



## India Invited to Join the Blue Dot Network

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### Why in News

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A group of the US Senators, in a letter, has asked India to join the **Blue Dot Network (BDN)**.

The letter also **backed India's decision to invite Australia** to the annual **Malabar naval exercise**.

### Key Points

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- **Blue Dot Network:**
  - The BDN was formally announced on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2019 at the **Indo-Pacific Business Forum** in Bangkok, Thailand. It is **led by the USA along with Japan and Australia**.
  - It is a **multi-stakeholder initiative** to bring together governments, the private sector and civil society to promote high-quality, trusted standards for global infrastructure development.
  - It is expected to serve as a globally recognized evaluation and certification system for roads, ports and bridges with a **focus on the Indo-Pacific region**.
    - Infrastructure projects would be graded on debt, environmental standards, labour standards etc.
    - This system would apply to projects in any citizen-centric country where citizens would like to evaluate such projects.
  - It is planned as a **direct counter to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**.
  - However, unlike the BRI, the **BDN would not offer public funds or loans for the project**.
  - **Blue Dot certification:** BDN will serve as a **globally recognized seal of approval** for major infrastructure projects, letting people know that projects are sustainable and not exploitative.

- **Malabar Exercise:**

- It is an **annual** exercise between the navies of India, Japan, and the U.S. held alternately in the Indian and Pacific Oceans.
- Australia's inclusion to Malabar followed the recent **2+2 ministerial meeting** of the **Quadrilateral Security Dialogue [the Quad]** in Tokyo.

## **Way Forward**

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- The new Blue Dot Network, can be a strategy to persuade developing countries in Asia-Pacific not rely on Chinese funds (debt traps) for sustainable infrastructure development.
- India, Japan, and Australia can take the lead in infrastructural projects, while the USA needs to be more proactive in pushing ahead the vision of connectivity.

**Source: TH**