Blue Dot Network

Why in News?

The Blue Dot Network was a proposal which was on table when the US President Donald Trump made a maiden visit to India.

What is the Blue Dot network?

- It will **certify infrastructure and development projects**.
- It was jointly launched by the US (Development Finance Corporation), Japan (Japanese Bank for International Cooperation) and Australia (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade).
- It is a multi-stakeholder initiative that was launched in November 2019 on the sidelines of the 35th ASEAN Summit (Thailand).

What does the initiative aim to do?

- It aims to promote high quality and trusted standards for global infrastructure development by bringing together the governments, the private sector and civil society.
- The infrastructure projects will be vetted and approved by the network depending on standards, as per which, the projects should meet certain global infrastructure principles.
- The projects that are approved will get a "Blue Dot", thereby setting universal standards of excellence.
- This will attract private capital to projects in developing and emerging economies.
- The proposal for the Blue Dot network is part of the US's Indo-Pacific strategy which aims at countering China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

Why the proposal is countering BRI?

- BRI is a programme that wants to connect Asia with Africa and Europe.
- It wants to connect them via land and maritime networks along six corridors with the aim of improving regional integration, increasing trade and stimulating economic growth.
- The name was coined in 2013 by China's President Xi Jinping.
- It consists of a belt of rail routes, highways, oil and gas pipelines and other infrastructure projects extending from Xian in Central China through Central

Asia, Russia, West Asia and Europe.
- There is also a branch extending from Kashgar in Xinjiang to Gwadar in Balochistan via Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK).

What are the areas in which Blue Dot need a lot of work?

- **Financing** - The BRI involves direct financing that will give countries in need of immediate short-term relief.
- But, the Blue Dot Network is not a direct financing initiative and therefore may not be what some developing countries need.
- The question is whether the Blue Dot is offering first-world solutions to third-world countries.
- **Coordination** - The Blue Dot will require coordination among multiple stakeholders when it comes to grading projects.
- Given the past experience of Quad, the countries involved in it are still struggling to put a viable bloc.
- Therefore, it remains to be seen how Blue Dot fares in the long run.
- [Quad - An informal strategic dialogue between the US, Japan, Australia and India.]

How has the US's foreign policy towards China evolved?

- Prior to 2001, US foreign policy was focused towards integrating China into its plan.
- But this changed after China's emergence as a global superpower.
- Under Barack Obama, US foreign policy started shifting focus to Asia, where the US wanted to counter China's growing influence.
- The National Security Strategy (NSS) under Trump says that the China seeks to displace the US in the Indo-Pacific region.
- It also says that it wants to expand the reaches of its state-driven economic model, and reorder the region in its favour.
- The US sees China's infrastructure investments and trade strategies as reinforcing its geopolitical aspirations.
- As per the US, China's efforts to militarise outposts in the South China Sea restricts the free movement of trade and undermines regional stability.

Source: The Indian Express

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