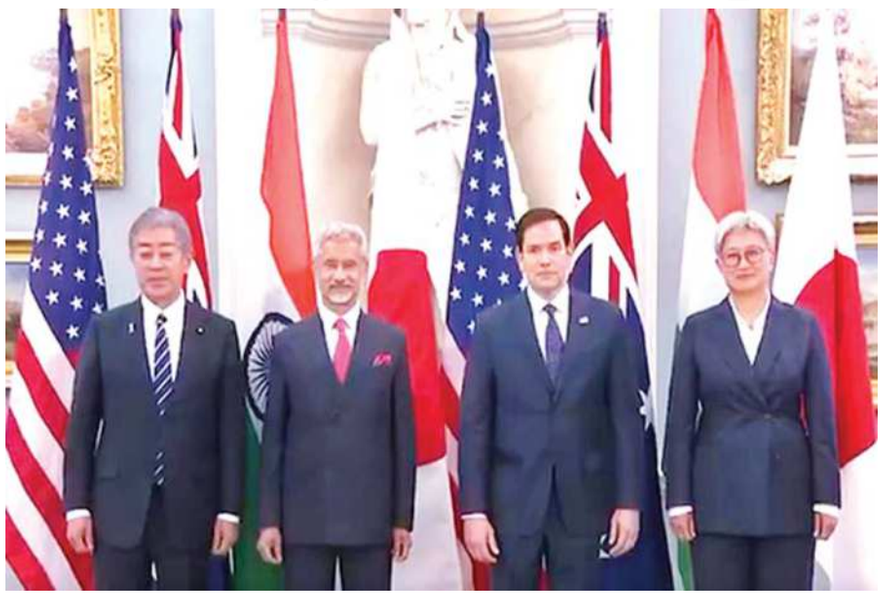
Focus on India as Trump to meet Quad leaders during his Asia trip



From left: Japan's Foreign Minister Iwaya Takeshi, India's External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong (File photo)

WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump's planned meeting with Quad leaders during his Asia trip could help deepen ties with India and strengthen Washington's diplomatic position before talks with China, former diplomat and experts said.

The meeting would bring together leaders of the United States, India, Japan and Australia. It would be the first gathering of Quad leaders in the current Trump administration, Edgard Kagan, a former US ambassador to Malaysia and now the Freeman Chair in China Studies at Center for Strategic and International Studies told reporters at a news conference.

Kagan said the absence of a leaders' meeting had caused disappointment and coincided with friction between Washington and New Delhi. He described the decision to hold one as significant for efforts to restore the relationship with India.

Meeting the Quad before travelling to China would also remind Chinese President Xi Jinping of Washington's ties with major regional partners, he said.

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Kagan said there had already been several Quad meetings at foreign minister level, including one in Atlanta. He argued that engagement with allies and partners before a presidential visit to China strengthened the US position.

Victor Cha, president of the centre's Geopolitics and Foreign Policy Department and Korea Chair, said the administration was looking for trade agreements during the Southeast Asian leg of the trip.

One possible initiative would encourage ASEAN countries to adopt US artificial intelligence technology, with development assistance offered as an incentive, Cha said. He stressed that he did not know whether Southeast Asian governments had accepted the proposal.

Gregory Poling, director of the centre's Southeast Asia Program, cautioned that details of Trump's engagement with ASEAN as an organisation remained unclear.

For the China leg, Kagan said White House signals suggested Trump's contact with Xi at APEC would amount to a courtesy call. Cha similarly said the administration had sought to lower expectations.

The more substantive discussions were expected in Miami three weeks later, Cha said. Possible topics included trade arrangements, an artificial intelligence safety dialogue and US concerns about China's implementation of commitments on rare earth exports.

Kagan said economic friction remained despite the trade truce. He pointed to US complaints about rare earth supplies and said allies, particularly Japan, had also raised concerns. "China needs to follow through on its commitments," he said.

Trump ready for immigration deal with Democrats, rules out amnesty

Broad changes to immigration law require action by Congress, says President

WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump said he was open to an immigration agreement with Democrats but ruled out amnesty, while backing a bipartisan permitting bill and insisting he would not approve wind turbines.

Speaking at an impromptu White House press conference, Trump offered few details on a possible immigration compromise. His remarks came during a wide-ranging exchange that also covered military operations, election disputes and Cuba.

Asked whether he could reach a deal with Democrats on immigration, Trump said: "We're not going to have amnesty or anything."

He said people would have to follow the proper process, arguing that doing otherwise would be unfair to others. He did not outline eligibility rules, a timetable or the terms he would seek in negotiations.

The exchange followed questions about Stephen Miller and what policy changes he had made. Trump praised Miller, saying he had been with him from the beginning and could work with the opposition. "He's smart, he's tough, he's fair, and he actually will get along, I think, very well with the Democrats."

The prospect of cooperation with Democrats also surfaced in questions about a permitting bill that a reporter said was expected to face a vote that night. "The permitting bill is a great bill that's supposed to be bipartisan. We -- we are behind it 100 per cent," Trump said.

He was less definite when asked whether he would press House members to support it. Trump said Democrats wanted the measure as much as Republicans, while allowing that their position might have changed.

His support came with an objection. Asked whether he would approve wind turbines, which a reporter described as a key part of the bill, Trump replied: "No, I will not approve wind turbines."



When pressed on the apparent conflict, he said the bill had not been fully negotiated. He did not explain how his opposition would be accommodated in the legislation.

Trump also defended Pete Hegseth against criticism, crediting him with military successes in Venezuela and Iran. He described the Venezuela operation as lasting 48 minutes and claimed nobody had been killed.

On Iran, Trump said he believed the war had been won. He asserted Iran's navy and air force had been destroyed and that Tehran wanted a deal. The supplied transcript contains no independent evidence supporting those assessments.

Trump linked the Iran campaign to preventing the country from acquiring a nuclear weapon. He acknowledged that public concern about energy costs could carry a short-term political cost and promised prices would come down.

Turning to Cuba, he described the country as failing and said the United States was providing humanitarian help. Asked about his earlier remarks on taking Cuba, he gave no specific commitment or operational details.

Immigration has long divided US politics. Disputes have centred on border enforcement, asylum, legal entry and the status of people living in the country without authorisation. Broad changes to immigration law require action by Congress, making negotiations between the White House and lawmakers important to any legislative agreement. Federal permitting governs approvals for many energy and infrastructure projects. Efforts to change that process have involved competing priorities, including faster construction, environmental safeguards and the treatment of different energy sources. Wind power has been one of the technologies at the centre of the wider US debate over energy policy.

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No manpower to defend immigration cases, says Washington prosecutor

WASHINGTON

FACED with an influx of petitions by people alleging they're being unlawfully detained by federal immigration authorities, the US Attorney's Office for the Western District of Washington said Monday that it no longer has the manpower to defend every case and will let judges rule without government opposition.

Acting US Attorney Charles Floyd said in a letter to US District Judge David Estudillo that habeas corpus cases initiate "protracted litigation" with numerous hearings, briefings and motions that consume prosecutors' resources.

"Thus, going forward, in order to conserve resources, there will be many habeas cases in which the USAO will no longer assume responsibility for providing a defense on behalf of the respondents," Floyd wrote.

The backlog has "severely impacted the government's ability to respond" to immigration petitions and prevented prosecutors from dealing with other unrelated civil litigation, he said. As a result, his office will decline to defend "many" habeas cases. He didn't specify how many cases could be affected.



Acting US Attorney Charles Floyd

Judges have often ruled against the administration in cases filed by tens of thousands of detainees arguing that they were being held illegally by US Immigration and Customs Enforcement. It has been a source of great frustration to administration officials — and to judges and advocates who say ICE has trampled on individual rights amid the Trump administration's hardline immigration agenda. Last week, US border czar Tom Homan told Fox News that courts have been weighed down by about 85,000 immigration habeas cases as the government carries out a sweeping crackdown.

Floyd is a former judge who, along with three other Washington judges, advocated for prohibiting immigration courts from granting bond to detainees — a question that is now before the US Supreme Court.

The justices will consider whether immigrants who have been living in the US have a right to a hearing to determine if they should remain detained while challenging their possible deportation.

Most appeals courts to have considered the issue have found that it violates federal law to detain immigrants, including those living in the US illegally, without a bond hearing. Those decisions conflict with rulings by the 5th and 8th circuits, which held that immigrants accused of illegally entering and remaining in the US must be detained while their deportation cases are pending.

The backlog has "severely impacted the government's ability to respond" to immigration petitions, Acting US Attorney Charles Floyd said. As a result, his office will decline to defend "many" habeas cases

US Congresswoman introduces Bill seeking holiday on Diwali

WASHINGTON

US Congresswoman Grace Meng announced the reintroduction of legislation to make Diwali a federal holiday, citing concerns about anti-Hindu and anti-South Asian hate.

The Diwali Day Act would add the Festival of Lights to the federal holiday calendar.

Meng, chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC), said recognising the festival would affirm the place of its diverse communities in American society.



"Diwali represents the triumph of good over evil and knowledge over ignorance," she said. The legislation is co-sponsored by 19 other lawmakers, including Indian-American Ami Bera, Ro Khanna, Raja Krishnamoorthi, Suhas Subramanyam and Shri Thanedar.

Other co-sponsors include Nanette Barragán, Wesley Bell, André Carson, Judy Chu, Suzan DelBene, Josh Gottheimer, Timothy Kennedy, Stephen Lynch, Deborah Ross, Lateefah Simon, Tom Suozzi, Mark Takano, Rashida Tlaib and Bonnie Watson Coleman.

"At a time when anti-Hindu and anti-South Asian hate is on the rise, recognizing Diwali as a federal holiday sends a powerful message that Hindus, as well as Sikhs, Jains, and Buddhists, are valued members of our society," Meng said.

The legislation would amend Section 6103(a) of Title 5 of the US Code by adding "Diwali Day" to the list of legal public holidays. According to Meng's announcement, it would become the country's 12th federal holiday.

"Here in Queens, I see firsthand how meaningful Diwali is to so many families and communities," Meng said.

India, UAE strengthening bilateral energy ties as crude imports rise

NEW DELHI

AS part of the strengthening bilateral energy ties, India's imports from the UAE have risen sharply over the years from less than one million barrels a day in the 1990s to about 4.4 million barrels a day in 2018, after which the Gulf nation has become the fourth largest crude supplier for India in 2026, according to a report.

India's energy ties with the UAE took a quantum jump in 2018 with public sector ONGC Videsh, Indian Oil Corporation and Bharat PetroResources bought a 10 per cent interest in Abu Dhabi's Lower Zakum offshore oilfield with an investment of $600 million.

India's petroleum ministry told Parliament that it was the country's first investment in Gulf oil production. It estimated that the stake would give the consortium an average of 1.75 million tonnes of crude a year over the 40-year concession, states the report by journalist Justin Varghese.

By 2026, Ministry of External Affairs listed the UAE as the country's fourth-largest source of crude and its second-largest source of both liquefied natural gas and liquefied petroleum gas.



PM Narendra Modi and UAE President Mohamed bin Zayed (File photo)

In May 2026, New Delhi and the UAE signed an agreement enabling India to hold part of its strategic oil reserve in Fujairah, where tankers can load outside the Strait of Hormuz. The same agreement opened the door for Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) to store up to 30 million barrels in India.

India has chosen Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh as a site where ADNOC could participate in an existing oil storage facility. It also identified Chandikol, in Odisha, as a location where the two sides could work on developing reserve facilities. The proposed 30 million barrels is the potential total for ADNOC crude storage in India under the agreement.

The memorandum also covers possible cooperation on storage facilities in India for liquefied natural gas (LNG), and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG).

The port already gives Abu Dhabi a way to ship oil without passing through Hormuz. ADNOC's existing 406-km pipeline carries crude from its onshore operations to Fujairah, where tankers can load for India.

US flags sham staffing firms for student visa frauds

WASHINGTON

THE State Department said fraudsters were using sham staffing firms, forged documents and fake student records to cheat the US visa system, detailing cases from several countries as the Trump administration widens its scrutiny of work and study visas used heavily by Indians.

"Fraudsters use sham staffing firms, forged documents, and fake student records to try to cheat the U.S. visa system," the department said in a thread on its official X account.

"Under President Trump and @SecRubio, the State Department is exposing these schemes, revoking fraudulent visas, and protecting our country from exploitation," it said.

In the first case, the department said petitioners in an unnamed Caribbean country "posed as 'staffing companies' and used unregistered agents to recruit foreign workers, charging thousands of dollars in illegal fees."



The State Department urged the public to report suspected fraud through an online tip portal it launched on September 23

They placed workers in unauthorised jobs under exploitative conditions through falsified labour contracts, pushing up overstay rates by more than four times, the department said. It said the US Embassy flagged dozens of petitions covering hundreds of workers and helped launch criminal investigations.

A second case involved study and exchange programmes. "A recruiting agency ran a scheme to push unqualified applicants into U.S. exchange programs, using fake academic transcripts and lies about student status," the department said. Consular Affairs tightened vetting and identified 30 more fraudulent agencies, leading to 250 visa refusals, according to the thread.

The department also cited immigrant visa applicants in an unnamed South American country who used fraudulent police, judicial and penal certificates to hide criminal histories. It said the embassy there moved to fully digital verification, and that a joint investigation with local police led to dozens of refusals and more than 15 arrests.

Jaishankar meets UAE envoy, discusses strategic partnership

NEW DELHI

EXTERNAL Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar met with the UAE's Ambassador to India, Abdulla Saif Al Nuaimi, in New Delhi on Tuesday with discussions focused on deepening bilateral cooperation and strengthening the strategic partnership between the two nations.

Additional Secretary (Gulf) in the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Aseem Mahajan and other officials were also present during the meeting.



EAM S Jaishankar with UAE Ambassador to India Abdulla Saif Al Nuaimi in New Delhi on Tuesday

Following the meeting, EAM Jaishankar on X wrote, "Glad to receive Ambassador H.E. Abdulla Saif Al Nuaimi of UAE today. We discussed deepening our bilateral cooperation and strategic partnership." Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri was on an official visit to the UAE from November 1-2 that took place in the context of the regular, high-level engagement that characterises India-UAE relations and provided an occasion to take stock of the progress of the India-UAE Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.