

PSIR & GS-2

DAILY BRIEF

ABOUT THIS INITIATIVE

Briefs, scans the best academic platforms, national newspapers & leading think tanks to pick the most relevant articles & research. It converts them into crisp, high-impact points you can directly use in your mains answers.



PSIR OPTIONAL BY
Amit Pratap Singh
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The Hindu

How ASEAN and the Quad Are Quietly Aligning in an Era of Strategic Competition

Context

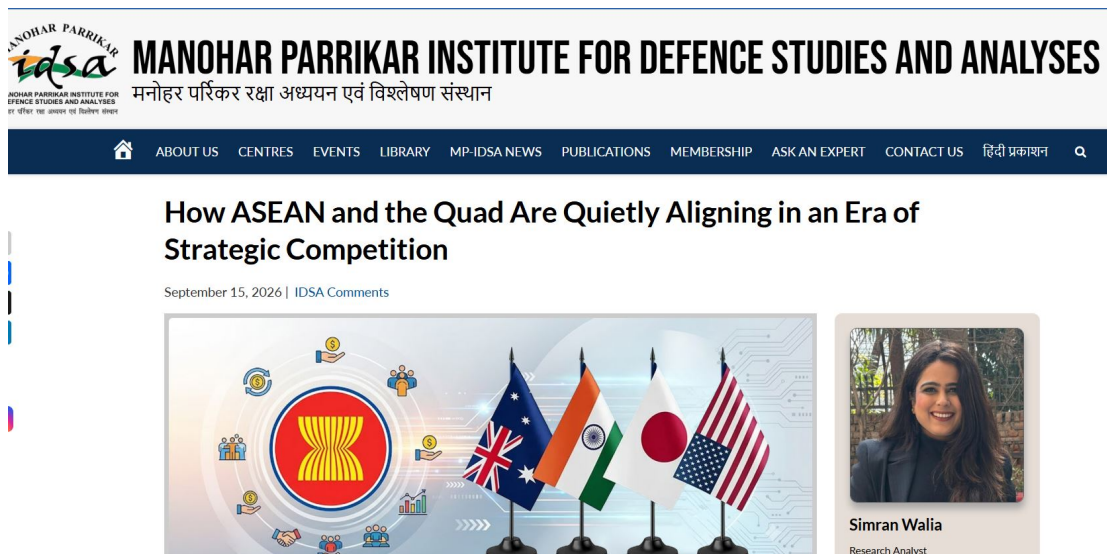
The Quad foreign ministers' meeting, held alongside the 59th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting, shows the Quad and ASEAN aligning through practical cooperation while each keeps its separate identity.

Facts

■ **Four areas of cooperation :** *maritime and transnational security, economic prosperity, critical and emerging technologies, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.*

■ **All four Quad members :** *are ASEAN Comprehensive Strategic Partners and reaffirmed support for ASEAN unity and centrality.*

■ **Divergence :** *Quad emphasises countering China's assertive behaviour. ASEAN leans towards economic integration, non-alignment and neutrality, because China is the major trading partner of ASEAN countries.*



Analytical Crux

The Quad and ASEAN are aligning through functional cooperation rather than institutional integration. ASEAN remains the centre of gravity of regional architecture, and Quad works inside that order as a capacity-enhancing partner. It benefits ASEAN because it can take resources, training and technology in maritime security, emerging technologies and HADR without joining a bloc against China. However, China is its major trading partner, it decides by consensus, and the Philippines and Vietnam read the sea differently from Cambodia and Laos. For India it matches its own Indo-Pacific position, where ASEAN centrality and Quad stand together. The alignment will be judged by delivery in maritime security, technology transfer and HADR, and a regular Quad-ASEAN forum would give it a structure that summit meetings do not.

Verbatim Quotes

"ASEAN provides the centre of gravity for the Indo-Pacific's multilateral architecture and the Quad provides a flexible mechanism for mobilising capabilities and resources among four democracies."

– Simran Walia

Europe rearms: Is the war economy back?

Firstpost.



TRENDING | India-Pakistan ships collision PM Modi birthday US bill on Russian sanctions US interest rates Oracle layoffs

Europe rearms: Is the war economy back?

The return of Europe's war economy is a warning about what peace was worth — and how much it costs to buy it back



Context

Whether Europe's record peacetime rearmament marks the return of a war economy, and what India should learn from it.

Facts

■ **SIPRI** : World military spending reached \$2.89 trillion in 2025. European spending rose 14 per cent in one year to \$864 billion.

■ **ReArm Europe / Readiness 2030** aims at €800 billion : about €650 billion from fiscal flexibility and €150 billion from SAFE loans.

■ **EU spending (European Defence Agency)** : €418 billion in 2025 and projected €454 billion (2.4 per cent of GDP) in 2026. It could reach €547 billion by 2029.

Analytical Crux

Europe is rearming in peacetime because of two fears i.e. Russia to the east, and an American guarantee that looks conditional and transactional. Money is flowing through NATO's 5 per cent target, looser EU fiscal rules and SAFE loans. Europe faces a timing problem as well because autonomy needs European industry, readiness needs American equipment, and Germany's preference for Rheinmetall pulls against a common European effort. Europe's "Made in Europe" rules mirror Make in India and may open a market for the Indian defence industry. The guns-versus-butter trade-off returns with rearmament, because every euro borrowed for deterrence will compete with pensions, health and the green transition.

Verbatim Quotes

"Strategic autonomy has a price tag, and that a nation which depends on a single foreign patron for its most sensitive weapons is a nation whose foreign policy can become vulnerable to external pressure."

– Akhileshwar Sahay

A war room for India in an age of sanctions

A war room for India in an age of sanctions

The next sanctions crisis may begin with a name on a Washington list and end in an Indian kitchen. Between them lie a New York bank, a London insurer, a tanker in the Strait of Hormuz and several Ministries in Delhi. Foreign pressure moves through one system. No single Ministry follows the whole journey. Diplomacy, law, banking, trade, shipping and fuel supplies sit in different parts of government. Who owns the combined response?

Washington sanctioned four companies based in India and three Indian nationals over alleged trade in Iranian oil and petrochemicals. Tehran listed an LNG carrier serving India and an Indian-flagged bulk carrier for possible fines, detention or confiscation in the Strait of Hormuz. One order travels through bank wires; the other waits at sea.

'Weaponised interdependence'

India makes its own laws and foreign policy. Yet, an Indian company may need an American bank for payment, a foreign insurer for its ship, and safe passage to deliver cargo through a strait that another state can disrupt. Whoever controls a critical network can exert pressure on those who depend on it. Scholars call this weaponised interdependence.

Secondary sanctions tell a foreign business to abandon a targeted transaction or risk losing access to American finance. On August 24, the United States widened that threat under Operation Economic Outcast across five Iranian sectors: digital assets, technology, gold, aviation and shipping. On September 14, Washington imposed Iran-related sanctions on Russia's VTB Bank, which has a Delhi branch. Banks dealing with it face sanctions risk, even where a transaction is permitted under Indian law.

American laws in the 1990s threatened foreign companies with penalties for conduct abroad. Europe responded with a Blocking Statute. When secondary sanctions against Iran returned in 2018, several European companies withdrew despite having legal protection at home. The possible loss of access to American banking and dollar payments was enough to choke off trade



Syed Akbaruddin
Former Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations and, currently, Dean, Kautilya School of Public Policy, Hyderabad

A coordinated response is essential as sanctions increasingly target entire transactions

that remained legal in Europe. Sanctions against Russia widened after 2022. Export controls pursued foreign suppliers of chips and machine tools. Oil restrictions reached tankers, insurers, ship managers and traders. Sanctions increasingly followed the transaction rather than stopping with the seller. On September 16, the U.S. Congress passed a sanctions bill that would authorise the U.S. President to impose tariffs as a form of economic coercion. Indian exports to the U.S. could face tariffs of up to 100% over India's purchases of Russian oil. The Indian government is monitoring developments and has said that it will work with industry to protect India's trade and economic interests.

Iran is using a different chokepoint at sea. On August 23, its Persian Gulf Strait Authority published a list of 45 vessels it called non-compliant. They included *Disha*, chartered by Petronet LNG and managed by the Shipping Corporation of India, and *Maha Roos*, an Indian-flagged bulk carrier. The authority did not explain the alleged breaches. By September 14, the list had grown to 77. The authority also warned insurers against covering listed ships. Washington has already sanctioned the authority and warned that seeking passage guarantees from it could carry sanctions risks, even without payment.

The domestic consequences

Economic coercion ties foreign policy directly to the domestic economy. Its consequences reach households, farmers and seafarers. No Ministry can see the whole chain on its own.

During the current West Asia crisis, the government coordinated Ministries, monitored vessels and supplies, raised LPG production and found alternative cargoes. It has kept pumps open and kitchens supplied.

That coordination should survive the crisis. An Economic Security and Sanctions Office under the Cabinet Secretariat should become India's permanent war room for economic coercion. It should bring together officials responsible for foreign policy, finance, commerce, energy, shipping, law and defence, alongside the Reserve

Bank of India and market regulators. Its staff should track where transactions could fail, from payment and insurance to shipping and delivery.

It would seek evidence behind foreign listings, support legitimate requests for removal, negotiate written exemptions and transition periods, and issue clear Indian guidance. Banks should distinguish legal prohibitions from their own commercial caution. Companies should be warned early when a payment route, insurer or port is at risk.

India also needs more LPG storage, an expanded Indian-controlled tanker fleet and a stronger Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool, while securing long-term LNG contracts outside Hormuz. Rupee settlement can preserve lawful trade when sellers accept it, but cannot shield a bank that still needs New York.

Why India cannot follow China's stand

China has said that the American measures had no basis in international law or authorisation from the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Earlier in May, Beijing told Chinese businesses not to recognise, enforce or comply with American sanctions against five Chinese refining companies. India also says that it upholds sanctions mandated by the UNSC and does not accept unilateral sanctions. That does not mean Delhi can simply copy Beijing. China's market power, state-directed economy and leverage over critical supply chains give it more room to resist.

India's financial and commercial ties with the U.S. make adopting Beijing's approach costly. A legal objection alone offers little comfort if Indian firms still bear the cost. India must protect household energy, seafarers, fertilizer supplies and lawful trade while preserving ties with the U.S., Russia, Iran and the Gulf. Delhi needs the full picture in one room before it acts.

The first test of sovereignty happens when Delhi decides. The second comes when that decision meets a New York bank or the Strait of Hormuz. In the age of sanctions, India cannot move those chokepoints. It can, however, make sure that every decision is taken with the whole journey in view.

Context

US secondary sanctions and Iran's listing of ships at Hormuz reach Indian homes through banks, insurers and shipping routes that no single Ministry tracks. India therefore needs a permanent "war room" for economic coercion.

Facts

■ **United States sanctioned :** four India-based firms and three Indian nationals over Iranian oil trade.

■ **Operation Economic Outcast :** The United States widened its secondary-sanctions threat across five Iranian sectors: digital assets, technology, gold, aviation and shipping.

■ **Proposal for India :** an Economic Security and Sanctions Office under the Cabinet Secretariat. It would bring together officials for foreign policy, finance, commerce, energy, shipping, law and defence, along with the RBI and market regulators.

Analytical Crux

Sanctions travel along networks and India's sovereignty is tested twice: once when Delhi decides, and again when that decision meets a New York bank or the Strait of Hormuz. Secondary sanctions work because banks and insurers protect their access to American finance even where Indian law permits the trade. A legal objection alone therefore leaves Indian firms carrying the cost. China can defy American sanctions because of its market power, state-directed economy and hold over supply chains. India, with deep financial and commercial ties to the United States, cannot copy it. Foreign pressure moves through one system. No single Ministry follows the whole journey. The next sanctions crisis may begin with a name on a Washington list and end in an Indian kitchen.

Verbatim Quotes

"Rupee settlement can preserve lawful trade when sellers accept it, but cannot shield a bank that still needs New York."

– Syed Akbaruddin

- PSIR 2026, Paper II: QUAD requires more robust architecture than the summit driven mode to tide over the current challenges. Elaborate.
- PSIR 2026, Paper II: Critically evaluate India-Russia relations in the 21st century. How have both the countries responded to America meddling in their relations in the recent times.
- GS 2026, Paper II: “IPMDA (Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness) bridges the gap between India’s SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) vision and the Quad’s collective Indo-Pacific strategy.” Make a critical assessment of the statement focusing on IPMDA.
- PSIR 2025, Paper II: “Trump’s return to the White House is a jolt to push the European Union to invest in its own defence and economic and technological revival.” Comment.
- PSIR 2025, Paper II: How successful has the ‘ASEAN Plus Three’ been in addressing regional problems? Support your answer with specific examples.
- PSIR 2025, Paper II: The tariff threats have pushed India and the European Union closer. Evaluate the India-EU partnership.

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| 02 | THE RECORD | Dates, official wording, and the document it came from. |
| 03 | THE ANALYSIS | The argument it raises, and the positions taken on it. |
| 04 | THEORY & VERBATIM QUOTATION | The concept on the syllabus, in the scholar's own words. |
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