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Quad FM Meet on May 26: Critical Minerals + Maritime Security Agenda

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WHY IN NEWS:

External Affairs Minister Dr S. Jaishankar will host the **Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting on May 26, 2026, in New Delhi**. Quad counterparts — **Marco Rubio (US), Penny Wong (Australia), and Toshimitsu Motegi (Japan)** — have arrived in the capital. The outcome document is expected to cover the **Quad Critical Minerals Initiative** (launched July 2025, Washington), South China Sea freedom of navigation, supply-chain resilience (rare earths, lithium, cobalt), cybersecurity, and emerging-tech governance. India is expected to host the **Quad Leaders' Summit later in 2026**, and this FM meet sets that Summit's deliverables.

THE QUAD AND WHY THIS MEET MATTERS

The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) — India, USA, Japan, Australia — has evolved from an ad-hoc tsunami-relief Core Group (2004) into the principal democratic coalition shaping the Indo-Pacific. The May 26 Delhi meet is the **first Quad FM in Delhi since 2023** and the **first major Quad engagement under the full second Trump administration**.

Quad Architecture — A Timeline

YEAR	MILESTONE
2004	Indian Ocean Tsunami Core Group formed
2007	Quad 1.0 launched in Manila; lapsed by 2008
Nov 2017	Quad 2.0 revived (Manila ASEAN sidelines)
12 Mar 2021	First virtual Leaders' Summit
24 Sep 2021	First in-person Leaders' Summit, Washington
24 May 2022	Tokyo Summit — IPMDA launched
May 2023	Hiroshima Summit (G7 sidelines)
21 Sep 2024	Wilmington Summit — Cancer Moonshot launched
1 Jul 2025	Quad Critical Minerals Initiative, Washington
26 May 2026	Delhi FM Meet (sets 2026 Leaders' Summit agenda)

QUAD CRITICAL MINERALS INITIATIVE (QCMi)

Launched on **July 1, 2025, in Washington DC**, the QCMi builds on the Quad Critical & Emerging Technologies (CET) Working Group and aims to diversify critical-mineral supply chains away from a single dominant supplier.

Why It Matters — The China Dependence

MINERAL / STAGE	CHINA'S GLOBAL SHARE
Rare Earth processing	>90%
Refined Lithium	~65%
Refined Cobalt	~73%
Refined Nickel	~60%

India's response architecture includes **KABIL (Khanij Bidesh India Ltd)** — a joint venture of NALCO, HCL, and MECL — tasked with identifying and acquiring overseas critical-mineral assets.

EXPECTED DELIVERABLES FROM THE DELHI MEET

1. Maritime Security

- Expansion of **IPMDA (Indo-Pacific Maritime Domain Awareness)**, launched at the Tokyo Quad Summit on May 24, 2022, to add real-time satellite tracking for dark-shipping and IUU fishing.
- Joint declaration on South China Sea freedom of navigation and overflight.

2. Health Security

- Follow-through on the **Quad Cancer Moonshot** (Wilmington, September 21, 2024) – focused on cervical cancer in the Indo-Pacific.

3. Capacity Building & HADR

- Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) standby protocols.
- Quad STEM Fellowship expansion.

4. Emerging Technology

- Trusted telecom (Open RAN) deployments in the Indo-Pacific.
- AI governance principles alignment.

INDIA'S DISTINCT POSITION IN THE QUAD

India is the **only Quad member outside a formal US treaty alliance** (the US has treaty alliances with Japan and Australia). This shapes India's calibrated posture:

- **Strategic autonomy doctrine** – India simultaneously hosts SCO engagements and Quad meets.
- **Russia defence legacy** – S-400, BrahMos co-development, spares dependency.
- **Multi-alignment** – Quad + BRICS + SCO + IBSA + G20.

Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI)

An India-led initiative announced by **PM Modi at the East Asia Summit, Bangkok, on November 4, 2019**, IPOI operates on **seven pillars**:

- 1 Maritime Security
- 2 Maritime Ecology
- 3 Maritime Resources
- 4 Capacity Building & Resource Sharing
- 5 Disaster Risk Reduction & Management

- 6 Science, Technology & Academic Cooperation
- 7 Trade Connectivity & Maritime Transport

BILATERAL OVERLAYS AROUND THE MEET

- **India-US:** Marco Rubio's 4-day visit (May 22–25) concludes with the pre-Quad bilateral.
- **India-Japan:** Toshimitsu Motegi to call on PM Modi.
- **India-Australia:** Penny Wong's bilateral with Jaishankar.

CHINA BACKDROP

Beijing routinely dismisses the Quad as an “**Asian NATO**”, even though the Quad's own framing emphasises a **free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific** with ASEAN centrality. Since the **October 2024 Galwan-area disengagement**, India-China LAC patrolling has normalised, but trade frictions persist (WTO solar/IT panels in progress).

UPSC RELEVANCE

- **GS Paper 2 – International Relations:** India and its neighbourhood; bilateral, regional and global groupings; effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests.
- **Mains Angle:** Critically examine how the Quad Critical Minerals Initiative serves India's twin objectives of strategic autonomy and supply-chain de-risking.
- **Prelims Angle:** Founding year of Quad 2.0; IPMDA launch venue and year; IPOI pillars and launch forum.

FACTS CORNER

Quad FM Meet: May 26, 2026, New Delhi

Members: India, USA, Japan, Australia

Quad Critical Minerals Initiative: launched July 1, 2025, Washington DC

China rare earth processing share: >90%

IPMDA launched: Tokyo Quad Summit, May 24, 2022

IPOI launched: EAS Bangkok, November 4, 2019 (7 pillars)

Quad Cancer Moonshot: Wilmington, September 21, 2024

First Quad Leaders' Summit (virtual): March 12, 2021

First in-person Quad Summit: September 24, 2021, Washington

Quad 2.0 revived: November 2017

KABIL: NALCO + HCL + MECL (40:30:30 JV) for overseas critical-mineral assets

Sources: [MEA](#), [PIB](#), [The Hindu](#)

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