potential.
- The combined arms warfare of the Indian Armed Forces needs to be developed in terms of its efficiencies.
- Therefore, it is evident that no amount of advanced technology can be an alternative to low morale and training, weak command, and poor tactics and strategy.

**Read about [Russia's invasion of Ukraine](#) in the linked article.****Nut Graf**

*Advancement in technology cannot alone compensate for low morale and training, weak command and poor strategy, in order to empower military effectiveness.*

**F. Prelims Facts****1. 60% e-waste recycling likely by 2023**

**Syllabus:** Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation

**Prelims:** Extended Producer responsibility; India's E-waste generation

**Context:**

- Draft notification by the Environment Ministry on electronic waste management.

### **Background:**

- According to the Global E-Waste Monitor 2017, **India ranks fifth among e-waste producing countries.**
  - India generates about 2 million tonnes (MT) of e-waste annually.
- Most of India's e-waste is recycled by the informal sector and under hazardous conditions.

### **Details:**

- Consumer goods companies and makers of electronics goods must ensure at least 60% of their electronic waste is collected and recycled by 2023. These targets will increase progressively, to 70% and 80% in 2024 and 2025, respectively.
  - The goods include laptops, landline and mobile phones, cameras, recorders, music systems, microwaves, refrigerators and medical equipment.
- The companies will have to **pay 'environmental compensation' for missed targets.**
- Also, there is the provision for a system of **trading in certificates, akin to carbon credits**, that will allow companies to temporarily bridge shortfalls.

## G. Tidbits

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

**Q1. Which of the given pairs is/are correctly matched? (Difficult)**

<b>Mahakavya</b>	<b>Composer</b>
1. Kumarasambhavam	Kalidasa
2. Prithviraja Vijaya	Jayanaka
3. Hammira Mahakavya	Nayachandra Suri
4. Shishupala Vadha	Banabhatta

**Options:**

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

**Answer: d**

**Explanation:**

- The Shishupala Vadha is a work of classical Sanskrit poetry composed by Magha.

**Q2. Which of the following were excavated/found in the Harappan site of Lothal? (Difficult)**

1. Coffin burials
2. Bronze dancing girl statue
3. Pashupati Seal
4. Rice Husk

**Options:**

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

**Answer: c**

**Explanation:**

- Dancing Girl is a prehistoric bronze sculpture excavated from Mohenjo-Daro. Pashupati Seal was also found in Mohenjo-Daro.
- Rice husk and dockyard were found from the Lothal site of Indus Valley Civilization. The Lothal site of the Indus Valley Civilization is situated in Gujarat.

**Q3. 'PARAM PORUL' recently seen in the news is: (Medium)**

- a. A handicraft from Tamil Nadu that recently received the Geographical Indication tag.
- b. A group of Buddhist monks who enjoyed the royal patronage under the rulers of the Kalabhra dynasty
- c. A state-of-the-art Supercomputer dedicated to the nation under National Supercomputing Mission
- d. A cave system in the Western Ghats known for Buddhist rock-cut architecture.

**Answer: c**

**Explanation:**

- PARAM PORUL is a state-of-the-art supercomputer set up at NIT Tiruchirappalli.
- PARAM PORUL supercomputing facility is established under Phase 2 of the National Supercomputing Mission to facilitate computational research.

**Q4. Which of the following national parks is/are located in the Garhwal Himalayas? (Medium)**

1. Govind Pashu Vihar National Park
2. Rani Jhansi National Park
3. Namdapha National Park
4. Nanda Devi National Park

**Options:**

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

**Answer: c**

**Explanation:**

- The Garhwal Himalayas are mountain ranges located in the Indian state of Uttarakhand.
- Namdapha National Park is located in Arunachal Pradesh.
- Rani Jhansi Marine National Park is located in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands in the Bay of Bengal.

**Q5. Consider the following towns of India: (Difficult)**

1. Bhadrachalam
2. Chanderi
3. Kancheepuram
4. Karnal

**Which of the above are famous for the production of traditional sarees/fabric?**

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

**Answer: b**

**Explanation:**

- Chanderi, Madhya Pradesh is known for its sarees.
- Kancheepuram in Tamil Nadu is known for its silk sarees.
- Bhadrachalam in the state of Telangana is a famous pilgrimage site.

**I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions**

1. Identify the issues associated with the disposal of e-waste in India. Give examples of legislations introduced by the Government to overcome these hurdles. (250 words; 15 marks) (GS III- Environment)
2. Quad presents an opportunity for India to stake a claim to a seat at the high table in global affairs. Comment. (250 words; 15 marks) (GS II- International Relations)

