



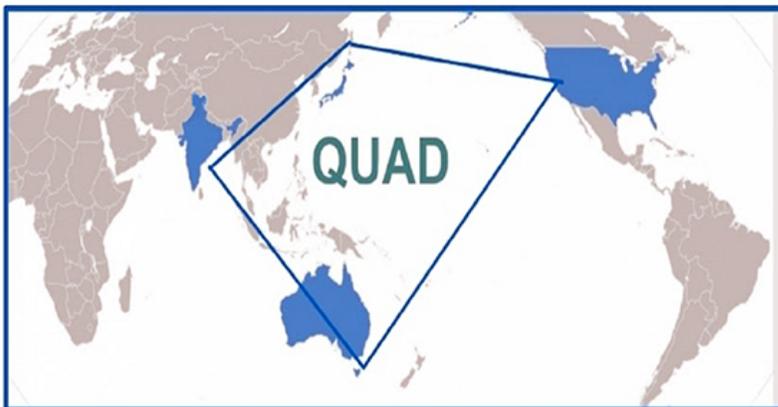
First Leaders' Summit: QUAD

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Why in News

Recently, the Prime Minister addressed the **first summit of the leaders' of the QUAD (Quadrilateral Framework)**. The meeting was **hosted by the USA** on a **virtual platform**.

- Earlier in February 2021, **QUAD ministerial meeting** discussed issues across Indo-Pacific and the military takeover in Myanmar.
- **QUAD** is a grouping of India, USA, Australia and Japan which aims to **safeguard the interests of democratic nations** in the **Indo-Pacific region** and **address global challenges**.



Key Points

- **Focus:**
- **Pledge:**

QUAD pledged to promote a **free, open rules-based order**, rooted in international law **to advance security and prosperity** and **counter threats to both in the Indo-Pacific and beyond**.

- **Highlights:**
 - **Quad Vaccine Partnership:**
 - Agreed to ensure “**equitable**” **access to vaccines to counter the pandemic.**
 - Agreed to a **plan to pool their financial resources**, manufacturing capabilities and logistical strengths.
 - **Japan, USA and Australia will finance** the vaccine initiative that India has welcomed.
 - Appreciated the **Vaccine Maitri initiative (India’s Vaccine Diplomacy)** of India.

Vaccine Maitri Initiative is an initiative launched by India to give **Covid-19 vaccines** to neighbouring countries.
 - **Discussion on China:**
 - The **Line of Actual Control (LAC)** was discussed by the QUAD leaders as one of several examples of **Chinese aggression.**
 - Other issues related to **Hong Kong, Xinjiang, Taiwan Strait** and coercion of Australia, harassment around the **Senkaku**, were also discussed.
 - Concerns regarding Chinese **cyberattacks** on the USA targets (Microsoft Exchange and SolarWinds) and also **cybersecurity incidents in India**, Japan and Australia were discussed.
- **India’s Stand:**
 - QUAD is **united by its democratic values** and will remain an **important pillar of stability in the Indo-Pacific region.**
 - Called the meet an extension of the ancient Indian philosophy ‘**Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam**’, which regards the world as one family.
- **America’s Stand:**
 - QUAD is not a military alliance or **North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)** equivalent, it is an **opportunity to cooperate on economics, technology, climate and security.**
 - Maritime security, humanitarian and disaster response are core to the QUAD agenda.
 - QUAD is going to be a **vital arena for cooperation** in the Indo-Pacific region.
- **Australia’s Stand:**

QUAD grouping could be the start of a **new, permanent and powerful regional grouping of like-minded democracies.**
- **Japan’s Stand:**
 - Acknowledged the **new dynamism** that QUAD has received because of the meeting of the top leaders of the member countries.
 - It will firmly advance its cooperation to realise a free and open Indo Pacific, and to **make a tangible contribution to the peace, stability, and prosperity of the region, including overcoming Covid-19.**

- **China's Apprehension:**

- Exchanges and cooperation between countries should **contribute to mutual understanding** rather than **targeting a third party and refrain from pursuing exclusive blocs**.

A meeting between the top diplomats of the USA and China is set to be held in Alaska later in March 2021.

- QUAD **should uphold the principles of openness**, inclusiveness and win-win results and do things that are conducive to regional peace, stability and prosperity.

QUAD

- **About:**

- It is a **four-nation alliance** of India, Australia, USA and Japan which was **established in 2007**.

- It is often dubbed as an **"Asian" or "mini" NATO**, and is viewed as a counterbalance to China's military and economic clout in the Indo-Pacific region.

The **2020 US-China Economic and Security Review Commission** shows China's growing power projection along the Indian Ocean rim with military or economic activities in countries like Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Myanmar and Bangladesh.

- Interestingly, the QUAD, which used to be known as the quadrilateral security dialogue, is now known as the **quadrilateral framework** to indicate it has gone beyond a narrow security dialogue.

- **Evolution:**

- The group, which began with an ambitious geostrategic vision 14 years ago, failed to take off initially due to hesitation among the four nations and objections by China.

- In **December 2012**, Shinzo Abe again floated the concept of Asia's **"Democratic Security Diamond"** involving Australia, India, Japan and the USA to safeguard the maritime commons from the Indian Ocean to the western Pacific.

- In **November 2017**, India, the USA, Australia and **Japan gave shape** to the long-pending **"QUAD"** Coalition to develop a new strategy to keep the critical sea routes in the Indo-Pacific free of any influence (especially China).

- Since then, QUAD has **taken several steps to bolster military and strategic** ties with a series of working- and ministerial-level meetings.

- **Participation in Malabar Exercise:**

- In 2020, all four QUAD Countries - Japan, India, Australia and the USA took part in the **Malabar exercise**.

- Malabar exercise is an annual trilateral naval exercise between the navies of India, Japan, and the USA which is held alternately in the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

Source: TH