



Sanskriti IAS

27th May 2026



IMPORTANT

EDITORIAL HIGHLIGHTS

DELHI CENTRE:
636, Mukherjee Nagar
New Delhi-110009

PRAYAGRAJ CENTRE:
1/1/8A, Stanley Rd,
Maharana Pratap Chauraha,
Civil Lines, Prayagraj, UP - 211002

 **9555-124-124**

 **sanskritiias.com**

GS 2: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

INDIAN EXPRESS PAGE: 9

Amid China concerns, India & US ink pact to secure critical minerals supply

Shubhajit Roy
New Delhi, May 26

INDIA AND the US signed a bilateral "critical minerals framework" on Tuesday, as External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar met US Secretary of State Marco Rubio before the latter wrapped up his four-day visit. This is significant since there are legitimate concerns over China's export curbs on rare earth which are crucial for global technology supply chains in the manufacturing of cars to phones, missiles to planes.

This is a key takeaway from the bilateral engagement between Jaishankar and Rubio, since both sides are working towards repairing ties after a challenging year in bilateral relations. This is also important as it comes days after US President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping met in Beijing.

At the signing ceremony on Tuesday, Jaishankar said, "We are today signing a bilateral India-US framework on securing supply of mining and processing of critical minerals and rare-earths. This is something which we have also discussed today at the Quad meeting. And whether we're doing it bilaterally, whether we're doing it as a Quad format, or in fact as a



(From left) Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi and US Secretary of State Marco Rubio in New Delhi, Tuesday. PTI

larger gathering of like-minded nations, it is clearly something very timely, something very important, something very critical."

"This particular framework aims to deepen our cooperation across the entire critical minerals and rare-earth supply chain, including mining, processing, recycling, and related investments. It will certainly strengthen resilient and diversified supply chains. It will help us to collaborate in financing

and in the effective management of critical minerals and rare-earths," he said.

Rubio said, "I've spoken often during my time here over the last few days about the strategic alliance between the United States and India and how important that is for our national interest in the United States, and today is a tangible example of it. We are two countries who have a strategic interest in ensuring reliable long-term access to critical minerals

and supply chains that are important for our innovation economy. And today's a tangible result of that; it's tangible evidence of why we are strategic allies. This is a very important step." The US embassy said that the initiative marks a "milestone" in the strategic partnership between the two nations to ensure that the foundational elements required for advanced technology and energy are available within trusted networks.

This agreement builds upon the foundational groundwork laid in February 2026 during high-level meetings in Washington, DC, where Rubio launched the Forum on Resource Geostategic Engagement (FORGE). Through this framework, the US and India will engage in international efforts to protect sensitive supply chains from "coercive market practices and reduce our collective vulnerability to single-source monopolies", it said, alluding to China's practices.

It said the US government is mobilising unprecedented resources to secure critical mineral supply chains, supporting projects with more than \$30 billion in letters of interest, investments, loans, and other support in partnership with the private sector. "These invest-

ments, along with Pax Silica and our reinvigorated diplomatic and commercial engagement are having a multiplier effect, mobilizing private capital many times greater than government outlays, which will generate billions of dollars in new projects to secure our supply chains," it said.

This framework, it said, sets a path toward reliable and resilient mineral supply chains, reinforcing key objectives set established by US President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the US-India Joint Leaders' Statement.

Rubio recalled that the groundwork for this was laid on February 4 when the critical minerals forum was held in Washington DC.

"It gained momentum later that month when India signed onto Pax Silica. It was one of the first and early member and signatories, and now today, because we both have a strategic and shared interest in the fact that vibrant innovation economies such as ours cannot afford to leave the foundational materials of these industries vulnerable to single-source monopolies that could deny us these things - not just in a time of conflict but as a leverage point contrary to our sovereign national interests."

GS 2: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

INDIAN EXPRESS PAGE: 9

In new world, with US, India has the cards. It must play them confidently



RAJA MANDALA
BY C RAJA MOHAN

LOVE IT or hate it, the media frenzy and political frisson that American leaders generate in Delhi remains unrivalled. Why do visits by the Russian foreign minister or his Chinese counterpart not provoke the same excitement and anxiety as the just-concluded four-day sojourn of US Secretary of State Marco Rubio? To be sure, the US is India's most weighty partner, and the 2025 turbulence in ties explains some of the hype surrounding Rubio's visit.

There is more to it. While Russia may be India's "best friend forever" and China its most consequential neighbour, neither relationship carries the emotional intensity that both binds and strains India's engagement with America. Unlike the US, the Indian elite has little social intimacy or political familiarity with Russia or China. There is only the G-to-G relationship and the coded diplo-speak associated with it. India's communists once engaged with the Soviet and Chinese polities. That bridge has collapsed.

In contrast, America looms large over Indian society. The Indian elite's social links, mobility plans, cultural aspirations, intellectual networks, and technological connections with the US deepened steadily even during the bitterest phases of the Cold War,

and have grown by leaps and bounds since. There is a huge business dimension today that did not exist earlier. Even our English has changed: British spellings survive, barely, but "blokes" have become "bros" and "doing fine" has yielded to "all good".

India is not alone in adopting American culture. Even many critics of Washington across the world continue to seek access to the opportunities and prestige that America uniquely offers. American soft power still rules the world. Despite the negative effects of US President Donald Trump, the US will continue to outrank Europe, Russia and China in any index of attractiveness.

Anti-American public posturing has a long provenance in India, on the Left and Right alike. There is a historical parallel: In the late 19th century, American elites sought British approval even as they bristled at every perceived slight from London. Rising powers often oscillate between attraction to and resentment of the hegemon. Delhi reflected some of that ambivalence last week amid the torrent of criticism directed at American policies and the excessive anxiety over the durability of the India-US partnership.

On the surface, not much appears to have changed since the early 1990s, when India and the US began reconstructing ties. Every visit by even relatively junior American officials became headline news, accompanied by fears about US mediation on Kashmir, pressure on India's nuclear programme, and concerns over sovereignty. Agreements with Washington routinely invited accusations of "arm-twisting" and "capitulation". But the relationship today is very different. The US is now India's

largest economic partner across trade, investment, technology and higher education. Washington has steadily de-hyphenated India from Pakistan. Successive administrations came to view India as an important element in balancing China in Asia. The long disputes over nuclear non-proliferation and technology denial regimes have been addressed to a large extent. India's foreign-policy establishment gradually moved beyond its inherited anti-American reflexes in the 21st century. Yet the first year of Trump's second term has revived old anxieties. Tariff threats against Indian exports, pressure over Russian oil imports, and uncertainty about Washington's future approach to China and Pakistan have resurrected familiar fears.

Rubio's visit was an effort at reassurance; the Indian establishment will wait to see how this plays out in practice. The Quad foreign ministers' meeting also reaffirmed the continuing importance of multilateral cooperation in the Indo-Pacific. Repairing public sentiment, however, will take longer.

Looking beyond Rubio's visit, three considerations stand out.

First, Delhi must honestly assess whether it fully utilised the opportunities opened by America's strategic rethinking of Asia over the past two decades. Political hesitation,

ideological confusion, and bureaucratic caution prevented India from fully leveraging the geopolitical openings the US created since the turn of the century. Too much debate and too little action in Delhi contrasts with the boldness with which Deng Xiaoping's China seized the US embrace to lift itself to great-power status. The mistaken sense that America needs

India more than Delhi needs Washington has fostered strategic complacency.

Second, we are dealing with a very different US from the one that went out of its way to befriend India 25 years ago. India must come to terms with the structural shifts underway in US foreign policy under Trump, especially regarding the Eurasian balance of power. Traditionally, the US relied on alliances to manage Russia and China. Trump is more sceptical about the value of partnerships, with an apparent belief that Washington can unilaterally manage both. India has felt the effects of this. There is understandable concern in some Indian quarters about a potential American accommodation with China and Pakistan. But objectively speaking, India today is far stronger than during earlier phases of strategic divergence with Washington — when the US was far closer to Beijing and Rawalpindi than it is today.

Third, whatever direction US policy takes, Delhi has no option but to adapt. Its response must be twofold: Continue working with the US, bilaterally and through the Quad, to sustain a favourable balance of power in Asia; and accelerate India's economic transformation and strengthen internal unity. External partnerships can help India shape the balance in Asia, but they cannot substitute for national capability and coherence. India has the cards; the question is whether it can play them with confidence.

The writer is a contributing editor on international affairs for The Indian Express. He is a distinguished professor at the Motwani Jadeja Institute of American Studies, Jindal Global University, and the Korea Foundation Chair on Asian Geopolitics at the Council on Strategic and Defence Research

Unlike the US, the Indian elite has little social intimacy or political familiarity with Russia or China. There is only the G-to-G relationship and the coded diplo-speak associated with it

GS 2: SOCIAL ISSUES (EDUCATION) INDIAN EXPRESS PAGE: 13

Liberal-arts education matters more, not less, in the age of AI: Five reasons why



AMITABH MATTOO

EVEN AS universities across India seek to implement the National Education Policy, they are confronted with a deeper question: What should higher education look like in the age of Artificial Intelligence? Fortunately, the NEP's focus on multidisciplinary learning and intellectual flexibility is remarkably prescient. In a world being shaped by AI, the future will be shaped by societies that can think across disciplines, rather than simply excel within a single specialisation. It also revives the importance of liberal-arts education.

Over 25 years, in academic leadership, I have seen recurring waves of anxiety about the relevance of liberal-arts education. Successive eras of doubt about the importance of the liberal arts have been driven by the growing dominance of STEM subjects. Questions about humanities and social science degrees are often posed in terms of "worth" or return on investment; disciplines that are intellectually interesting but economically dispensable. The age of AI has finally exposed the poverty of that thinking.

Liberal-arts education is now — more than ever — India's key to the future. Here's why. First, while data may be the new marker of literacy, information alone is not enough. Yes, artificial intelligence can process massive amounts of data at speeds no human can match. Yes, AI can write essays, create computer programs, identify trends, and engage in convincing conversation. But at a time when AI is dangerously masquerading as truth, nothing can substitute judgement informed by history, ethics, culture and politics. The more sophisticated machines become, the more precious distinctly human capacities will grow.

The second reason to embrace liberal arts is that future problems will not come neatly labelled as History, Economics or Computer Science. Debates about the liberal arts versus STEM are based on a false binary. The biggest challenge facing India

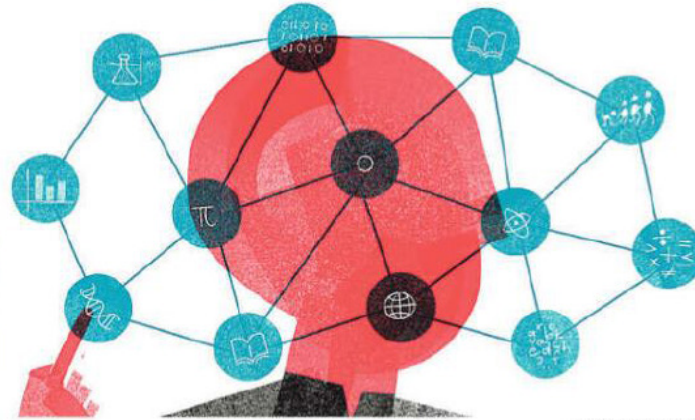


ILLUSTRATION: CR SASIKUMAR

is whether — and how well — it can do both. The best engineers will need the insights of History, Political Science and Ethics to solve the problems of the future. Good technologists will need social science to build humane technology. India needs economists who can speak knowledgeably about climate change and behavioural science. In the age of AI, disciplinary silos will hinder those who work within them. That's why the NEP's stress on multidisciplinary and holistic education is so welcome.

Third, liberal-arts degrees matter for democracy. Democracies need citizens who can think critically, engage in civil disagreement, and have some understanding of the past. When markets determine educational priorities, the social value of learning can easily be reduced to its immediate monetary value. History, Philosophy, Anthropology and Political Theory will always seem less important than degrees with easy job placements. But democracies that stop valuing these subjects will do so at their own peril. Universities are, after all, more than employment facilitation or placement centres.

When JNU was created more

India's traditions never viewed knowledge as fragmented into isolated disciplines. Education was seen as a cohesive whole. India's strengths in the modern knowledge economy are tied to a return to this interdisciplinary approach

than five decades ago, it was imagined almost as an intellectual republic. Students came from every corner of India and were introduced to new ideas that helped them see beyond the limits of their backgrounds and communities. The value of universities like JNU is not simply in what they research or publish; it is in the idea of a public space dedicated to knowledge for its own sake. Just as importantly, universities play an important role in nurturing democratic citizenship and values. To be sure, private universities have expanded access to education and brought change to India's higher education ecosystem. From Shiv Nadar to Ahmedabad University to Ashoka, several private institutions have pioneered serious investments in liberal-arts education and interdisciplinary programmes. With India's vast population, we need both private and public universities. Yet there is also reason for caution. Once you let market forces alone dictate the purpose of a university, certain areas of study will naturally be privileged over others.

The fourth reason to care about liberal-arts education is resilience. Coding languages and technical skills change every few years. What

employers look for changes. What will not change — and what humans will always need — is the ability to think critically, communicate effectively, and relate to others. As AI takes over more of the world's blue-collar and white-collar jobs, human skills will need to become more human. Liberal-arts degrees are uniquely positioned to provide that education. At JNU's School of International Studies, we see it play out in real time as the field of International Relations is being reshaped by tech. Climate change, cybersecurity, big data and disinformation aren't just "topics" to be studied — they will define both opportunities and challenges for the next generation of global leaders. Which is why we must train students who are not only tech-savvy, but historically literate, ethically mindful, and globally literate.

The fifth reason is civilisational. India's own intellectual traditions never viewed knowledge as fragmented into isolated disciplines. There was no divide between Philosophy and Politics, Economics and Ethics, or even Literature and public service. Education was seen as a cohesive whole. India's strengths in the modern knowledge economy are tied to a return to this interdisciplinary approach. The NEP, in many ways, mirrors a growing recognition that Indian traditions of knowledge are no longer compartmentalised.

For decades now, I have had the privilege of learning from students across India and the world — whether at public universities in India's conflict areas or leading universities abroad. What I have learned from them is that higher education must do more than create workers. It must help us become better human beings.

India today has a historic opportunity. If implemented with care and seriousness, the NEP has the potential to help India educate a generation that is technologically literate and democratically mindful. That will make India not just a stronger knowledge economy but a stronger democracy, and improve the quality of life of all its inhabitants. For the ultimate challenge posed by AI is not technological, it is human. Machines may increasingly answer questions. Universities must still teach which questions are worth asking.

The writer is dean of the School of International Studies, JNU and professor of IR at the University of Melbourne

GS 2: GOVERNANCE

INDIAN EXPRESS PAGE: 15

• POLICY

Delhi Gymkhana Club row: The rules governing land in the capital

Damini Nath

New Delhi, May 26

LAST WEEK, the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs's Land and Development Office (L&DO) wrote to the Delhi Gymkhana Club, asking it to vacate its leased premises on Safdarjung Road by June 5.

The government wanted the 27.3-acre plot back for "strengthening and securing Defence infrastructure", but the decision has kicked off a controversy.

Colonial origins

The club has its origins in 1913, soon after the British Indian government decided to move the capital from Kolkata to Delhi in 1911. The land was leased by the government to the Imperial Delhi Gymkhana Club in 1928, and the buildings were constructed in the 1930s.

According to official documents, the lease was perpetual, meaning that no fixed time frame was attached to it. Initially meant for British officials, the club later became a space for members of the Indian bureaucracy, judiciary and armed forces,

among others.

The club's website states that the building was designed by architect Robert T Russell, who also designed Connaught Place and the Commander-in-Chief's residence. The latter became known as Teen Murti — the residence of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru.

Located at 2, Safdarjung Road, the club was renamed the Delhi Gymkhana Club after 1947.

Land administration in Delhi

After 1947, the Union government came to administer the land in Delhi through its L&DO. It allots land for the development of residential colonies, institutions, clubs, political parties, etc., and administers leases. The leases can be for a fixed period, like 99 years, or perpetual in nature.

The lessee pays a fixed ground rent for the land, which can be periodically revised. Over the years, more than half of the residential properties have been granted freehold status by the L&DO, meaning the ownership status changes to grant full rights. In fact, out of around

Authority at Centre

- After 1947, the Union government came to administer the land in Delhi through its Land and Development Office.
- It allots land for the development of residential colonies, institutions, clubs, political parties, etc., and administers leases.

60,000 properties on L&DO land, around 35,000 had been converted from leasehold to freehold as of 2021, according to the CAG report that year.

Current controversy

In its May 22 letter to the club, the L&DO cited clause 4 of the lease that allows the government to "re-enter" the land for a "public purpose".

It has been determined that the said premises, located in a highly sensitive and strategic area of Delhi, is critically required for the strengthening and securing of Defence infrastructure and other vital public security purposes. The land is essential to fulfil urgent institutional needs, governance infrastructure, and public-interest projects, integrated with the resumption of adjoining government lands," the L&DO said.

The land is located next to the Prime Minister's residence on Lok Kalyan Marg. The slums on Race Course Road, which are the adjoining government lands referred to in the letter, are currently being cleared of encroachments by the L&DO, pointing to a larger plan for the area.

"Under Clause 4... it is expressly provided that: 'If the demised premises or any part thereof are required for a public purpose then and in such case it shall be lawful for the Lessor... to re-enter and thereupon this demise and everything contained therein shall cease and determine...'" the L&DO said.

Since 2022, the club has been run by a government-appointed general committee on the orders of the National Company Law Tribunal. The Corporate Affairs Ministry approached the NCLT seeking regulation of the club, which is a registered company under the Companies Act, 1956, alleging that it was being run in violation of norms and mishandled.

On the latest issue, the club's general committee met on May 23 and decided to write to the L&DO asking it to consider that there should be "no dislocation of the club". The committee said the club's 14,000 members, who have been paying fees regularly, and 500 employees would be impacted by the L&DO's decision. Multiple petitions filed by members and employees of the club were heard in the Delhi High Court.

GS 2: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

THE HINDU PAGE: 1

India, U.S. draw up deal on rare earth elements

Framework follows growing concerns over China's export controls of strategic metals; Australia, Japan join fellow Quad members in separate framework among the grouping on critical minerals

Kallol Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

On the sidelines of the 11th Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting (FMM), India and the United States on Tuesday firmed up an important framework for cooperation in ensuring steady supplies of critical minerals, in a move that follows growing concerns over China's export controls of rare earth minerals and strategic metals vital for technology supply chains.

"The Framework aims to deepen India-U.S. cooperation across the critical minerals and rare earths supply chain, including mining, processing, recycling and related investments. It seeks to strengthen resilient and diversified supply chains, while promoting collaboration in financing and effective management of critical minerals and rare earths scrap," said an announcement on the "Framework" titled "Securing of supply in the mining and processing of critical minerals and rare earths".

The understanding between India and the U.S. has been under consideration at least since Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Washington in February 2025, when secure supply routes for critical minerals were considered a "shared strategic priority", said a official press note.

A separate framework on critical minerals was al-

Rare deal

The framework comes amid shortfall of critical metals in global markets after China imposed export curbs on rare earth elements



Mining strategy: The agreement follows continued India-U.S. engagements, including India becoming a signatory to the U.S.-led Pax Silica initiative. REUTERS

Framework seeks to:

- Deepen India-U.S. cooperation across the critical minerals and rare earths supply chain, including mining, processing, recycling and related investments
- Implement effective management of critical minerals and rare earths scrap
- Strengthen resilient and diversified supply chains
- Promote collaboration in financing

so signed among the four Quad nations – Australia, India, Japan, and the United States – which aims at mobilising around \$20 billion in government and private-sector support to establish stable supply chains for critical minerals.

The initiatives aim at dealing with the shortfall of critical metals in global markets that intensified after China imposed export controls on rare earth elements in 2025, after the U.S.'s imposition of tariffs on a large number of partner countries.

'\$30-billion projects'

The India-U.S. deal was built upon continued engagements between the two countries, including India becoming a signatory to the U.S.-led Pax Silica initiative on February 20, 2026.

A statement issued by the U.S. Embassy said the United States is "mobilising unprecedented resources to secure critical supply chains, supporting projects with more than \$30 billion in letters of interest, investments, loans and other support in partnership with the private sector".

"These coordinated efforts span domestic and international projects, strengthening U.S. national security and economic competitiveness," the statement said.

The Quad Critical Minerals Initiative Framework will help in nurturing projects on critical minerals that are located in 'Quad partner countries' and are 'operated by companies headquartered in Quad partner countries', thereby plugging supply chain

gaps in critical minerals.

Both the India-U.S. and Quad-level frameworks are expected to allow for greater alignment and harmonisation of domestic laws and regulations to facilitate easier access to the supply chain. These agreements are also expected to help partner countries to tighten controls to deal with national security requirements.

"Quad partners intend to work together to improve the recovery and use of critical minerals from e-waste and other scrap materials to enhance the supply chain and promote recycling of contained critical minerals within Quad partner and like-minded countries," said a statement.

EDITORIAL
» PAGE 8

GS 2: INDIAN POLITY

THE HINUD PAGE: 6

Give prosecution immunity to Chambal guards, says SC

Top court asks Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan to consider granting it for any bona fide actions taken against miners in the line of duty; Bench seeks report from States by next hearing

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court directed Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan on Tuesday to consider immunity from prosecution for forest guards serving on the frontline in the battle to protect Chambal against illegal sand miners.

The court said the States should examine the need to notify prosecution immunity for their forest guards under Section 218 (3) of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita for any bona fide actions taken against miners in the line of duty. The immunity is the same as the one afforded to the armed forces.

The court sought a report from the States by the next hearing.

The direction passed by a Bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta sent a clear message to the three States that frontline forest officials should not fear prosecution under law while fighting the lawless.

The order, pronounced by Justice Mehta, contained a series of directions to push back against the rampant illegal mining

Guarding the guards

The court issued the direction for immunity from prosecution under Section 218(3) of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita

COURT'S SUPPORT

- Forest guards working in dangerous anti-mining operations should not hesitate to act because of fear of later criminal prosecution

- Court passed the order using extraordinary powers under Article 142 of the Constitution - doing "complete justice" in any pending case

- Court directed installation of CCTV-based carpet surveillance and live monitoring



THE BACKGROUND

- Order comes after two forest guards were brutally killed by miners in Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan

- The case concerns illegal sand extraction inside the National Chambal Gharial Sanctuary, an ecologically sensitive habitat

which is destroying the National Chambal gharial sanctuary and its fragile ecosystem.

The court's direction was also a response to the brutal murders of forest guards by sand miners in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan.

Harikesh Gurjar, a forest guard, was crushed under a truck by sand miners while trying to halt an illegal mining operation in Morena district of Madhya Pradesh on April 8. Jitendra Singh Shekhawat, another forest guard sta-

tioned at Dholpur district in Rajasthan, was run over while trying to stop miners' vehicles from getting away.

In April, on learning about the deaths of the forest guards, a frustrated apex court had said it would order the deployment of paramilitary forces in the Chambal area unless the three States took "concrete measures" to stop the miners.

The court had observed that the apathy shown by the States reeked of tacit connivance and helplessness

in the face of the "superior firepower" and acts of lawlessness of the miners.

The Bench urgently sought a response from the three States on a news report that sand mining was continuing unabated. The court listed the case for hearing on May 29.

In a series of directions passed under Article 142 of the Constitution to ensure "complete justice and to ensure environmental and statutory safeguards in the affected regions" of the Chambal sanctuary, the court ordered the States to take immediate steps to augment the field level enforcement officers in their forest departments to effect protection, surveillance and patrolling of the affected regions.

The recruitment process must be completed and vacancies filled within a year. The Chief Secretaries have to file compliance reports in the court.

The court directed the States to establish carpet surveillance of the protected areas through installation of CCTV cameras and live streaming. "The process should be undertaken on a war-footing," it said.