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'India has to work along with Trump, resolve H1B issues'

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Chennai: India-US partnership will not strain because of the Donald Trump administration's tightened stance on immigration rules, said former diplomat **Ashok**



Sajjanhar.

Speaking to students of international studies at Stella Maris College at an endowment lecture on Indo-US relations under Trump's presidency on Friday, Sajjanhar said ties with India was one of the bright spots in American foreign policy. The Indian diaspora significantly contributes to this partnership, he added.

Sajjanhar, during whose term in Washington in 2005 the Indo-US nuclear deal was signed, said problems related to H1B visas must be addressed through dialogue. "India should not hold its relationship with a strategic partner hostage to a single issue," he said. "We need to think about what has come out of Washington in the past two days

and have to resolve problems over misuse and abuse of H1B visas, and move forward."

After president Trump, in his first address to the US Congress, had condemned the shooting of an engineer from Hyderabad in Kansas, India's foreign secretary S Jaishankar, was in the White House a day ago to facilitate a meeting between Trump and Prime Minister Modi. The meeting, which will possibly be held in May, seeks to address safety issues and visa issues of Indian immigrants and among other matters, he said.

It is a question of whether Trump will lead a strategic or a deal-based partnership, given the bipartisan support India enjoys in the US with Democrats and Republicans, Sajjanhar told students.

He said that it was not local American issues but the relationship and policies of the US with Pakistan, China, Russia and Iran that will be significant to India. "This partnership has a logic and strength of its own, so that will take it forward," he said. "We should not panic or relax but be on our toes."