



Blue Dot Network

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Why in News

India may join the US-led Blue Dot Network (BDN).

- The BDN was formally announced on 4th November, 2019 at the Indo-Pacific Business Forum in Bangkok, Thailand. It will be **led by the US 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 recognised 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 seems to be 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**. BDN will serve as a globally recognized seal of approval for major infrastructure projects, letting people know that projects are sustainable and not exploitative.
 - India has not joined China's BRI.
- Till 2019, China's investment in BRI projects in various countries exceeds US\$90 billion. Instead of trying to **match China's scale of spending, the US through Blue Dot Network is arguing that the quality of investments in infrastructure** is just as important as the quantity.

The new Blue Dot Network, therefore, is best seen as part of the U.S.A.'s strategy of trying to persuade developing countries in Asia-Pacific **not rely on Chinese funds for infrastructure**.

Belt and Road Initiative

- BRI is an ambitious project that focuses on connectivity and cooperation among multiple countries spread across the continents of Asia, Africa, and Europe.
- Initially announced in the year 2013, the project involves building networks of roadways, railways, maritime ports, power grids, oil and gas pipelines, and associated infrastructure projects.
- The project covers **two parts**.
 - **Silk Road Economic Belt:** It is land-based and is expected to connect China with Central Asia, Eastern Europe, and Western Europe.
 - **21st Century Maritime Silk Road:** It is sea-based and is expected to connect China's southern coast to the Mediterranean, Africa, South-East Asia, and Central Asia.

Source: TH