

Quad Meeting

Why in news?

The second meeting of the Quadrilateral Strategic Dialogue of Foreign Ministers was held in Tokyo.

What is the Quad?

- The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue or the 'Quad' is an informal setup of Australia-India-Japan-United States.
- It aims to strengthen the defence and security cooperation amongst the four countries.
- The idea was originally conceived in 2007 by the former Japan's Prime Minister, Shinzō Abe.
- It was proposed to check China's growing influence and assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific region.

What is the departure?

- The meeting was planned when the Foreign Ministers (FMs) had met at the UN General Assembly.
- In a departure from the earlier secrecy, the FMs made public a large part of their deliberations.
- The deliberations include the decision to make the FM meeting an annual event, to cooperate on combating the pandemic, and on building infrastructure, connectivity and a supply chain initiative in the region.

Who were the attendees?

- As the host, Japan's Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga dispelled any notion that he might not be as proactive as his predecessor, Shinzō Abe.
- Australia's FM Marise Payne, India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and the U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo attended the meeting.

What did the US say?

- In the meeting, Pompeo said that his mission was to direct the Quad towards building a coalition to counter Beijing's aggression in the region.
- This pointed out to the LAC standoff, as well as Chinese aggression in the

South and East China Seas.

- His proposal did not only seem to be just a coalition of democracies committed to a free and open Indo-Pacific.
- But also seems like the US is keen on turning the Quad into a full-fledged military alliance of countries facing tensions with China.

What should be done?

- **Strategic autonomy** - The government should not downplay the import of such openly stated intentions.
- While Japan and Australia are bound by alliance treaties to the U.S., New Delhi has thus far charted its course on strategic autonomy.
- Mr. Pompeo's words point to an interest in bringing India into bilateral tensions in the Indo-Pacific.
- He also invited the Quad to take a role in India-China tensions as well.
- The Modi government has rejected such suggestions, and any shift would be unwise now.
- **Impression** - India has much to gain strategically and in terms of capacity building from the Quadrilateral dialogue.
- But little should be gained from the impression that it is being led by the US on an important initiative for the region in which India is an important stakeholder.

Source: The Hindu