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QUAD SUMMIT 2026

Maritime Security, AI and Critical Minerals

1. Latest News

The leaders of India, the United States, Japan and Australia announced a series of initiatives on maritime security, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, critical minerals and business cooperation at the Quad Leaders' Meeting held in Manila on the sidelines of the East Asia Summit.

2. About QUAD

The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) is a strategic partnership comprising India, the United States, Japan and Australia.

It seeks to promote a free, open, stable and prosperous Indo-Pacific through cooperation in maritime security, economic resilience, critical and emerging technologies, infrastructure, health and disaster response.

The grouping was first initiated in 2007 but became inactive for several years before being revived in 2017 on the sidelines of the ASEAN meeting in Manila.

Although it is not a formal military alliance, the Quad provides a platform for its four members to coordinate on regional and global challenges.

Its central objective is to uphold a rules-based international order, promote freedom of navigation and overflight, strengthen regional resilience and oppose coercive actions that undermine Indo-Pacific stability.

3. Key Outcomes of the 2026 Quad Leaders' Meeting

The meeting brought together Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, US President Donald Trump, Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi and Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese. It was the first Quad leaders' meeting since 2024.

The leaders announced several initiatives to deepen cooperation across security, economic and technological domains.

Maritime Security and Surveillance Cooperation

The leaders announced the Indo-Pacific Maritime Surveillance Collaboration, an initiative aimed at improving information sharing and maritime domain awareness across the region.

Under this initiative, patrol aircraft from the four countries are scheduled to participate in a maritime exercise in 2027. The P-8 and P-3C aircraft are expected to fly together in an exercise for the first time in a Quad context.

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The initiative seeks to strengthen maritime monitoring, improve coordination and ensure safer maritime transit corridors across the Indo-Pacific.

The leaders also highlighted the importance of the annual Malabar Naval Exercise, whose 30th edition was recently conducted near Japan. The exercise involved anti-submarine and anti-surface warfare drills, reflecting the growing importance of coordinated maritime capabilities.

Quad Business Leaders' Forum

The leaders announced the inaugural Quad Business Leaders' Forum, scheduled to be held in Mumbai in early 2027.

The forum will bring together business leaders, government officials and policy experts from the four countries to strengthen private-sector cooperation. It will focus on promoting commercial agreements, investment opportunities and business partnerships across the Indo-Pacific.

The initiative is intended to complement strategic cooperation with stronger economic and commercial engagement.

Artificial Intelligence Cooperation

The Quad announced a new Quad AI Accelerator to coordinate and fund efforts supporting trusted artificial intelligence access, deployment and technical assistance across the Indo-Pacific.

The initiative seeks to expand access to reliable AI ecosystems and promote cooperation in emerging technologies among countries that share common interests and values.

The United States also announced an investment of more than US$85 million to expand access to trusted AI ecosystems across the region.

The initiative reflects the Quad's growing emphasis on technological cooperation and the importance of ensuring that emerging technologies contribute to regional economic growth and resilience.

Enhanced Cybersecurity Cooperation

Recognising the rapid increase in the number and scale of cyber incidents across the region, the leaders announced enhanced Quad Cybersecurity Cooperation.

The initiative aims to strengthen collaboration among member countries to promote an open, secure and resilient cyberspace.

Cybersecurity has become an important component of regional security, given the growing dependence on digital infrastructure, communication networks and interconnected economic systems.

Critical Minerals and Supply Chain Resilience

The leaders highlighted the importance of securing critical mineral supply chains and reducing dependence on individual foreign suppliers.

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Critical minerals and rare earth elements are essential for electric vehicles, renewable energy technologies, semiconductors, defence equipment and advanced manufacturing.

The joint statement expressed concern over economic coercion, including arbitrary export restrictions, and emphasised the need to develop secure and diversified supply chains.

Counterterrorism and Regional Security

The Quad leaders unequivocally condemned terrorism and violent extremism in all their forms and manifestations, including cross-border terrorism.

They also committed to strengthening ongoing cooperation on counterterrorism.

The joint statement also opposed destabilising or unilateral actions aimed at changing the status quo through force or coercion.

4. Significance for India

- Maritime security: Greater information sharing and surveillance cooperation can strengthen India's maritime domain awareness in the Indian Ocean and wider Indo-Pacific.
- Critical minerals: Diversified supply chains can support India's electric mobility, renewable energy, electronics and defence manufacturing sectors.
- Technology development: Cooperation in AI and cybersecurity can improve access to trusted technologies and strengthen India's digital capabilities.
- Economic partnerships: Hosting the inaugural Quad Business Leaders' Forum in Mumbai can create opportunities for Indian businesses and investors.
- Counterterrorism: The explicit condemnation of cross-border terrorism reinforces India's longstanding diplomatic position.

Source: Indian Express (IE)

