

Far and Wide

Every week we share selection of six news from six continents that we believe will impact our world in the near or distant future

September 2024 | Issue #65

Strengthening Global Cooperation: Highlights from the 2024 Quad Leaders' Summit in United States

Welcome to the latest edition of Far and Wide, where we embark on a journey to explore intriguing stories and global developments.

The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, or Quad, consists of India, Australia, the United States, and Japan. Its primary aim is to foster a free and open international order governed by the rule of law in the Indo-Pacific region, focusing on cooperation and shared democratic values. Prime Minister Modi participated in the sixth Quad Leaders' Summit held in Wilmington, Delaware, hosted by the United States. This summit marks a significant moment in the ongoing collaboration among the four democracies.

The Quad's origins trace back to an informal alliance established after the Indian Ocean tsunami, aimed at disaster relief efforts. Initially proposed by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2007, the initiative stalled due to resistance from China and hesitance from India. However, it regained momentum during the 2017 ASEAN Summits and was elevated to a ministerial level in September 2019, with the first virtual summit occurring in March 2021.

At this year's summit, the leaders adopted the Quad Wilmington Declaration to advance their agenda. One notable initiative is the Quad Cancer Moonshot, aimed at reducing the cancer burden in the Indo-Pacific. This partnership focuses initially on cervical cancer, utilizing collective investments and scientific expertise. Additionally, the Maritime Initiative for Training in the Indo-Pacific (MAITRI) was announced, which will enhance regional partners' capabilities to use maritime tools effectively, with India set to host the inaugural workshop in 2025.

Other significant announcements include the launch of the Quad Indo-Pacific Logistics Network to streamline disaster response, the Quad Ports of the Future Partnership for sustainable port development, and a memorandum to bolster semiconductor supply chains. India also highlighted its establishment of a space-based web portal for Mauritius to monitor extreme weather and climate impacts. Finally, the leaders confirmed that India will host the next Quad Leaders' Summit in 2025, reinforcing its crucial role in this strategic alliance.



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Source : The Economic Times, Daily Pioneer

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/india-eu-to-begin-next-round-of-talks-on-free-trade-pact-on-monday/articleshow/113572133.cms?from=mdr>

<https://www.dailypioneer.com/2024/business/india-uk-may-hold-next-round-of-talks-on-proposed-fta-in-october.html>



Europe

India and UK likely to resume next round of FTA negotiations in October

The India and the UK are set to resume talks for a proposed free trade agreement (FTA) in October, aiming to resolve outstanding issues. Discussions began in January 2022 but stalled during both nations' election cycles. The pending issues include market access in goods and services. Indian industries, particularly in IT and healthcare, are seeking more opportunities for skilled professionals in the UK and zero customs duties on certain goods. Meanwhile, the UK is pushing for lower import duties on items such as Scotch whiskey, electric vehicles, lamb meat, chocolates, and other confectioneries. The UK also seeks better access for its services in India, particularly in telecommunications, legal, and financial services. Alongside the FTA, both countries are negotiating a bilateral investment treaty (BIT). The agreement spans 26 chapters covering goods, services, investments, and intellectual property rights. Bilateral trade between India and the UK increased from USD 20.36 billion in 2022-23 to USD 21.34 billion in 2023-24.

UK officials are currently briefing their new ministers on the FTA, and the two nations are expected to move forward with negotiations soon. A virtual meeting between Indian Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal and UK Secretary of State Jonathan Reynolds was held in July to discuss the next steps. Both countries are eager to finalize the deal.

North America

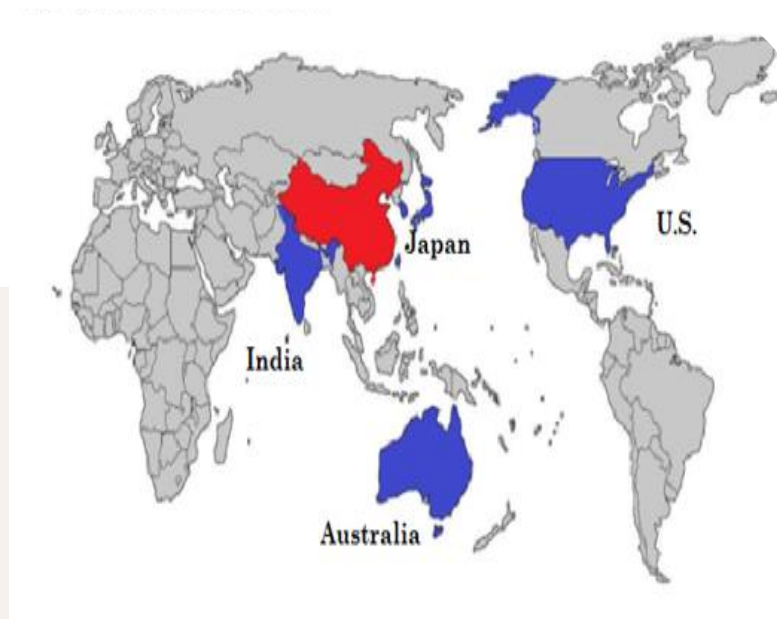


Strengthening Global Cooperation: Highlights from the 2024 Quad Leaders' Summit in Wilmington

Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended the sixth Quad Leaders' Summit in Wilmington, Delaware, on September 21, 2024, hosted by U.S. President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. The summit also included Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida. In his address, Prime Minister Modi expressed gratitude to President Biden for his role in strengthening the Quad as a global force for good. He highlighted the significance of the Quad's unity amidst global tensions and conflicts, underscoring their shared commitment to upholding international order, sovereignty, and peaceful dispute resolution.

During the summit, the leaders reaffirmed the Quad's role as a "force for global good" by announcing several initiatives aimed at addressing development priorities in the Indo-Pacific. Notable initiatives included the "Quad Cancer Moonshot" to combat cervical cancer, the "Maritime Initiative for Training in the Indo-Pacific" (MAITRI) to enhance regional capabilities, and the inaugural "Quad-at-Sea Ship Observer Mission" in 2025 to improve maritime safety. They also launched the "Quad Ports of the Future Partnership" for sustainable port infrastructure and established principles for digital public infrastructure.

Additionally, the leaders announced a "Semiconductor Supply Chains Contingency Network Memorandum of Cooperation" to bolster semiconductor supply resilience, a collective effort to enhance energy efficiency, and India's establishment of a space-based web portal for Mauritius to monitor extreme weather. A new sub-category under the Quad STEM Fellowship was introduced to support students from the Indo-Pacific in pursuing engineering degrees at Indian institutions. The leaders welcomed India's upcoming hosting of the next Quad Leaders' Summit in 2025 and adopted the Quad Wilmington Declaration to further their agenda.



Source: MEA

<https://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/38317/Prime+Minister+attends+the+sixth+Quad+Leaders+Summit+in+Wilmington+Delaware>

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South America

India Opens Embassy in Bolivia, Strengthening Lithium and Energy Ties

India is expanding its diplomatic presence in South America by opening an embassy in Bolivia, a key player in the global lithium market. This move reflects India's growing interest in securing vital resources for its transition to cleaner energy, especially lithium, crucial for electric vehicles (EVs) and renewable energy technologies. Bolivia, part of the Lithium Triangle, holds vast lithium reserves that are essential for India's ambitious goal of having 30% electric vehicles on its roads by 2030. Beyond EVs, India also needs lithium for its aerospace, submarine, and drone sectors. Rohitkumar R. Vadhwana has been appointed India's Ambassador to Bolivia, marking a shift from joint representation with Peru to a dedicated diplomatic mission. The new embassy will enhance India's engagement with Bolivia and the broader region, especially considering Bolivia's full membership in MERCOSUR, a South American economic bloc. This membership offers expanded trade opportunities for Indian industries in pharmaceuticals, technology, and machinery.

Source: The Financial Express, ANI News

<https://www.financialexpress.com/business/industry-indias-bold-move-new-embassy-in-lithium-rich-bolivia-signals-major-shift-in-global-energy-game-361570/>

<https://www.aninews.in/news/world/asia/shri-rohitkumar-r-vadhwana-appointed-as-indias-next-ambassador-to-bolivia20240918143451/>

India's relationship with Bolivia has strengthened since President Ram Nath Kovind's 2019 visit, where agreements on lithium cooperation were signed. India is also poised to collaborate with Bolivia in technology, biotechnology, and space exploration, with both nations eyeing mutual growth through knowledge exchange and resource partnerships. The embassy will play a key role in fostering these ties and supporting India's strategic interests in the region.

Asia



India and Russia Expedite New Investment Treaty to Boost Bilateral Cooperation

India and Russia have initiated negotiations for a new investment treaty, seven years after the expiration of their previous agreement. Virtual discussions on the treaty took place from July 18-19, following the issue being raised during a meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Vladimir Putin in Moscow on July 9. Officials from both nations agreed to expedite the treaty, which aims to enhance and safeguard investments. The two leaders also directed officials to begin talks for a bilateral free trade agreement in investments and services, targeting a trade goal of \$100 billion by 2030. India's exports to Russia surged by over 35% in FY24 compared to FY23, while Russian imports, particularly petroleum, grew by more than 32%.

While no definitive timeline has been set for the treaty's completion, both sides aim to finalize it swiftly. India and Russia have set a target of \$50 billion in bilateral investments by 2025, with the total already surpassing \$30 billion in 2018. India is interested in sectors like Russia's Far East development, the Northern Sea Route, energy, infrastructure, and shipbuilding, particularly for ice-class vessels.

The last bilateral investment pact, based on a 1993 model, was signed in December 1994 and implemented in August 1996. India terminated this treaty in April 2017, along with several others, due to flaws in the 1993 model that allowed broad interpretations by arbitral tribunals. India's challenges with the treaty model surfaced in 2011, following an unfavorable ruling in the White Industries Australia Ltd case. The Indian government revised the model text in 2015, and subsequently, it terminated investment treaties with 77 out of the 83 countries with which such agreements were signed.



Source: Hindustan Times

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/india-russia-aim-for-speedy-conclusion-of-bilateral-investment-treaty-101726662635366.html>

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Source: Financial Express

<https://www.financialexpress.com/business/defence-india-australia-space-cooperation-strengthens-ahead-of-quad-leaders-summit-3614155/>

Australia

India-Australia Space Collaboration Strengthens Ahead of QUAD Summit

India and Australia are strengthening their space cooperation as part of their growing strategic partnership, especially in the lead-up to the upcoming QUAD Leaders' Summit in the United States, where they will meet with leaders from the US and Japan. Space collaboration has become a key element of their relationship, aligning with both countries' ambitions to expand their space. Australia's space industry is undergoing rapid transformation, with significant government investment and a thriving startup ecosystem. The Australian government has prioritized the space sector, aiming to grow it to \$12 billion by 2030 and create 20,000 new jobs.

India and Australia have a longstanding history of cooperation in space exploration, which has been further solidified in recent years. In 2021, ISRO and the Australian Space Agency signed an amendment to their 2012 Inter-Governmental MoU on space cooperation, formalizing joint efforts in earth observation, satellite navigation, and space situational awareness. A key milestone in this partnership occurred when Australia signed an \$18 million MoU with ISRO's commercial arm, NewSpace India Limited (NSIL).

This growing space partnership highlights the strategic importance both nations place on space collaboration. Australia's strategy of attracting international partnerships, combined with India's advanced space capabilities, positions their cooperation as a crucial part of their broader defense and technological relationship. Additionally, their involvement in the QUAD framework provides opportunities for multilateral space collaboration, enhancing their role in global space governance and further boosting their influence in the evolving space landscape.

Africa

India Nears Breakthrough Deal to Export Combat Helicopters to Nigeria

India's Light Combat Helicopter (LCH) Prachand is close to securing a major export deal with the Nigerian Army, a breakthrough for Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL). The LCH is competing against the Turkish T-129 ATAK and European Airbus Tiger HAD helicopters for the contract. Nigeria, seeking to enhance its military firepower, particularly for counterterrorism efforts, is looking to acquire 12 twin-engine attack helicopters. The Indian-made LCH, priced at \$17 million per unit, stands out for its versatility, cost-effectiveness, and proven performance, giving it an edge over competitors like the T-129 ATAK (\$45 million) and Tiger HAD (\$68 million). India has bolstered its defence ties with Africa, extending credit lines, including a \$1 billion defence deal with Nigeria. The Nigerian Army has blamed insufficient airpower for prolonged insurgencies and is now seeking helicopters that can conduct ground attacks, armed escort, and anti-tank operations. LCH, capable of high-altitude operations, fits this requirement.

This deal marks a significant step for India's aerospace exports, with other countries like Argentina and Egypt also showing interest in the LCH. As part of broader defence cooperation, Indian forces provide training to Nigerian military personnel, enhancing trust and fostering bilateral ties. If finalized, this contract will underscore India's growing influence in Africa's defense sector, particularly in the combat helicopter segment. HAL aims to expand production capacity to meet rising global demand for the LCH.



Source: Sputnik News, Eurasian Times

<https://sputniknews.in/20240919/gateway-to-africa-india-to-sign-helicopter-deal-with-nigeria-8167220.html>

<https://www.eurasiantimes.com/historic-contract-for-indias-lch-prachan/>