



NEWS ANALYSIS

30 JULY 2024

Today's prelims practice Question

Q) Consider the following statements regarding Godavari River.

1. Godavari is the largest River in peninsular India.
 2. The Godavari River *rises from Trimbakeshwar and drains into Arabian Sea.*
 3. *Purna, Indravati, Musi and Majira are the tributaries of the Godavari River.*
- Which of the above statements is/are correct?*

- a) 1, 2
- b) 1 only
- c) 1, 3
- d) 1, 2, 3

Explanation

- ❑ The Godavari river is the **largest river system** of Peninsular India. The Godavari basin extends over States of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Odisha in addition to smaller parts in Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka and Puducherry (Yanam) having a total area of approximately 3 lakh Sq.km.
- ❑ The river flows in southeast direction across south-central India states. After flowing for about 1,465 km., in a generally southeast direction, it falls into the **Bay of Bengal**.

Tributaries of Godavari River



Today's prelims practice Question

Q. India's first sunken museum was recently inaugurated by Union Culture Minister Gajendra Singh Shekawat in which of the Following cities ?

- a. Mumbai
- b. Kolkata
- c. Delhi
- d. Pune

Quad calls for end to violence

Quad calls for end to violence in Ukraine, Gaza, and Myanmar

Foreign Ministers of India, U.S., Australia, and Japan announce plans to expand IPMDA to Indian Ocean Region; emphasise the importance of maintaining freedom of navigation and overflight, and unimpeded commerce consistent with law

Kallol Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

The Quadrilateral group of Australia, India, Japan, and the U.S. intends to expand the Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA) into the Indian Ocean Region, the Foreign Ministers of the four member countries announced in Tokyo on Monday.

Addressing a meeting, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said the four Quad countries are democracies that are working as a "powerful stabilising factor". The Ministers also called for immediate cessation of violence in Ukraine, Gaza, and Myanmar.

"We continue to work with the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency to enhance regional maritime domain awareness in the Pacific through satellite data, training and capacity building. In line with such efforts, we intend to geographically expand the Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA) to the Indian Ocean region," the Ministers said in a joint statement.

The IPMDA is aimed at ensuring safety and security of the critical sea lanes. In an interview with *The Hindu* in October 2023, former Indian Navy chief Admiral Hari Kumar had



External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar with U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Australia's Foreign Minister Penny Wong, and Japan's Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa in Tokyo on Monday. AFP

described the IPMDA as a "comprehensive system for monitoring and securing maritime activities in the Indo-Pacific".

Indicating growing concern about China's maritime activities in the South China Sea, the meeting emphasised "the importance of maintaining and upholding freedom of navigation and overflight, other lawful uses of sea, and unimpeded commerce consistent with international law".

Apart from Mr. Jaishankar, the meeting was attended by Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, and Japanese Foreign Minister Kamikawa Yoko, who was the host of the event.

Mr. Jaishankar described the Quad as an ac-

tion-oriented platform that is aimed at "practical outcomes", saying, "...Our HADR [Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief] conversations are reflected in understandings and SOPs between our Navies."

He referred to the IPMDA initiative as a system that will link the information fusion centres and enable real-time coordination to deal with maritime challenges.

Indicating a global agenda of the Quad club, the Foreign Ministers said they have "great interest" in "ensuring peace and stability in the Middle East".

The joint statement condemned the October 7, 2023 attacks on Israeli targets by Hamas but also said that "large-scale loss of civilian lives and the human-

itarian crisis in Gaza is unacceptable".

for the ongoing war in Ukraine. The joint statement underscored the importance of "sovereignty and territorial integrity" for Ukraine and sought "a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace in line with international law, consistent with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter".

The consensus on the territorial integrity of Ukraine indicates the larger discussion over the matter as Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to visit Ukraine next month. Answering a question at a press conference after the meeting, Mr. Jaishankar hinted at possibilities of "more contacts" between India and Ukraine but did not confirm Mr. Modi's visit. "Things [should] move from the battlefield into the conference table, that is our endeavour," he said.

The meeting also took up the violence in Myanmar, which has pitted dozens of ethnic armed organisations against the forces of the military junta.

"We remain deeply concerned by the worsening political, security and humanitarian situation in Myanmar, including in Rakhine... We again call for the immediate cessation of violence; the release of all those unjustly detained; safe and unhindered humanitarian assistance," the joint statement said.

They also expressed their "deepest concern"

CONTEXT

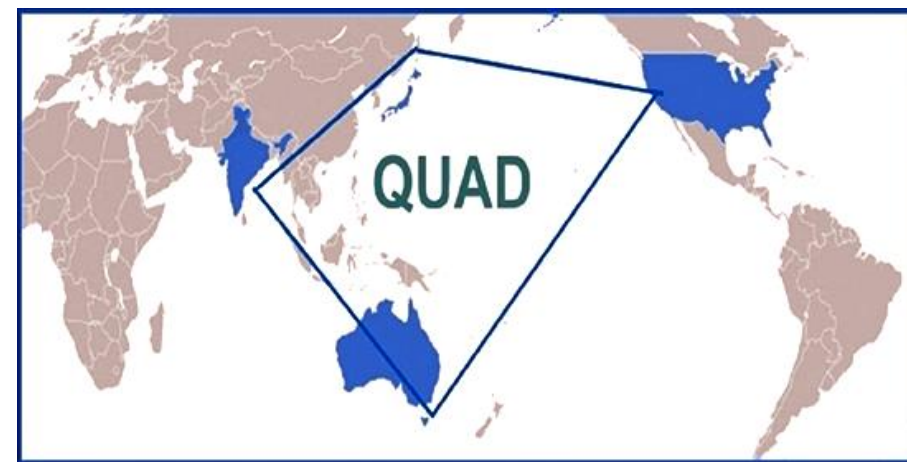
- The Quadrilateral group of Australia, India, Japan, and the U.S. intends to expand the Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA) into the Indian Ocean Region, the Foreign Ministers of the four member countries announced in Tokyo .

- The **four Quad countries are democracies** that are working as a “powerful stabilising factor”.
- To enhance **regional maritime domain awareness** in the Pacific through satellite data, training and capacity building.
- Intend to geographically expand **the Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA)** to the Indian Ocean region.”
- The IPMDA is aimed at ensuring **safety and security of the critical sea lanes.**
- “The importance of maintaining and upholding freedom of navigation and overflight, other lawful uses of sea, and unimpeded commerce consistent with international law”



QUAD

- It is the grouping of four democracies – **India, Australia, the US, and Japan.**
- All four nations find a common ground of being democratic nations and also support the common interest of **unhindered maritime trade and security.**
- It aims to ensure and support a **“free, open and prosperous” Indo-Pacific region.**
- The idea of Quad was first mooted by **Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2007.** However, the idea couldn't move ahead with Australia pulling out of it, apparently due to Chinese pressure.
- Finally in 2017, India, Australia, the US and Japan, came together and formed this **“quadrilateral” coalition.**



Opportunities for India Under Quad Arrangement

Countering China:

- The maritime space is a lot more important to China than engaging in opportunistic land grab attempts in the Himalayas.
- A huge chunk of Chinese trade happens via the Indian oceanic routes that pass through maritime chokepoints.
- In the event of any Chinese aggression on borders, India by cooperating with Quad countries can potentially disrupt Chinese trade.

Emerging as a Net Security Provider:

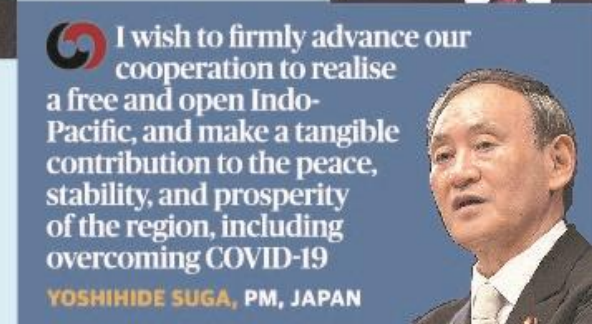
- There is a growing great power interest in the maritime sphere, especially with the arrival of the concept of **'Indo-Pacific'**. For instance, many European countries have recently released their Indo-Pacific strategies.



- With India, located right at the centre of the Indo-Pacific geopolitical imagination can realise the vision of a **'broader Asia'** that can extend its influence away from geographical boundaries.
- Moreover, India can build around collective action in **humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, monitoring shipping for search and rescue or anti-piracy operations, infrastructure assistance** to climatically vulnerable states, connectivity initiatives and similar activities.

Issues Related to Quad

- **Undefined Vision:** Although there is potential for cooperation, the Quad remains a mechanism without a defined strategic mission.
- **Maritime Dominated:** The entire focus on the Indo-Pacific makes the Quad a maritime, rather than a land-based grouping, raising questions whether the cooperation extends to the Asia-Pacific and Eurasian regions.



Human Failure

Two held day after three IAS aspirants drown in basement

Samridhi Tewari
NEW DELHI

A day after three Civil Services aspirants drowned in the basement of a private coaching centre, the Delhi Police on Sunday arrested its coordinator and the building owner, and booked them for culpable homicide. The accused have been sent to judicial custody for 14 days.

The deceased have been identified as Shreya Yadav, 25, from Uttar Pradesh; Tanya Soni, 25, a resident of Telangana; and Nevin Dalvin, 28, from Kerala.

Senior police officers said the basement was around eight feet below ground level and more than 20 students were present inside it on Saturday evening. While the basement gate was closed, it got damaged after water gushed in at a high pressure, an officer said.

Mayor Shelly Oberoi said Rau's IAS Study Circle had been running a library



Security personnel stand guard near the UPSC exam coaching centre in New Delhi, where three people drowned on Saturday. PTI

in the basement in violation of the law.

"It was said that a drain passing in front of the building burst, and like a flash flood, water entered the basement and the students got trapped," Ms. Oberoi told presspersons.

She and an official of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi said none of the other buildings next to the centre had faced flooding.

Later, the Corporation said in a statement, "The so-called bursting of drain-

age outside the coaching centre is not conclusive and the matter is under investigation."

Students stage protest

Since morning, students from coaching institutes and residential complexes have been protesting against the negligence that caused the deaths.

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Context

- A recent tragedy at an IAS coaching centre in New Delhi, where flooding resulted in the deaths of three IAS aspirants, highlights the **increasing issue of urban flooding exacerbated by human errors and inadequate infrastructure.**

Regulatory and Safety Concerns

- Building regulations in India generally **restrict the use of basements for habitation**, allowing them for storage, parking, and utility purposes. However, mixed-use buildings often see basements used for activities like **coaching classes, which may not comply with these regulations**.
- **The Delhi Master Plan 2021** mandates that basement usage for coaching centres requires clearance from fire authorities and other statutory bodies. There is uncertainty whether the coaching centre in question had the necessary approvals and if any changes in basement use were duly notified.
- **Inspection and Compliance Issues:** Often, users avoid notifying authorities about changes to avoid **bureaucratic hurdles and potential bribe demands**. This non-compliance contributes to unsafe conditions, as seen in recent urban flooding incidents.



Infrastructure and Flood Management

- Localized flooding in cities like New Delhi is becoming more common due to **both natural topography and poor urban planning**. Flooding often damages critical infrastructure, as seen in past incidents like the **2015 Chennai floods**.
- Basements are particularly vulnerable during floods due to **limited access and poor ventilation**. Effective flood management for such spaces requires specialized pumping systems and other mitigation measures to prevent water ingress.
- **Resilience Measures:** To enhance flood resilience, buildings should include features such as **concrete walls, flood barriers, and non-return valves**. These measures can prevent water from entering basements and other critical areas up to a height of 1.5 meters.



The Problem with India's blocking of the Chinese

The problem with India's blocking of the Chinese

Indian authorities have promised more visas to Chinese technicians, whose help Indian businesses urgently need. Rajendra Kumar Singh, Secretary, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, recently accepted claims by Indian companies that "a significant skill gap" exists between Chinese and Indian factory supervisors and workers. As a Yelkze-based shoe manufacturer explained, Chinese professionals are "highly productive." They can "help you produce 150 items with the same resources with which we produce 100". The Engineering Export Promotion Council of India's chairman has joined the call for more visas for Chinese technicians.

From footwear and textiles to engineering and electronics, Indian businesses have purchased machines from China but cannot use them productively without the help of Chinese technicians. Leaders of Indian industry associations keep reminding officials that the machines are lying idle, and export orders unfulfilled. Gautam Adani's solar manufacturing facility is also awaiting visas for Chinese workers. The official acknowledgement of India's huge skill deficit is important and impressive. Rarely is there such clarity that even "low-tech", labour-intensive production requires a deep well of expertise. China honed exactly this expertise over the past 40 years to become the world's manufacturing hub. Its experts are less expensive than those from elsewhere. Yet, while the government has few, if any, restrictions on international experts, it holds the Chinese back, citing national security concerns. This is a problem. The Chinese can help India secure a foothold on the lowest rungs of the global skills ladder. Those rungs are rising: India must jump on now.

But especially since the government is already slow-walking its promise of more visas to the Chinese, this moment must trigger action on the real culprit: woeful Indian education. For, despite the hype, the world is not waiting for India. Without foreign technical assistance and vastly upgraded domestic education (as also in China, job-rich prosperity will remain a cruel mirage).

Discouraging visa prospects
In 2019, Chinese nationals received 2,000,000 visas, but the numbers fell sharply after deadly clashes between Indian and Chinese troops in 2020. Indian officials accused the Chinese of violating visa conditions and laundering money to evade India's tax laws. Last year, the number of visas to Chinese personnel was down to 2,000. A security-driven mindset has taken root. This year, even the meagre 1,000 visas for Chinese electronics professionals are stuck in a "pipeline", undergoing "intensive screening".

Despite positive noises by Commerce and Industry Ministry officials, a cabinet Minister, who chose to remain anonymous, tempered expectations. "Visas," the Minister said, "will be issued for Chinese technicians and businessmen only after screening with assurance that travel conditions will not be violated". Such "screening" might well kill this initiative with a thousand cuts. The powerful national security argument is



Ashoka Mohy

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India's economic growth increasingly depends on foreign expertise, particularly from China

readily evoked in the rhetoric of "Atmanirbhar Bharat", a golden era of self-reliant Indian manufacturing. The breathtaking irony of invoking self-reliance is lost on Indian officials precisely when India's economic growth increasingly depends on foreign expertise, particularly from China.

Integrating foreign knowledge

East Asian economic history teaches us that foreign knowledge is pivotal but spurs development only when combined with adequately educated domestic workers. Weak Indian education makes foreign expertise especially urgent. In the 1980s, Korean businesses bought foreign machines to dismantle and reverse engineer them. By then, Korea had already three decades of a solid educational foundation and needed minimal human assistance. They sourced foreign knowledge as was embodied in machines.

China began its explosive growth in the early 1980s with a weaker education base than Korea's. However, the breadth and the quality of Chinese primary education – achieved during the Communist era – had primed it for rapid development, as a World Bank report predicted in 1981. To enhance domestic capabilities, Deng Xiaoping – better known for special economic zones and Tiananmen Square – sent senior policymakers on international study tours and sought foreign investors willing to bring global knowledge to China. Once again, the interaction of domestic and foreign knowledge proved potent, propelling China to become the world's global manufacturing hub.

India, in the meantime, built more school buildings and enrolled more children in schools. But as the surveys of learning outcomes depressingly remind us, the schools have rarely educated the children. Stanford University's Eric Hanushek – the world's pre-eminent scholar on the tight relationship between education quality and growth – points out that only about 15% of Indian school students have the basic reading and arithmetic skills required for an international economy; 85% of Chinese children have those skills.

And China is not standing still. Since 2018, Chinese school students have bettered the world's best in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Successive PISA evaluations and internal Chinese assessments show ever-larger numbers of Chinese children achieving world-class levels of learning. India participated in a 2009 PISA evaluation, and dropped out after a cringe-worthy performance.

The Red Queen race

China, for all its faults and problems, has learnt a fundamental lesson that the Red Queen imparted in Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass*. You must run twice as fast as you can to stay in the same place. You must run faster than that to get ahead. Chinese universities are among the world's best, especially in computer science and mathematics. Chinese scientists are making

advances in various applied sciences of relevance to industrial progress. A world leader in electric vehicles and solar technology, China is ready to breach the inner sanctums of artificial intelligence.

Put simply, China is at the frontiers of global technology, a fact that has captured the attention of western leaders, who – instead of remedying their atrophying education systems – are building trade barriers against Chinese imports with boasts of unfair competition. Such protectionism, even if dignified as "industrial policy", will not fix the fundamental shortcomings in their education systems.

Indian and international elites seem unable to learn the lesson from China's example. The economists Rohit Lamba and Raghuram Rajan have mistakenly given up hope of generating Indian jobs for the, as yet, vast global market for labour-intensive products. Instead, they say that India must grow jobs in technology-enhanced service exports. This proposition ignores the tiny base of high-quality Indian university education. And as the historian Mukul Kesavan's poignant description of Delhi University's decay reminds us, Indian leadership is enervating some of its best institutions.

The reality in India

India's sput in technology-related service exports during the COVID-19 years has come to a grinding halt. Even graduates from the Indian Institutes of Technology are struggling to find jobs. Many formerly at the bottom range of Bengaluru's IT economy – in support, maintenance, and basic coding roles – are seeking opportunities in the gig economy. IT jobs have fallen off their peak of just above five million in 2022, which itself was minuscule in a working-age population of a billion people and a workforce of 600 million.

Underscored by such evidence, Martin Wolf of the *Financial Times* predicts that India – a country that cannot educate its children and provide its vast millions with dignified jobs – is on course to be a global economic superpower. However, India has all-but-trusted the China-plus-one window. Mexico (due to its strategic location) and Vietnam (well-located and possessing exceptional human capital) seized this opportunity when barriers descended on Chinese products. In fact, foreign investors are shying away from India, and India's labour-intensive manufactured exports (goods exports minus petrochemicals and chemicals) are stuck at a 1.3% share of global markets, below Vietnam's share.

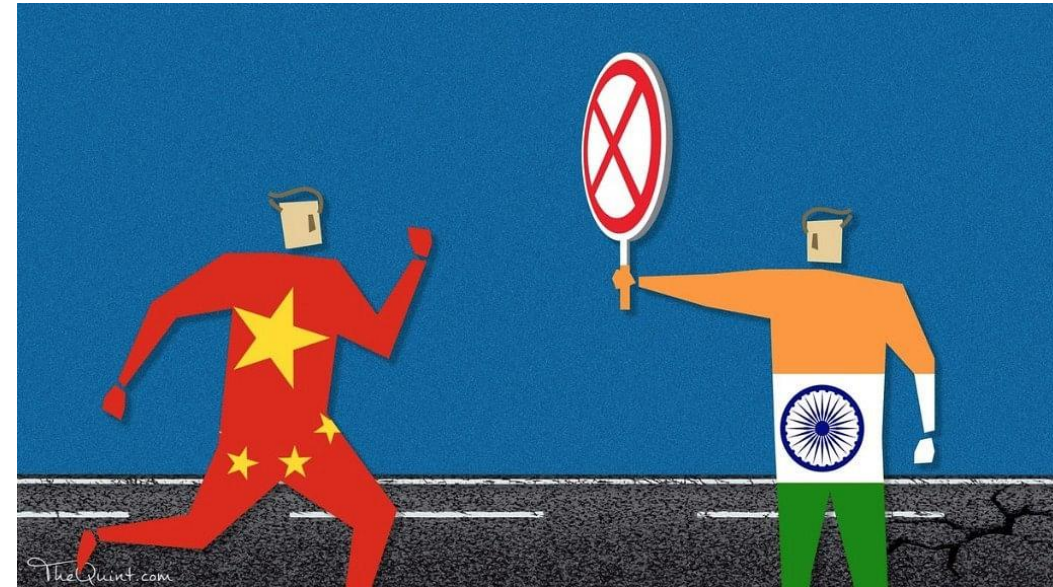
Make no mistake, if national security and self-reliance mantras block even the baby step of visas for relevant foreign experts, India will miss another opportunity for a new beginning. With dysfunction in school and university education and an overvalued rupee, any prospect of labour-intensive manufactured exports will die again. India must address its severely deficient human capital rather than harboursing fanciful notions of its place in the world. The global Red Queen race is intensifying. More windows will close as increased millions helplessly await dignified jobs.

Context

- Indian authorities have acknowledged a **significant skill gap between Chinese and Indian technicians**, impacting productivity in various sectors. Despite the need for Chinese expertise, visa restrictions have hindered their entry, exacerbating India's challenges in bridging this gap and advancing its manufacturing sector.

Current Visa and Skill Gap Challenges

- Indian officials have sharply reduced visas for Chinese nationals from 200,000 in 2019 to just 1,000 this year due to security concerns and political tensions. This decline affects various industries reliant on Chinese technical expertise.
- Indian businesses, including those in footwear and solar manufacturing, struggle with underutilized Chinese machinery due to insufficient local expertise. Chinese technicians are noted for their productivity and ability to maximize resources.
- India's education system lags behind China's, with only about 15% of Indian students having basic international skills compared to 85% of Chinese students. This education gap underscores the urgent need for foreign expertise to fill technical roles.



Historical and Comparative Insights

- China leveraged foreign expertise and improved its education system over decades, successfully transitioning from a **weaker educational base to a global manufacturing leader**. This strategy combined international knowledge with local educational advancements.
- In the **1980s, South Korea used foreign technology alongside its strong educational foundation** to advance rapidly. This example illustrates how essential a solid educational base is for effectively utilizing foreign expertise.
- **India has expanded school infrastructure but struggled with educational quality**, resulting in low skill levels among students. This problem hampers India's ability to benefit from advanced technologies and foreign knowledge.



Future Implications and Recommendations

- India's potential for labor-intensive manufactured exports remains constrained by its limited human capital and strict visa policies. This reduces its competitiveness compared to countries like Vietnam and Mexico, which have capitalized on similar opportunities.
- India's restrictive visa policies and educational inadequacies risk missing out on global manufacturing and technology trends. This could further isolate India from significant economic advancements and investment opportunities.
- To avoid further economic setbacks, India must address its educational deficiencies and reconsider visa restrictions for foreign experts. Enhancing domestic capabilities and integrating foreign knowledge is crucial for future growth.



Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD)' is the transforming itself into a trade bloc from a military alliance, in present times – Discuss.

Approach :

- ❑ Introduce this answer by writing What is Quad and some basic details about it.
- ❑ Write what is the objective of QUAD-Especially from the military cooperation perspective.
- ❑ Write How QUAD has been transforming itself into trade bloc
- ❑ Write implication for QUAD
- ❑ Conclude the answer by writing a way forward

QUAD is also known as Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QSD). QUAD is an informal group of India, the US, Japan and Australia. It is a strategic dialogue with the objective to ensure a free, open, inclusive and prosperous Indo Pacific.

Write what is the objective of QUAD-Especially from the military cooperation perspective.

- ❑ The motive behind the Quad is to keep the strategic sea routes in the Indo -Pacific free of any military or political influence.**
- ❑ It is basically seen as a strategic grouping to reduce Chinese domination.**
- ❑ The core objective of the Quad is to secure a rules -based global order, freedom of navigation and a liberal trading system.**
- ❑ The coalition also aims to offer alternative debt financing for nations in the Indo -Pacific region.**
- ❑ The Quad leaders exchange views on contemporary global issues such as critical and emerging technologies, connectivity and infrastructure, cyber security, maritime security, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, climate change, pandemic and education.**

❑ Write How QUAD has been transforming itself into trade bloc

- ❑ There have been discussions about the QUAD transforming itself into a trade bloc.
- ❑ This would involve the four countries reducing trade barriers and increasing economic integration.
- ❑ A trade bloc would allow for increased trade and investment between the countries involved, creating economic benefits for all.
- ❑ It would also serve to counter China's economic influence in the region, as well as provide an alternative to the Belt and Road Initiative.
- ❑ There are numerous reasons to increase economic engagement within the QUAD nations—the four countries, with a combined population of over 1.8 billion people, represent a quarter of the world's population and over \$30 trillion in GDP.
- ❑ In 2018, trade between the four countries totalled more than \$440 billion, with nearly \$6 trillion in trade with the rest of the world.



India's strong economic ties with the QUAD economies are reflected in its bilateral trade volume with each member. During 2019-2020, these three economies accounted for 15% of India's total trade.

Write implication for QUAD

- The transition from a military alliance to a trade bloc would have significant implications for the countries involved and the region as a whole.**
- The countries involved, increased economic cooperation would create economic benefits, including increased trade and investment.**
- It would provide an alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative, which has been criticized for its debt-trap diplomacy.**

QUAD's shift from a military alliance towards a trade bloc is a significant development. It reflects the growing importance of economic cooperation and the need to promote free and fair trade among QUAD countries.



Thank you

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