



Quad Marks 20 Years of Cooperation

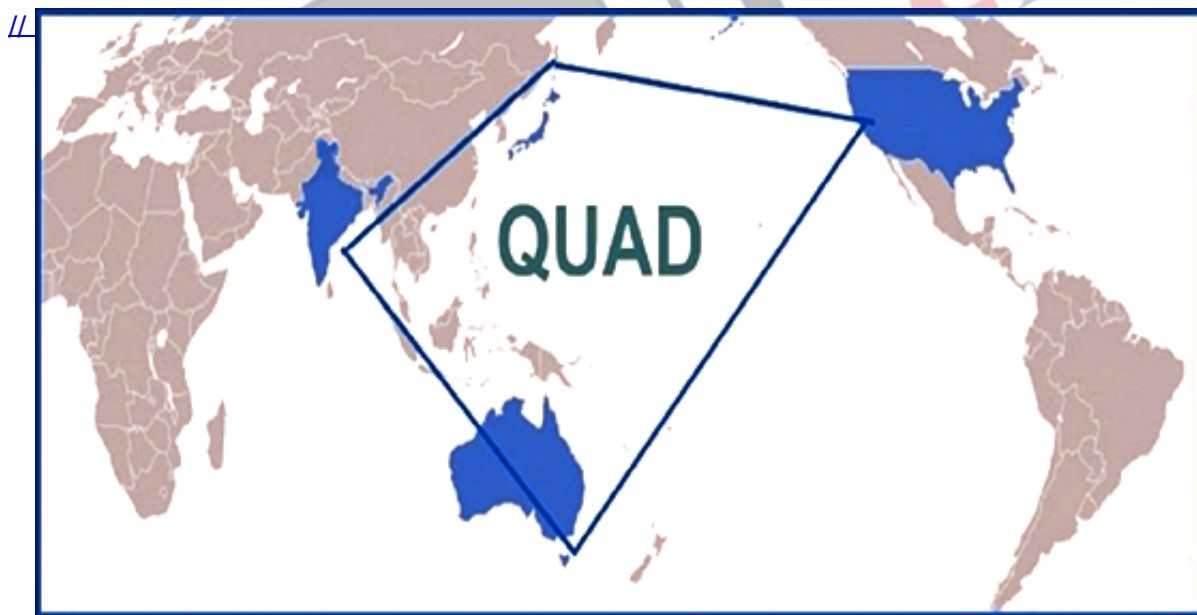
For Prelims: [Quad](#), [Indo-Pacific](#), [Malabar exercise](#), [Information Fusion Center](#), Cancer Moonshot, [Artificial Intelligence](#), [String of Pearls](#), [Blue Dot Network](#), [Indo-Pacific Economic Framework](#)

For Mains: Significance of Quad in India's foreign policy, Significance of Quad in the Indo-Pacific region, India and its Bilateral Relations

Source: [IE](#)

Why in News?

The [Quad Foreign Ministers](#) marked the **20th anniversary of Quad cooperation**, reaffirming their commitment to a **free, open, and peaceful Indo-Pacific** amid China's growing assertiveness.



What are the Key Facts About Quad?

- **About:** Quad, or **Quadrilateral Security Dialogue** is a strategic forum of the **US, Japan, India, and Australia** aimed at regional security and economic cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region.
- **Objectives:** Promoting a **free and open Indo-Pacific**, upholding **democracy, human rights, and [rule of law](#)**, and countering China's expanding influence.

- **Formation of Quad:**
 - **2004 Tsunami Origins:** The group's roots lie in the [2004 tsunami](#) relief efforts when **India, the US, Japan, and Australia** collaborated for rescue operations.
 - **2007 Formation:** The Quad formally emerged in 2007, with **Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe proposing the idea.**
 - **Australia withdrew in 2008** due to Chinese pressure and regional tensions.
 - **Revival in 2017:** Enhanced **US-Australia military ties** led to Australia's return. The first official Quad talks were held in the **Philippines in 2017.**
 - **Malabar Exercise:** The [Malabar exercises](#) began in 1992 as a bilateral naval drill between India and the US. Japan joined in 2015, and Australia participated in Malabar 2020.
- **Nature of Quad:** The Quad operates without a **formal alliance structure, secretariat, or decision-making body.**
 - The forum is sustained through **regular meetings, including ministerial and leader-level summits**, as well as information exchanges and military drills.
- **Key Initiatives of the Quad:**
 - **Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA):** Enhances real-time monitoring of illegal fishing and maritime activities.
 - [IPMDA](#) collaborates with regional bodies like the **Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency** and [India's Information Fusion Center-Indian Ocean Region.](#)
 - **Maritime Initiative for Training in the Indo-Pacific (MAITRI):** Supports capacity-building for maritime security and law enforcement training.
 - **Indo-Pacific Logistics Network:** Aims to leverage shared **airlift and logistical capacities** for rapid [disaster](#) response in the region.
 - **Quad Cancer Moonshot:** Targets [cervical cancer](#) prevention and treatment, with plans to save hundreds of thousands of lives over coming decades.
 - **Quad Ports of the Future Partnership:** Develops **sustainable and resilient port infrastructure** across the Indo-Pacific, with India hosting a **Regional Ports and Transportation Conference in 2025.**
 - **Open Radio Access Networks (Open RAN):** Quad with [Open RAN facilitates](#) secure and resilient [5G ecosystems.](#)
 - **Advancing Innovations for Empowering NextGen Agriculture (AI-ENGAGE):** Uses [Artificial Intelligence \(AI\)](#), robotics, and sensing to improve agricultural practices and empower farmers in the Indo-Pacific.
 - **BioExplore Initiative:** A **USD 2 million project** to leverage AI for biological research, with applications in healthcare, clean energy, and sustainable agriculture.
 - **Semiconductor Supply Chain Contingency Network:** Enhances collaboration to mitigate risks in [semiconductor supply chains.](#)
 - **Quad Fellowship:** Funds graduate [STEM \(Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics\)](#) education in member countries and recently expanded to include ASEAN students.
 - India's Quad Scholarships program supports 50 engineering students from the Indo-Pacific annually.
 - **Counter Terrorism Working Group (CTWG):** Focuses on countering the misuse of unmanned aerial systems, **chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear threats (CBRN)**, and the internet for terrorist purposes.

What is the Significance of Quad for India?

- **Maritime Security:** Ensures **India's maritime interests** are safeguarded by promoting freedom of navigation and countering [piracy and illegal fishing.](#)
 - Joint naval exercises enhance interoperability and maritime domain awareness.
- **Strategic Importance:** Quad provides a platform to address challenges in the Indo-Pacific region, particularly countering China's assertive policies like the ["String of Pearls."](#)
 - Quad aligns with [India's Act East Policy](#) to strengthen ties with East and Southeast Asia.
- **Economic Opportunities:** Encourages economic cooperation through initiatives like the [Blue Dot Network](#) and [Supply Chain Resilience Initiative.](#)
 - Post-Covid, India has the opportunity to attract manufacturing **units shifting from China,**

enhancing supply chain resilience in the global economy.

- **Scientific Collaboration:** The Quad Fellowship encourages academic and scientific research in **STEM fields**.
- **People-to-People Ties:** Enhances cultural and academic exchanges, boosting [India's soft power diplomacy](#).

What is the Relevance of Quad in Contemporary Global Context?

▪ Quad's Continued Relevance

- **Strategic Significance:** The Quad remains a crucial platform to **counterbalance China's growing influence in the Indo-Pacific**, particularly in contested regions like the [South China Sea](#).
 - The Quad pledged support for the [ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific](#), the [Pacific Islands Forum](#), and the [Indian Ocean Rim Association](#), highlighting its role in collaborating with existing regional frameworks.
- **Maritime Security:** Initiatives like the **IPMDA** enhance member countries' abilities to monitor illegal activities and protect their [Exclusive Economic Zones \(EEZs\)](#).
- **Diverse Agenda:** The Quad addresses multiple issues beyond security, such as **health, technology, infrastructure, and climate change**, showing its adaptability and multi-dimensional focus.
 - Programs like the **Quad Cancer Moonshot, pandemic preparedness initiatives**, and **climate adaptation** measures demonstrate its practical contributions to regional stability.
- **Institutional Strengthening:** Regular summits, ministerial dialogues, have institutionalized the Quad, ensuring its **sustainability and ability to evolve**.
- **People-Centric Initiatives:** Fellowships, scholarships, and people-to-people ties strengthen the Quad's soft power and build trust in the region.

▪ Challenges to Quad's Relevance:

- **Lack of formal structure:** The Quad lacks a secretariat, or permanent decision-making body, limiting coordinated action and consensus on critical issues and hampers its ability to address global challenges effectively.
- **Divergent Priorities:** Quad members have varied national interests. For instance, [India's non-alignment policy](#) and **reluctance to join formal military alliances** can limit the grouping's strategic cohesion.
- **Security vs. Development:** While the US and Japan focus heavily on **countering China**.
 - India and Australia majorly emphasize **development-oriented goals**, leading to differing approaches.
- **China's Growing Influence:** Despite Quad efforts, China's influence in the Indo-Pacific continues to grow, especially through its [Belt and Road Initiative \(BRI\)](#) and **investments in Pacific Island nations**.
- **Resource Constraints:** Many Quad initiatives require substantial funding and institutional support.
 - Delays or insufficient resource allocation could hinder their implementation and impact.
- **Overlaps with Other Groupings:** The Quad's objectives often overlap with other multilateral forums like [ASEAN](#), [Australia, the UK and the US \(AUKUS\)](#), and the [Indo-Pacific Economic Framework \(IPEF\)](#), leading to redundancy and dilution of focus.

Way Forward

- **Institutionalization:** Formalize mechanisms for decision-making and implementation to improve efficiency and accountability.
 - Strengthen ties with regional organizations like ASEAN and ensure complementary, not competing, efforts.
- **Quad Plus:** Expanding the Quad to include South Korea, New Zealand, Vietnam, ASEAN, and other regions would enhance inclusivity.
 - Focusing on climate change, healthcare, and disaster resilience, along with strengthening institutional mechanisms, would boost regional support and effectiveness.

- **Enhanced Resource Commitment:** Secure robust funding for initiatives like **infrastructure, digital connectivity, and renewable energy projects** to ensure long-term impact.

Drishti Mains Question:

Discuss the strategic significance of the Quad for India. How does it help in addressing China's growing influence in the Indo-Pacific region?

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Mains

Q. The new tri-nation partnership AUKUS is aimed at countering China's ambitions in the Indo-Pacific region. Is it going to supersede the existing partnerships in the region? Discuss the strength and impact of AUKUS in the present scenario. **(2021)**

Q. Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) is transforming itself into a trade bloc from a military alliance, in present times Discuss. **(2020)**

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