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 stake-holder.

Source: The Hindu

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