

# Business Standard

## U.S host cities brace for uncertainty ahead of 2026 FIFA World Cup

*The World Cup will be played at 16 stadiums in the U.S., Mexico and Canada from June 11 to July 19 next year, a tournament expanded to 48 nations and 104 games*

AP | New York



FIFA (Photo: X @official\_gwf)

Philadelphia's host city executive for the 2026 World Cup says organizers accept that an immigration crackdown by President Donald Trump's administration may be among the outside events that impact next year's tournament.

"There are certainly things that are happening at the national level, the international level, there are going to be geopolitical issues that we don't even know right now that are going to affect the tournament next year, so we recognize that we're planning within uncertainty, Meg Kane said Monday at a gathering of the 11 U.S. host city leaders, one year and two days ahead of the tournament opener.

The World Cup will be played at 16 stadiums in the U.S., Mexico and Canada from June 11 to July 19 next year, a tournament expanded to 48 nations and 104 games. All

matches from the quarterfinals on will be in the U.S., with the final at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey.

Whether it's the Olympics, whether it's a World Cup, whether it's a Super Bowl, you name it, anytime you've got a major international sporting event, geopolitics is going to have a role, said Alex Vasry, CEO of the New York/New Jersey host committee.

Kane said the host committees must adapt to decisions made by others.

One of the things that I think we all recognize is that we have to be really good at operating within that uncertainty, Kane said.

I think for each of our cities, we want to be prepared to make any person that is coming and makes the decision to come to the United States or come to this World Cup feel that they are welcome. We do not play a role necessarily in what is happening in terms of the decisions that are made.

Trump's travel ban on citizens from 12 countries exempted athletes, coaches, staff and relatives while not mentioning fans.

We allow for FIFA to continue having constructive conversations with the administrations around visas, around workforce, around tourism, Kane said.

FIFA is running the World Cup for the first time without a local organizing committee in the host nation. Asked in late April whether FIFA president Gianni Infantino was available to discuss the tournament, FIFA director of media relations Bryan Swanson forwarded the request to a member of the media relations staff, who did not make Infantino available.

Legislation approved by the House of Representatives and awaiting action in the Senate would appropriate \$625 million to the Federal Emergency Management Agency for security, planning, and other costs related to the 2026 FIFA World Cup. The 11 U.S. host committees have been consulting with each other on issues such as transportation for teams and VIPs, and for arranging fan fests.

At the last major soccer tournament in the U.S., the 2024 Copa America final at Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens, Florida, started 82 minutes late after fans breached security gates.

Certainly we were not involved in the planning or the logistics for that particular match, said Alina Hudak, CEO of the Miami World Cup host committee. She said local police have done an extensive review of the after-action reports related to that in collaboration with the stadium and so all of the things that happened are in fact being

reviewed and addressed and I can assure you that everything is being done within our power to make sure that the appropriate measures are being placed, the appropriate perimeters.

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