



First in-Person Meeting of Quad Countries

Why in News

Recently, the first in-person meeting of [Quad](#) leaders was hosted by the US. Issues like climate change, Covid-19 pandemic and challenges in the Indo Pacific, amidst China's growing military presence in the strategic region, were discussed in the meeting.



Key Points

▪ Background:

- In **November 2017**, **India, Japan, the US and Australia** gave shape to the long-pending proposal of setting up the Quad to develop a new strategy to keep the critical sea routes in the Indo-Pacific free of any influence.
 - **China claims nearly all of the disputed [South China Sea](#)**, though Taiwan, the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia and Vietnam all claim parts of it.
 - The South China Sea is an arm of the Western Pacific Ocean.
- In **2020**, the trilateral **India-US-Japan [Malabar naval exercises](#) expanded to include Australia**, marking the first official grouping of the Quad since its resurgence in 2017.
 - Further, it is the first joint military exercises among the four countries in over a decade.
- In **March 2021**, the **[Quad leaders met virtually](#)** and later released a joint statement titled '**The Spirit of the Quad**,' which outlined the group's approach and objectives.
- Further, just before this meeting, the US has announced a new trilateral security partnership for the Indo-Pacific, between **Australia, the UK and the US ([AUKUS](#))**.

▪ Major Highlights of the Quad Summit:

- Discussed **[Afghanistan](#)** and agreed to deepen their cooperation in South Asia.
- **[Quad Vaccine Initiative](#)**: Under this, the Quad countries have pledged to donate more than 1.2 billion Covid-19 vaccine doses globally, in addition to the doses financed through

Covax.

- **Building Back Better Health Security:** Supported the call for a "global pandemic radar" to improve viral genomic surveillance and expand the [WHO Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System \(GISRS\)](#).
- **Quad Infrastructure Coordination Group:** The **G7 grouping** has recently announced the [Build Back Better World \(B3W\) initiative](#).
 - Based on similar lines, the Quad will establish high-quality infrastructure and will share expertise, capacity, and influence in the region and identify new opportunities to meet the needs there.
- **Tackling Climate Change:** In this context, Quad countries has envisaged to establish:
 - **Green-Shipping Network** for deployment of green-port infrastructure.
 - **Clean-Hydrogen Partnership** to strengthen and reduce costs across all elements of the clean-hydrogen technology, leveraging existing bilateral and multilateral hydrogen initiatives in other fora.
 - **Climate Adaptation, Resilience, and Preparedness** for increasing the Indo-Pacific region's resilience to climate change by improving critical climate information-sharing and disaster-resilient infrastructure.
 - Apart from this, Quad countries intend to update or communicate ambitious **NDCs** (Nationally Determined Contributions) **by COP26**.
- **The Quad Fellowship:** The Fellowship will sponsor 100 students per year - 25 from each Quad country - to pursue masters and doctoral degrees at leading STEM (Science, Technology Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) programmes) graduate universities in the United States.
- **Semiconductor Supply Chain Initiative:** It will be a joint initiative to map capacity, identify vulnerabilities, and bolster supply-chain security for semiconductors and their vital components.
 - This initiative will help ensure Quad partners support a diverse and competitive market that produces the secure critical technologies essential for digital economies globally.
- **Critical and Emerging Technologies:** The announcement of launch of a **5G** deployment and calls for monitoring trends in advanced biotechnologies, including synthetic biology, genome sequencing, and biomanufacturing.
- **Quad Senior Cyber Group:** This group will make shared cyber standards; development of secure software; building workforce and talent; and promoting the scalability and cybersecurity of secure and trustworthy digital infrastructure.
- **Satellite Data Sharing:** The Quad will begin space cooperation for the first time with a new working group.
 - In pursuance of this, Quad countries will start discussions to exchange Earth observation satellite data and analysis on climate-change risks and the sustainable use of oceans and marine resources.

Way Forward

- **Need For Clear Vision:** The Quad nations need to better explain the Indo-Pacific Vision in an overarching framework with the objective of advancing everyone's economic and security interests.
 - This will reassure the littoral States that the Quad will be a factor for regional benefit, and a far cry from Chinese allegations that it is some sort of a military alliance.
- **Expanding Quad:** India has many other partners in the Indo-Pacific, therefore India should pitch for countries like Indonesia, Singapore to be invited to join in the future.

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