

# Rubio skirts query on trade-Russia oil link

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J aishankar and Rubio had last met on the sidelines of the UNGA last month.

Rubio's remarks come at a time US-India relations, long considered a cornerstone of Washington's Indo-Pacific strategy, is under pressure given the trade and tariff tensions with New Delhi and the slack US has cut for China and Pakistan — at India's expense. Pakistan currently has a 19% tariff on its exports to the US compared to India's 50%.

When pressed on whether India might need to reduce its reliance on Russian oil to secure a broader trade deal with the US, Rubio noted that India has already expressed interest in diversifying its oil portfolio.

"The more they buy from us, the less they'll buy from someone else," he said.

Yet, Rubio avoided committing to specifics on trade negotiations and stated, "I'm not negotiating trade deals, so I'm not going to speak on that."

While Rubio appeared to be echoing the traditional-



**When pressed on whether India might need to reduce its reliance on Russian oil to secure a broader trade deal with the US, Rubio noted India has already expressed interest in diversifying its oil portfolio**

ist State Department outlook that continues to hew to Washington's Indo-Pacific strategy, the Trump White House seems less enthused about it in recent weeks as the US President seeks to engage China, having realised Beijing holds many cards — from its stranglehold on rare earth elements to buying American agricultural produce.

He is also transparently in thrall of Pakistan following reports of its pledge to supply rare earths minerals and its interest in crypto business run by family asso-

ciates, with unvarnished admiration for the country de-facto military ruler, field marshal Asim Munir.

The State Department and the National Security Council, both now run by Rubio, has had to finesse its position in line with White House priorities even as a trade agreement with India remains in limbo.

According to officials who are clued into the talks, an agreement is almost ready, but it needs to be signed off by the president, and "no one has any idea if it will satisfy him".

# This is the 'century of India & Asean', Modi tells bloc

New Delhi: PM Narendra Modi addressed the 22nd Asean-India summit in Malaysia virtually, saying the comprehensive strategic partnership between the two sides had progressed steadily even in this

► **Chhath beautiful example of India's social unity: PM, P 12**

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era of uncertainties and emerged as a "robust foundation" for global stability and growth. Underscoring the significance of India's ties with the Southeast Asian bloc, Modi said "the 21st century is our century, the century of India and Asean".

"We are companions in the Global South. We are not only commercial partners but also cultural partners. Asean is a cornerstone of India's Act East Policy. India has always



PM Modi attends Asean-India Summit 2025 virtually from Delhi

fully supported Asean's centrality and outlook in the Indo-Pacific," said the PM, declaring 2026 as "Asean-India Year of Maritime Cooperation". With Modi skipping the Asean and East Asia summit meets in Kuala Lumpur, apparently because of the festival season and Bihar polls, India was represented by EAM S Jaishankar at the Asean-India meet. TNN

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# Pak holds peace talks with Afghanistan in Turkiye

ISLAMABAD, Oct 26 (PTI)

PAKISTAN and Afghanistan held the second round of talks in Istanbul to establish a joint monitoring and oversight mechanism to curb terrorist movements across the border even as Islamabad warned that war was still an option if talks failed to address its chief concern about terrorism. Dozens of soldiers, civilians and terrorists were killed in clashes earlier this month, creating a war like situation but peace was restored temporarily on October 19 after the two sides held talks -- facilitated by Qatar and Turkey -- in Doha.

As agreed in Doha, the second round of talks between Pakistan



**Pak Defence Minister Khawaja Asif warns of an "all-out war" with Afghan Taliban regime if the talks fail**

and the Afghan Taliban was held on Saturday in Istanbul, Turkiye.

Radio Pakistan quoted official sources saying that the discussions were focused on estab-

lishing a joint monitoring and oversight mechanism to curb cross-border terrorist movements and addressing trade barriers. The two sides also explored the possibility of reaching a long-term political understanding.

Pakistan handed over a comprehensive counter-terrorism plan to the Afghan Taliban during the second round of talks between the two sides.

Separately, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif, speaking to reporters in his home town of Sialkot, warned of an "all-out war" with the Afghan Taliban regime if the talks failed, adding that the outcome of the negotiations would be known by tomorrow, if not today.

## Pakistan intensifies crackdown on Afghan refugees amid rising tension

NEW DELHI, Oct 26 (IANS)

PAKISTAN has become increasingly hostile to the 2.8 million Afghan refugees who have lived within its borders for decades, with Islamabad launching a sweeping campaign of deportations in the name of combating terrorism.

According to a report by France 24, more than 6,66,000 Afghan refugees have already been expelled since the beginning of this year -- a move that

has drawn criticism from humanitarian groups and deepened the already strained relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The Pakistani Government alleges that the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), or Pakistani Taliban, has found safe haven across the border in Afghanistan, from where militants allegedly plan and execute attacks on Pakistani security forces.

# Trump plans **10% extra tariff** on Canada

ABOARD AIR FORCE ONE, Oct 26  
(AP)

PRESIDENT Donald Trump said on Saturday that he plans to hike tariffs on imports of Canadian goods by an extra 10 per cent because of an anti-tariff television ad aired by the province of Ontario. The ad used the words of former President Ronald Reagan to criticize US tariffs, angering Trump who said he would end trade talks with Canada. Ontario Premier Doug Ford said he would pull the ad after the weekend, and it ran Friday night during the first game of the World Series.

“Their Advertisement was to be taken down, IMMEDIATELY, but they let it run last night during the World Series, knowing



that it was a FRAUD,” Trump said in a post on his Truth Social platform as he flew aboard Air Force

One to Malaysia. “Because of their serious misrepresentation of the facts, and hostile act, I am increasing the Tariff on Canada by 10% over and above what they are paying now.”

The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment on when the 10% hike would come into effect, and whether it would apply to all Canadian goods.

Canada’s economy has been hit hard by Trump’s tariffs, and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney has been trying to work with Trump to lower them.

More than three-quarters of Canadian exports go to the US, and nearly \$3.6 billion Canadian (\$2.7 billion US) worth of goods and services cross the border daily.

# INS Sutlej completes joint hydrographic survey in Mauritius

NEW DELHI, Oct 26 (PTI)

INS Sutlej has successfully completed a joint hydrographic survey with the Mauritius Hydrographic Service, covering an area of nearly 35,000 square nautical miles, the Indian Navy said on Sunday.

The initiative will significantly contribute to marine charting, coastal regulation, resource management, and long-term environmental planning, thereby supporting Mauritius' Blue Economy goals, a Navy spokesperson said.

The survey was conducted in close coordination with national agencies under the existing MoU between India and Mauritius.

As part of the mission's capacity-building efforts, six personnel from various Mauritian ministries embarked on board INS Sutlej for hands-on training in modern hydrographic techniques, the

Navy said.

In addition, INS Sutlej carried out joint Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) surveillance and anti-piracy patrols with the the Mauritius National Coast Guard, strengthening regional maritime security, the spokesperson said.



At a ceremony held on board INS Sutlej, the fair-sheet of the completed survey was formally handed over to Mauritian authorities in the presence of Shakeel Ahmed Yousuf Abdul Razack Mohamed, Minister of Housing and

Lands, Mauritius, and Anurag Srivastava, High Commissioner of India to Mauritius, the statement said.

The deployment marks the 18th joint hydrographic mission between India and Mauritius - "a testament to the enduring maritime partnership and shared commitment to safe navigation, sustainable ocean management, and regional cooperation", the Navy said.

# Thailand, Cambodia sign **CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT** in presence of Trump

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 26 (AP)

**THAILAND** and Cambodia signed an expanded ceasefire agreement on Sunday

of economic pressure prodded the two nations to halt skirmishes along their disputed border earlier this year.

Thailand will release Cambodian pris-

oners and Cambodia will begin withdrawing heavy artillery as part of the first phase of the deal. Regional observers will monitor the situation to ensure fighting doesn't restart. "We did something that a lot of people said couldn't be done," Trump said. Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet called it a "historic day," and Thai Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul said the agreement creates "the building blocks for a lasting peace."

The ceremony was Trump's first event after arriving at the annual summit of the  
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President Donald Trump, (L) Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet and (C) Thailand's Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul pose with their documents during a signing ceremony on the sidelines of the ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia on Sunday. (AP/PTI)

during a ceremony attended by US President Donald Trump, whose threats

arriving at the

# ISRO to launch communication satellite on November 2

BENGALURU, Oct 26 (PTI)

THE ISRO on Sunday said its LVM3 launch vehicle is scheduled to lift off with the CMS-03 communication satellite on November 2, from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota.

“India’s LVM3 launch vehicle is scheduled to launch the CMS-03 communication satellite in its fifth operational flight (LVM3-M5) on November 2, 2025,” ISRO said in a statement.

According to the space agency, CMS-03 is a multi-band communication satellite designed to provide services across a wide oceanic region, including the Indian landmass. Weighing about 4,400 kg, it will be the heaviest communication satellite to be launched to a Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO) from Indian soil.

# US, China reach rare earths, tariff pause for Trump & Xi to consider

## Bessent: Duo Could 'Consume' TikTok Deal Too

**Kuala Lumpur:** Top Chinese and US economic officials on Sunday hashed out the framework of a trade deal for US President Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping to finalise that would pause steeper American tariffs and Chinese rare earths export controls and resume US soybean sales to China, US officials said.

US treasury secretary Scott Bessent said the talks on the sidelines of the Asean Summit in Kuala Lumpur had eliminated the threat of Trump's 100% tariffs on Chinese imports starting Nov 1. Bessent said he expects China to delay implementation of its rare earth minerals and magnets licensing regime by a year while the policy is reconsidered.

Chinese officials were more circumspect about the talks and offered no details about the outcome of the meetings.

Trump and Xi are due to meet on Thursday on the side-



**IMPROMPTU JIG:** Trump joins performers in a dance during a welcoming ceremony at Kuala Lumpur airport in Malaysia on Sunday

lines of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) summit in Gyeongju, South Korea to sign off on the terms. While the White House has officially announced the highly anticipated Trump-Xi talks, China has yet to confirm that the two leaders will meet.

"I think we have a very successful framework for the leaders to discuss on Thursday," Bessent told reporters after he and US trade representative Jamieson Greer met with Chinese vice-premier He Lifeng and top trade negotiator Li

Chenggang for a fifth round of in-person discussions since May. Bessent said he anticipates that a tariff truce with China will be extended beyond its Nov 10 expiration date, and that China will revive substantial purchases of US soybeans after buying none in Sept in favour of soybeans from Brazil and Argentina.

Bessent said the two sides have to iron out details of the TikTok deal, allowing Trump and Xi to "consummate the transaction" in South Korea.

US soybean farmers "will

feel very good about what's going on both for this season and the coming seasons for several years" once the deal's terms are announced, Bessent told the ABC programme "This Week." Greer told the "Fox News Sunday" programme that both sides agreed to pause some punitive actions and found "a path forward where we can have more access to rare earths from China, we can try to balance out our trade deficit with sales from the US."

China's Li Chenggang said the two sides reached a "preliminary consensus" and will next go through their respective internal approval processes. "The US position has been tough," Li said. "We have experienced very intense consultations and engaged in constructive exchanges in exploring solutions and arrangements to address these concerns."

Trump arrived in Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur on Sunday for Asean summit, his first stop in a five-day Asia tour. After the talks, Trump struck a positive tone saying: "I think we are soon going to have a deal with China". REUTERS