

# Kwatra discusses energy trade and ties with US Dy Secretary

WASHINGTON, Oct 25 (PTI)

THE India-US energy security partnership and recent developments in energy trade and ties were discussed between India's Ambassador to Washington Vinay Mohan Kwatra and Deputy Secretary of Energy James Danly.

The meeting came against the backdrop of the proposed bilateral trade deal between India and the US, which, according to an official, is "very near" to concluding. "We are very near as far as deal is concerned," the official said on Friday.

Kwatra in a social media post on Saturday said he had a "fruitful discussion" with Danly on the "India-US energy security partnership and shared perspectives on recent developments in energy trade and ties".

Kwatra also met with Lockheed Martin CEO Jim Taiclet. The ambassador said the two had a "productive discussion" on the



India's Ambassador to Washington Vinay Mohan Kwatra with Deputy Secretary of Energy James Danly.

India-US industrial cooperation and how US defence companies have a key role to play in New Delhi's 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'

goals. On Thursday, Kwatra hosted Republican Senator from Tennessee Bill Hagerty and his wife Chrissy Hagerty at his residence. "Discussed various facets of our bilateral partnership, including continuing ongoing talks on a mutually beneficial trade deal," Kwatra said in a post on X. He added that they also explored ways to expand bilateral hydrocarbons trade and "working together to address shared challenges in the Indo-Pacific region".

In February this year, leaders of the two countries directed officials to negotiate a proposed Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA). They have fixed a deadline to conclude the first tranche of the pact by the fall (October-November) of 2025. So far, five rounds of negotiations have been completed. Last month, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal led an official delegation to New York for trade talks.

# Brazil voices concern over US threats against Venezuela

RIO DE JANEIRO, Oct 25 (IANS)

THE Chief Advisor to the President of Brazil voiced deep concern over growing US threats of military action against Venezuela.



In an interview with local outlet Metropoles, Celso Amorim dismissed attempts to link Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro to terrorism. “You may like him or not, but Maduro is not a sponsor of terrorism,” he said on Friday (local time).

Amorim warned that the deployment of US forces near Venezuela and the authorisation of covert CIA operations by US President Donald Trump have heightened tensions in the Caribbean and raised alarm across Latin America.

He stressed that “any conflict in the region must be resolved through dialogue and respect for national sovereignty.”

Brazil maintains diplomatic relations with Venezuela and has repeatedly opposed any foreign military intervention.

Meanwhile, Venezuela’s Defence Minister Vladimir Padrino Lopez, during a visit to a military hospital in the capital Caracas, said that the country will not accept any government subservient to the United States.

“The Bolivarian National Armed Forces will not allow a government that is kneeling, enslaved, or submissive to US interests,” Padrino Lopez said on Friday (local time), according to state broadcaster Venezolana de Television.

# Israeli strike kills Hezbollah commander in Lebanon

JERUSALEM/BEIRUT, Oct 25 (IANS)

THE Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said in a statement that it struck and killed a senior Hezbollah commander in southern Lebanon.

Abbas Hassan Karky, the logistics commander of Hezbollah's Southern Front headquarters, was killed in the Nabatieh area of southern Lebanon, the statement said on Friday.

It claimed that Karky led efforts to rebuild Hezbollah's combat capabilities in recent months, Xinhua news agency reported.

According to the IDF, Karaki "led and advanced efforts to rebuild" Hezbollah's capabilities in southern Lebanon; restored infrastructure that had been destroyed during the fighting last year. "He was also responsible for

reestablishing the organisation's force structure and for managing the transfer and storage of weapons in southern Lebanon."

Lebanon's National News Agency reported that an Israeli airstrike targeted a vehicle on a road in southern Lebanon on Friday, killing Abbas Hassan Karky.

A Lebanese security source confirmed to Xinhua that Karky was a Hezbollah official, without providing further details.

According to Lebanese media, Karaki was related to Ali Karaki, the former chief of the Southern Front who was assassinated alongside longtime Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah last year.

The assassination of Karaki came a day after Israel said it carried out strikes across Lebanon against Hezbollah sites.

# EC may roll out first phase of all-India SIR next week, beginning with 10-15 States

NEW DELHI, Oct 25 (PTI)

**THE** Election Commission is likely to roll out the first of pan-India Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of voters' list next week beginning with "10 to 15 States", including those going to polls next year, officials said Saturday.

Assam, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Kerala and West Bengal will go to polls in 2026 and they are amongst the States where the voters' list cleanup exercise will begin first.

The poll authority is likely to announce the first phase of SIR middle of next week, in which as many as "10 to 15 States" would be included, officials said.

The EC will not hold the electoral roll cleanup exercise in States where local body elections are taking place or are due, as the grassroots poll machinery is busy with it and may not be able to focus on SIR, they said.

The SIR in such States will be held in later phases.

The voters' list cleanup exer-



Assam, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Kerala, and West Bengal will go to polls in 2026 and they are amongst the States where the voters' list cleanup exercise will begin first.

cise has concluded in Bihar where the final list with nearly 7.42 crore names was published on September 30.

Bihar will go to polls in two phases, on November 6 and November 11, and the

counting will take place on November 14.

The Commission has already held two conferences with State Chief Electoral Officers (CEOs) to firm up the SIR rollout roadmap. Several CEOs have

already put the voter lists published after their last SIR on their websites.

The website of the Delhi CEO has the 2008 voter list when the last intensive revision took place in the national capital.

In Uttarakhand, the last SIR took place in 2006, and that year's electoral roll is now on the State CEO website.

The last SIR in States will serve as the cut-off date, just as the 2003 voter list of Bihar was used by the EC for intensive revision.

Most States had the last SIR of the voter list between 2002 and 2004.

Most have nearly completed the mapping of current electors with the voters according to the last SIR held in their respective States or Union Territories.

The primary aim of the SIR is to weed out foreign illegal migrants by checking their place of birth. The move assumes significance in the wake of a crackdown in various States on illegal migrants, including from Bangladesh and Myanmar.