

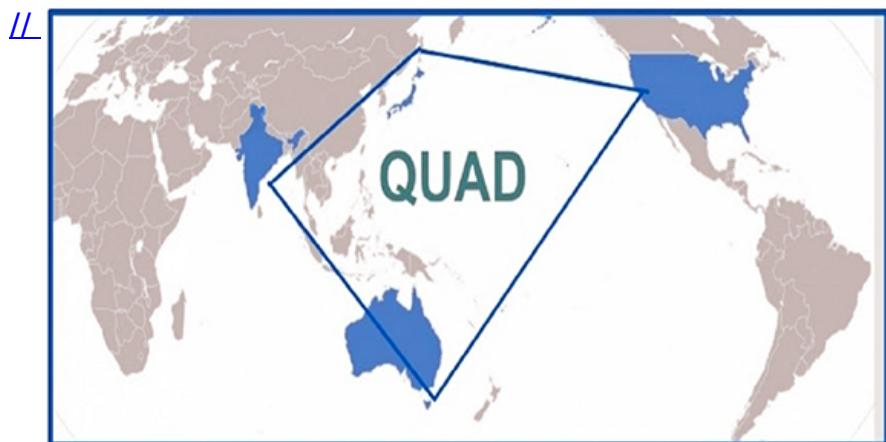


First Leaders' Summit: QUAD

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:**
 - On pressing crises, such as [Covid-19](#), [climate change](#) and **emerging technologies**.
- **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.

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