

Tokyo Quad Summit

Why in news?

Leaders of the U.S., Japan, Australia and India gathered in Tokyo for a summit of the “Quad”.

What is the Quad?

- The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue began as a loose partnership after the devastating 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami to provide humanitarian and disaster assistance.
- It includes the countries of U.S., Japan, Australia and India.
- It was formalised by former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2007, but then fell dormant for nearly a decade.
- The group was resurrected in 2017, reflecting changing attitudes in the region toward China's growing influence.
- The Quad leaders held their first formal summit in 2021.
- While the Quad members say that the group is meant to deepen economic, diplomatic and military ties, China terms the grouping as an “Asian NATO”.
- The group has held “Quad-plus” meetings that have included South Korea, New Zealand and Vietnam, which could form the basis for future expansion or partnership in the region.



What areas were discussed?

- **Russia’s invasion of Ukraine-** US, Japan and Australia have taken an unequivocal stand against Russia’s aggression, while India’s position is neutral that calls for respect of territorial sovereignty and integrity and the UN charter.
- **The threat of China-** Every Quad statement has proxy references to China in the repeated emphasis on a “rules based international order” and a “free and open” Indo-Pacific.
- In 2008, Australia pulled out of the Quad because it did not wish to antagonise China, with which it has deep economic ties.
- But China’s militarisation, aggressive foreign policy and determined push on its territorial claims had the effect of bringing the four together again in 2017, in what was called Quad 2.0.
- The pandemic, its controversial origins in China, and the resulting disruption of the global supply chain have also been instrumental in bringing the four closer.
- But, each Quad member views the Chinese threat differently.
 - For the US, it is about trade and Taiwan.
 - For Australia, trade and establishment of a Chinese military base in the Solomon Islands was the biggest issue.
 - Japan and India are closest to China, and both face Chinese claims to territory.
- **Adherence to international law-** Following international law as reflected in the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and in maintaining freedom of navigation and overflight was also discussed.
- The challenges to the maritime rules-based order, including in the East and South China Seas

were a matter of discussion.

- **Non-security initiatives-** Cutting-edge technology, pharmaceuticals and infrastructure have been described as key battlegrounds in the contest with China.

What messages were affirmed by the leaders?

- **Against unilateral actions-** The Quad leaders affirmed to strongly oppose coercive, provocative, and unilateral actions by Beijing that seek to change the status quo and heighten tensions across the region.
- For this, a military coordination between the dialogue members will continue to provide strategic depth to the mission, including notably the annual Malabar exercise.
- **Leveraging resources-** They seek to leverage resources in areas such as
 - Vaccine delivery
 - Climate action
 - Supply chain resilience
 - Disaster response
 - Cyber security infrastructure
 - Economic cooperation

What are the difficulties in pulling out these initiatives?

- **Co-operation-** With India pulling together in different directions from other Quad countries on data management, it raises questions on the co-operation among the four.
- **IPEF-** The Biden Administration's [Indo-Pacific Economic Framework](#) appears streamlined with the Quad initiatives but how it can counter Chinese economic clout remains to be seen as each of the Quad partners have flourishing bilateral trade with China.

References

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