

# China on mind, Quad rolls out critical minerals initiative

Grouping condemns Pahalgam terrorist attack, but does not name Pak

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In Washington DC on Wednesday (India time), foreign ministers of the four-member Quad grouping launched the Quad critical minerals initiative to ensure their availability.

This comes amid concerns over China's coercive tactics, including price manipulation in the sector.

The statement issued after the meeting, however, did not mention China.

But the foreign ministers of India, Japan and Australia and the US Secretary of State said they were "deeply concerned about the abrupt constriction and future reliability of key supply chains, specifically for critical minerals."

A few hours earlier, on Wednesday morning, Prime Minister Narendra Modi embarked on his over a week-long visit to five countries.

Officials stated that increasing cooperation in critical minerals, including rare earth elements, will top his agenda during his discussions with respective leaders of at least four of these countries.

Barring Trinidad and Tobago, four of the PM's ports of call, Ghana, Namibia, Argentina and Brazil have mineral and energy resources. It is the first time in several decades that an Indian PM is paying bilateral visits to some of these countries.

About his visit to Argentina, the PM said in his departure statement that this will be the first bilateral visit to that country by an Indian PM in 57 years.

He said his discussions with Argentinian President Javier Milei will focus on advancing mutually beneficial cooperation in critical minerals, and also agriculture, trade, tourism, technology and energy. Argentina holds the world's second largest shale gas reserves and the fourth largest shale oil reserves along with substantial conventional oil and gas deposits.

These make it a potentially important energy partner for India in the future, Secretary (East) in the Minister of External Affairs (MEA) P Kumaran had said at a press briefing on Monday.

On the issue of critical minerals, the



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar with United States Secretary of State Marco Rubio on the sidelines of the Quad Foreign Ministers' meeting in Washington on Wednesday

PHOTO: PTI

Quad foreign ministers underscored the importance of diversified and reliable global supply chains.

"Reliance on any one country for processing and refining critical minerals and derivative goods production exposes our industries to economic coercion, price manipulation, and supply chain disruptions, which further harms our economic and national security," they said.

The foreign ministers announced new initiatives in four areas, including maritime and transnational security, economic prosperity and security, critical and emerging technology, and humanitarian assistance and emergency response.

The joint statement issued after the meeting said that the Quad unequivocally condemns all acts of terrorism and violent extremism in all its forms and manifestations, including cross-border terrorism. It condemned "in the strongest terms" the Pahalgam terrorist attack.

The statement did not mention Pakistan or Lashkar-e-Taiba-affiliated terror group that India has said carried out the terror attack.

The foreign ministers said the Quad critical minerals initiative is being launched to strengthen economic security and collective resilience. This is by collaborating to secure and diversify critical

## EAM holds talks with top US officials to deepen ties in critical sectors

Ways to deepen the India-US collaboration in key sectors such as trade, defence, energy, mobility and critical technologies figured prominently during talks between External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar and his American counterpart Marco Rubio. The (EAM) also held separate bilateral talks with US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth and Energy Secretary Chris Wright. It is understood that the two sides also took stock of the ongoing negotiations for a trade deal between India and the US.

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minerals supply chains.

They said they look forward to coordinating with private sector partners to facilitate increased investments in this sector. The meeting was attended by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong and her Japanese counterpart Takeshi Iwaya.