

India To Take Back 18,000 Citizens Illegally in America as Even Mexico Acquiesces to Trump Immigration Policies

Trump's threat of tariffs has everyone being much more agreeable.



President Trump holds up an executive order at Washington, D.C.'s Capital One Arena, January 20, 2025.

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India is also playing ball because it wants to hold on to the legal channels for immigration that Indians now enjoy. With a new sheriff in town — and a possible trade war looming — India on Tuesday declared it will help President Trump identify its citizens residing illegally in America and then take them back.

So far the two countries have already identified more than 18,000 Indians who entered America illegally, but officials say they aren't sure that's the total number, Bloomberg reported. On Inauguration Day, Mr. Trump vowed to round up and deport foreigners who have entered the country illegally. The threat packs more punch as the nations facing tariffs seek to avoid them by cooperating with the new administration on other issues.

India is also playing ball because it wants to hold on to the legal channels for immigration that Indians now enjoy, including student visas and the H-1B program, which allows American employers to hire foreign laborers for specialized occupations, such as in the tech industry.

Before taking office, Mr. Trump expressed support for the H-1B program saying, “I’ve always liked the visas... I’ve been a believer in H-1B. It’s a great program.” That was a departure from his stance during his first term, when his administration tightened restrictions on the program, saying it was replacing American laborers with lower-paid foreign ones.

The program is important to India as nearly three-quarters of the 386,000 H-1B visas granted in 2023 went to Indians, according to official data. Illegal immigration from India at the southern border is relatively low, accounting for about 3 percent of unlawful crossings in fiscal 2024, according to US Customs and Border Protection data. Illegal entries are far higher on the northern border, however.

“As part of India-US cooperation on migration and mobility, both sides are engaged in a process to deter illegal migration. This is being done to create more avenues for legal migration from India to the US,” a spokesman for India’s Ministry of External Affairs, Randhir Jaiswal, said. “The latest deportation of Indian nationals from the US by a chartered flight is a result of this cooperation.”

Meanwhile, Mexican officials were not happy about Mr. Trump’s pledge to deport millions of illegals, or his move to reinstate the long-dormant “Remain in Mexico” policy of his first term, which mandates that those seeking asylum stay in their own country while awaiting adjudication of their cases in American courts.

“If they reinstate it, this is something we don’t agree with. We have a different focus. We want to adjust it,” Mexico’s secretary for external relations, Juan Ramón de la Fuente, said in a news conference Monday morning. “The desire is to keep the same policies as now,” he added, which is not likely with Mr. Trump now in charge.

Still, Mr. De la Fuente said the “Remain in Mexico” policy is “unilateral,” which means it “does not require the assistance of other countries” to be enacted. While Mexican officials say they do not agree with deportations from the United States, Mexican Interior Secretary Rosa Icela Rodríguez Velázquez said “we will receive them and give them access to Mexico’s welfare programs.”

The new acquiesce from Mexico comes as Mr. Trump said Monday he is planning to impose tariffs of as much as 25 percent on Mexico and Canada by February 1, blaming them for “allowing vast numbers of people” into the country.