

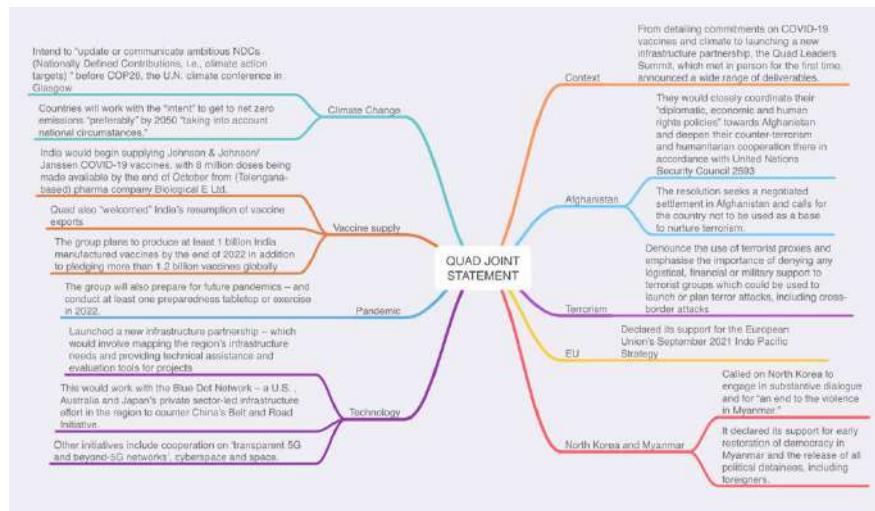


AIR SPOTLIGHT: PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO US

Context: PM Modi on his 3-day 'landmark' US visit addressed the United Nations General Assembly, attended the first in-person Quad summit meeting and held bilateral and multilateral engagements, including with Biden, Kamala Harris and his Australian and Japanese counterparts.

Highlights of the visit:

- During his **first visit to the US since COVID outbreak**, PM started his engagements by **meeting five top American corporate leaders from key sectors**
- Then Prime Minister held his **first in-person meeting with US vice president Kamala Harris**. Harris **called upon Pakistan to act against terrorist groups operating from its soil** to ensure they do not threaten the security of both the US and India and underscored the need to monitor Islamabad's support for terrorism.
- It was followed by meeting with US President. **Highlights of meet with the US President:**
 - This was the first in-person meeting of the two Leaders.
 - The leaders took the opportunity to **review the India-US Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership** and potential for strengthening bilateral cooperation further.
 - PM said that India and USA were entering a decade of transformation, based on the pillars **(5-Ts) of tradition of democratic values, technology, trade, talent of our people, trusteeship of nature, and above all, trust.**
 - The leaders welcomed the forthcoming bilateral dialogues in various sectors, including the annual 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue of Foreign and Defense Ministers, which would identify priorities for future.
 - The two leaders discussed the COVID-19 situation and ongoing India-US collaboration to contain the pandemic.
 - Both leaders agreed that the **next Trade Policy Forum would be convened later this year to identify measures which would boost commercial linkages.**
 - Under the India-US Climate and Clean Energy Agenda 2030 Partnership, they agreed to **accelerate clean energy development and deployment of critical technologies.**
 - PM also highlighted the **importance of people-to-people ties between the two nations and the mutual benefits of facilitating mobility and expanding higher education linkages.**
 - The Leaders **exchanged views on regional developments in South Asia**, including the situation in Afghanistan, and reiterated their shared commitment to work together to counter global terrorism; and condemned cross-border terrorism.
 - The Leaders also **exchanged views about the Indo-Pacific region**, and reaffirmed their shared vision for a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific region.
 - India and the USA also **agreed to continue working together in international organisations**, given their convergence of strategic perspectives and shared interests on global issues such as climate change and terrorism.
- Later, PM Modi attended the Quad Summit and pledged to work together for ensuring peace and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific and the world. **Prime Minister's participation in the Quad Leaders' Summit**



Quad Principles on Technology Design, Development, Governance, and Use

- Technology should make the lives of our citizens more secure, prosperous, and rewarding, addressing some of the world's greatest shared challenges, like equitable growth, climate change, energy security, and pandemic diseases.
- **Quad is committed to fostering an open, accessible, and secure technology ecosystem, based on mutual trust and confidence, and we welcome all nations to support the following principles:**
 1. Support universal values.
 2. Build trust, integrity, and resilience.
 3. Foster healthy competition and international collaboration to advance the frontier of science and technology.
- This was followed by **PM Modi addressing the 76th UNGA session**. Highlights:
 - The theme for 76th UNGA debate is "**Building resilience through hope to recover from Covid-19, rebuild sustainably, respond to the needs of the planet, respect the rights of people and revitalise the United Nations**".
 - Representing the Mother of Democracy and based on his own experiences, Prime Minister affirmed that **democracy can deliver, democracy has delivered**.
 - The impact of India's development on global progress is evident - **when India grows, the world grows; when India reforms, the world transforms**.
 - India's **importance as a responder to natural disasters and a net contributor to the security in the region and beyond**.
 - India will soon resume vaccine supplies to the world.
 - India has been **pioneer in transformational role of technology in daily lives of crores of its people**, while ensuring its democratic values.
 - A **diversified, resilient and expanded global value chain and production centers is in our collective interest**.
 - India has a **strong record on climate action and has an ambitious vision, including for renewables and green hydrogen**.
 - Prime Minister **cautioned against regressive thinking and extremism, and proposed science-based, rational and progressive thinking**. Using terrorism as a political tool will backfire on those practising it.
 - On Afghanistan, Prime Minister called for **Afghan soil not to be used by terrorists. Nor should Afghanistan's predicament be taken advantage of by other states**.
 - India, during its Presidency of the UN Security Council, shaped an important outcome document on Maritime Security. The international community must speak in one voice to strengthen a rules-based world order.
 - **Oceans and their resources must be used, not abused**.
 - Oceans are also lifelines for international trade, and should be safeguarded from expansion and exclusion.
 - The **United Nations must enhance its effectiveness and reliability**.
- PM Modi also **brought home 157 artefacts and antiquities**, which were handed over to India by the US during his visit. Nearly half of the artefacts are cultural, and the rest are figurines related to Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism—including the one-and-a-half metre bas relief panel of Revanta in sandstone of the 10th CE to the 8.5 cm tall, exquisite bronze Nataraja from the 12th CE.



OVERVIEW:

- Shared democratic values and growing convergence on bilateral, regional, and global issues have provided a strong base for India-U.S. relations, which have now evolved into a strategic partnership of global significance.
- The relationship enjoys strong bipartisan and popular support in both countries.
- India USA have seen ascendance of relationship in the 21st century, which was crystallised by 2008 India Nuclear Civil Nuclear Agreement.
- Various factors, including LPG reforms, rise of China, increasing influence of Indian community in USA are the factors behind this.

HIGH-LEVEL VISITS:

- Mutual visits at the leadership-level have been an integral element of the engagement between India and the U.S.
- Since assuming office in 2014, PM has visited the U.S. on six occasions.
- Events like 'Howdy, Modi' in Houston in 2019 have strengthened the partnership
- President Trump visited India in February 2020 and President Obama visited India in January 2015 and participated in the Republic Day Celebrations.
- Apart from these visits, there have been a number of bilateral engagements at the leadership-level on the margins of multilateral events in other countries.

HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE MECHANISMS:

- India and the U.S. have more than 50 bilateral inter-governmental dialogue mechanisms for exchange of views on issues of mutual interest. A number of such dialogue mechanisms are held at the Ministerial level including:
 - **India-U.S. 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue:** India-U.S. 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue is led by the heads of foreign and defence ministries of India and the U.S. Two rounds of this Dialogue have been held so far.
 - **India-U.S. Commercial Dialogue:** The India-U.S. Commercial Dialogue is led by the Minister of Commerce and Industry (CIM) and the U.S. Secretary of Commerce.
 - **India – U.S. Economic and Financial Partnership:** The India – U.S. Economic and Financial Partnership is led by the Finance Minister (FM) and the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury.
 - **India-U.S. Trade Policy Forum:** The India-U.S. Trade Policy Forum is led by CIM and the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR).
 - **India-U.S. Strategic Energy Partnership:** The India-U.S. Strategic Energy Partnership is led by the Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas and the U.S. Secretary of Energy.
 - **India-U.S. Homeland Security Dialogue (HSD):** The India-U.S. Homeland Security Dialogue is led by the Minister of Home Affairs and the Secretary, U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THE BILATERAL ENGAGEMENT BETWEEN INDIA AND THE U.S.

Defence:

- Defence relationship has emerged as a major pillar of India-U.S. strategic partnership with intensification in defence trade, joint exercises, personnel exchanges, and cooperation in maritime security and counter-piracy.
- India conducts more bilateral exercises with the U.S. than with any other country. Some important bilateral exercises are: **Yudh Abhyas, Vajra Prahar, Tarkash, Tiger Triumph, and Cope India.**
- **Aggregate worth of defence-related acquisitions from the U.S. is more than US\$ 15 billion.**
- The **India-U.S. Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTI)** is aimed at promoting co-development and co-production efforts.
- In June 2016, the U.S. recognised India as a "Major Defence Partner", which commits the U.S. to facilitate technology sharing with India to a level commensurate with that of its closest allies and partners.



- The announcement of India's elevation to **Tier I of the Strategic Trade Authorization (STA)** license exception will further contribute towards facilitating interaction in advanced and sensitive technologies.
 - Apart from the 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue, some other important dialogue mechanisms on defence cooperation are: Defence Policy Group, Military Cooperation Group, Defense Technology and Trade Initiative etc.
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- **Counter-terrorism and internal security:**
 - The bilateral **Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism** is an important mechanism in this regard.
 - Both sides have also been working together in law- enforcement and security cooperation through the **six subgroups under the HSD**.
 - Apart from the above, both sides also cooperate with each other on counter-terrorism and security issues in various multilateral bodies.
 - Cyber security cooperation between India and the U.S. is carried out under the India-U.S. Cyber Framework.
 - The two important dialogue mechanisms in this domain are – **India-U.S. Cyber Security Dialogue and the India-U.S. Joint Working Group on ICT**.
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- **Trade and Economic:**
 - The U.S. is **India's largest trading partner, goods and services combined**.
 - **Bilateral trade in goods and services grew by more than 10% per annum over the past two years to reach US\$ 142 billion in 2018**.
 - India's goods exports to the U.S. were valued at US\$ 54 billion and India's goods imports from the U.S. were valued at US\$ 33 billion.
 - India's services exports to the U.S. were valued at US\$ 28.7 billion and India's imports of services from U.S. were valued at US \$ 25.8 billion.
 - U.S. direct investments in India are estimated at about US\$ 44.5 billion whereas Indian FDI in U.S. is estimated at US\$ 18 billion.
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- **Energy:**
 - The U.S. has emerged as a key partner for India in the field of energy.
 - The **bilateral Strategic Energy Partnership** launched in 2018 is robust and witnessing increasing diversification across both conventional and renewable energy sources.
 - An India-U.S. Natural Gas Task Force was also created.
 - **India has started importing crude and LNG from the U.S.** from 2017 and 2018 respectively.
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- **Civil Nuclear Cooperation:**
 - The **bilateral civil nuclear cooperation agreement** was signed in October 2008.
 - India and the U.S. have a **Civil Nuclear Energy Working group on R&D activities**.
 - A U.S. company - **Westinghouse is in discussions with Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL)** for implementation of a project that envisages six AP 1000 reactors at Kovvada (A.P.).
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- **S&T/Space:**
 - The multi-faceted cooperation between India and the U.S. in the field of Science and Technology has been growing steadily under the framework of the **India-U.S. Science and Technology Cooperation Agreement signed in 2005, renewed in 2019**.
 - The **Indo-U.S. Science & Technology Forum** was established to promote cooperation in Science, Technology and Innovation.
 - Both countries also have a long history of cooperation in civil space arena that includes cooperation in earth observation, satellite navigation, and space science and exploration.
 - The **India-U.S Joint Working Group on Civil Space Cooperation** regularly reviews the status of cooperation and identifies new areas for furthering space cooperation.



- ISRO and NASA are also working towards intensifying cooperation in Mars exploration, heliophysics, and human spaceflight through relevant working groups between both sides.
- **Indian Diaspora:**
 - The number of Indians and Indian Americans in the U.S. is estimated at around **4 million**, which accounts for almost **1% of the total U.S. population**.
 - It includes a large number of professionals, entrepreneurs and educationists with considerable and increasing influence in U.S. polity, economy and the society.
 - U.S. is one of the most favoured destinations by Indian students for higher education. **More than 200,000 Indian students are currently pursuing various courses in the U.S.**
- **Regional and International Cooperation:**
 - Both countries are collaborating and coordinating on a number of regional and global issues in both security as well as development spheres.
 - Both are also engaged in areas such as maritime and cyber security, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief efforts.
 - **The U.S. has expressed support for India's permanent membership on a reformed U.N. Security Council and for India's early membership in the Nuclear Suppliers Group.**
 - India and the U.S. remain engaged to promote peace; prosperity; and security, in the Indo-Pacific as well as globally.

FOUR FOUNDATIONAL AGREEMENTS:

1. GSOMIA (General Security of Military Information Agreement): It guaranteed that the two countries would protect any classified information or technology that they shared. It was aimed at promoting interoperability and laid the foundation for future US arms sales to the country.

2. LEMOA (Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement): LEMOA allows the militaries of the US and India to replenish from each other's bases, and access supplies, spare parts and services from each other's land facilities, air bases, and ports, which can then be reimbursed.

3. COMCASA (Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement): The pact allows the US to provide India with its encrypted communications equipment and systems so that Indian and US military commanders, aircraft and ships, can communicate through secure networks during both peace and war.

4. BECA (Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement): facilitates the provision of targeting and navigation information from US systems.



FRICTIONS IN INDIA USA RELATIONS

- **Trade related:** like removal of India from its list of developing countries and taking off India from list of beneficiary-developing countries under its scheme of Generalised System of Preferences.
- **Tariffs war:** In 2018, the US imposed additional tariffs of 25% on steel and 10% on aluminium imports from various countries, including India, India's refusal to remove the 20% tariffs on ICT products.
- **WTO disputes:** like Capping prices of medical devices by India, greater Indian market access for American agriculture and dairy products etc.
- **IPR:** India is also on U.S.'s Priority Watch List.
- **H1B visas:** US has ramped up H-1B denials.
- **U.S.'s soft policy towards Pakistan and tensions with Iran, Russia and divergence of interests in Afghanistan.**

ANALYSIS:

- For a strategic partnership to blossom, the presence of three factors is necessary. There must be 1) long term vision, 2) volume of exchange, 3) defense and security part or understanding.
- **Principal variables that would drive Indo-US relations in the future:**
 - China.
 - Pakistan and Terrorism.
 - Economics/Trade and finance.
 - Managing the global commons.
 - 7 Es: Economics, Ecology, Epidemics, Education, Ethnicity and emancipation, Energy, and Entente (coming together in the area of defence, space and technology).
- **Variables that would prove to be impediments to the growth of the Indo-US strategic partnership in the future:**
 - US domestic problems: Political disunity, protectionism etc
 - Fear of China's rise at the cost of US power
 - India's domestic problems: Issues such as Naxal insurgency, corruption, bureaucratic delays and anti-American feeling among certain sections of the Indian polity.
- **8 principal areas of Indo-US cooperation:**
 - **Possible support for India in UNSC:** Amid India's push for UN Security Council reforms, the US has said it supports building a consensus for a "modest" expansion of the Council for both permanent and non-permanent members, provided it does not diminish its effectiveness or its efficacy and does not alter or expand the veto.
 - **US Entity List:** removing entities from the US Entity List would certainly consolidate the relationship.
 - **Economic aspect of the relationship will also be crucial.** \$10 b worth deals with various Indian corporations suggest that the US is looking for Indian investments which would create jobs in the US.
 - **India getting US support for membership in four export control regimes:** what are the criteria for memberships and how other countries react and whether US can push Indian claim.
 - **Pakistan-US relations:** US military aid to Pakistan would continue to be an area of irritation for India.
 - **Counter-terrorism:** some good cooperation has happened between India and the US. But this cooperation needs to be deepened further given that the US is still reluctant to share intelligence about Pakistan with India.
 - India expects the US to advocate and support a **greater role for India in Afghanistan.** Pakistan's efforts to exclude India's role in Afghanistan has been voiced by India with the US.
 - **Good relations with China** are important for both countries and neither country wants to offend China. There continues to be a divergence between India and the US on Iran and Myanmar. Convergence will take time to develop. There is anti-US sentiment in India in some political quarters. Finally, stronger Indo-US relations may alienate other countries and allies like Russia and China.



<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/pm-modi-to-return-home-after-landmark-us-visit-lists-strongest-assets-101632617241120.html>

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<https://mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/34323/Quad+Principles+on+Technology+Design+Development+Governance+and+Use>



NEWS IN BRIEF: PRELIMS SPECIAL

India – United Arab Emirates Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)

- The first round of CEPA negotiations were held recently.
- India and the UAE signed a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in 2017.
- A new strategic economic agreement is expected to increase bilateral trade in goods to USD 100 billion within five years of the signed agreement and increase trade in services to USD 15 billion.
- The UAE is currently India's third-largest trading partner with bilateral trade in 2019-20 valued at USD 59 billion.
- The UAE is also India's second-largest export destination after the US.
- India was the UAE's second-largest trading partner in 2019, with bilateral non-oil trade valued at USD 41 billion.
- The UAE is the eighth-largest investor in India.
- India imported USD 10.9 billion of crude oil from the UAE in 2019-2020.

<https://newsonair.com/2021/09/23/india-uae-to-hold-first-round-of-negotiations-for-cepa-today/>

National Single Window System for Investors and Businesses

- Government launched a National Single Window System (NSWS) for investors and businesses.



APTI PLUS

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- The **single window portal will become a one-stop-shop for investors for approvals and clearances.**
- The system is expected to bring in transparency, accountability and responsiveness in the ecosystem and all information will be available on a single dashboard.
- The portal currently hosts approvals across 18 Central Departments and 9 States, and another 14 Central depts and five states will be added by December 2021.
- **The NSWS provides the following services:**
 1. Know Your Approval (KYA) Service
 2. Common Registration Form
 3. State registration form
 4. Applicant dashboard
 5. Document repository
 6. E-Communication module

<https://newsonair.com/2021/09/25/launch-of-nsws-national-single-window-system-for-investors-ease/>

Sign Language Day

- The UN General Assembly has proclaimed **23 September** as the International Day of Sign Languages in order to raise awareness of the importance of sign language in the full realization of the human rights of people who are deaf.
- The theme for 2021 is "**We Sign For Human Rights**", declared by the World Federation of the Deaf.
- The first International Day of Sign Language was observed across the world on September 23, 2018.
- The International Week of the Deaf was first celebrated in September 1958 and has since evolved into a global movement of deaf unity.

<https://newsonair.com/2021/09/22/govt-to-celebrate-sign-language-day-tomorrow/>