

US launches new retaliatory strikes against ISIS in Syria

WASHINGTON, Jan 11 (AP)

THE US has launched another round of retaliatory strikes against the Islamic State in Syria following last month's ambush that killed two US soldiers and one American civilian interpreter in the country.

The large-scale strikes, conducted by the US alongside partner forces, occurred around 12:30 pm ET, according to US Central Command. The strikes hit multiple Islamic State targets across Syria.

The Jordanian military later announced it had taken part in the strikes.

Saturday's strikes are part of a broader operation that is part of President Donald Trump's response to the deadly ISIS attack that killed Sgt. Edgar Brian Torres-Tovar, Sgt. William Nathaniel Howard, and Ayad Mansoor Sakat, the civilian interpreter, in Palmyra last month.

"Our message remains strong: if you harm our warfighters, we will find you and kill you anywhere in the world, no matter how hard you try to evade justice," US Central Command said in a statement Saturday.

A day earlier, Syrian officials said their security forces had arrested the military leader of IS's operations in the Levant.

The US military said Saturday's strikes were carried out alongside partner forces without specifying which forces had taken part.

The Trump administration is calling the response to the Palmyra attacks Operation Hawkeye Strike. Both Torres-Tovar and Howard were members of the Iowa National Guard.

It launched December 19 with another large-scale strike that hit 70 targets across central Syria that had IS infrastructure and weapons.

Trump signs executive order to protect Venezuelan oil money

West Palm Beach (US), Jan 11 (AP)

US PRESIDENT Donald Trump's new executive order on Venezuelan oil revenue is meant to ensure that the money remains protected from being used in judicial proceedings. The executive order, made public on Saturday, says if the funds were to be seized for such use, it could "undermine critical US efforts to ensure economic and political stability in Venezuela".

The order comes amid caution from top oil company executives that the tumult and instability in Venezuela could make the country less attractive for private investment and rebuilding.

"If we look at the commercial constructs and frameworks in place today in Venezuela, today it's uninvestable," said Darren Woods, CEO of ExxonMobil, the largest US oil company, during



a meeting convened by Trump with oil executives on Friday.

During the session, Trump tried to assuage the concerns of the oil companies and said the executives would be dealing directly with the US, rather than the Venezuelan Government.

Venezuela has a history of state asset seizures, ongoing US sanctions and decades of political uncertainty. Getting US oil companies to invest in Venezuela and help rebuild the country's infrastructure is a top priority of the Trump administration after the dramatic capture of now-

deposed leader Nicolas Maduro.

The White House is framing the effort to "run" Venezuela in economic terms, and Trump has seized tankers carrying Venezuelan oil, has said the US is taking over the sales of 30 million to 50 million barrels of previously sanctioned Venezuelan crude, and plans to control sales worldwide indefinitely.

"I love the Venezuelan people, and am already making Venezuela rich and safe again," Trump, who is currently in southern Florida, wrote on his social media site on Saturday. "Congratulations and thank you to all of those people who are making this possible!!!" The order says the oil revenue is property of Venezuela that is being held by the United States for "Governmental and diplomatic purposes" and not subject to private claims.

India, Russia cement business ties at Moscow conference

NEW DELHI, Jan 11 (IANS)

THE XVI Russia–India Business Dialogue held in Moscow, attended by over 1,250 participants, observed that the development of Russia–India cooperation and implementation of joint business projects will continue at major international platforms, including the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum, scheduled to take place from June 3 to 6.

The Dialogue was organised by the Indian Business Alliance, the Business Council for Cooperation with India, the Moscow Government, and the Roscongress Foundation.

During the plenary session, participants discussed the main directions of Russia–India cooperation, including the resolution of trade issues and identification of new opportunities to balance bilateral trade, according to an article in *Modern Diplomacy*.

The issue of ensuring logistics and financial resilience, development of industrial cooperation and import substitution, and partnership in energy, technology, and innovation also came up for discussion.

Besides, the implementation of joint projects in industry, energy, pharmaceuticals, and the digital economy was also taken up at the conference.

Space start-up OrbitAid to demonstrate in-orbit re-fuelling tech for satellites

NEW DELHI, Jan 11 (PTI)

A CHENNAI-BASED space start-up is all set to demonstrate its technology that would allow re-fuelling of satellites orbiting the earth, extending their lifespan and help address the challenges of space debris.

OrbitAid Aerospace is set to launch AyulSAT, a dedicated tanker-satellite, onboard the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) on Monday to perform internal propellant transfer, power transfer and data transfer using its Standard Interface for Docking and Refuelling Port (SIDRP).

“We will first demonstrate transfer of fuel from one tank to



another within the satellite,” Sakhikumar Ramachandran, founder and CEO, OrbitAID, told PTI. Sakhikumar said AyulSAT will be India’s first commercial docking and refuelling interface

deployed in-orbit.

“We will soon have fuel stations in orbit that will enable life extension of satellites - both in low earth and geo synchronous orbits,” he said.

Spain, Germany, Belgium, Poland emerging as key export destinations for India

NEW DELHI, Jan 11 (PTI)

SPAIN, Germany, Belgium, and Poland are emerging as stable and key export destinations for Indian goods within the 27-nation European Union bloc, according to the commerce Ministry data.

The data showed that Spain stands out as a high-growth European market for Indian exports. Exports to Spain rose by over 56 per cent during April-November this fiscal to USD 4.7 billion from USD 3 billion in the same period of the previous



financial year. Spain's share in India's total exports rose to 2.4 per cent, with a notable gain of 0.5 percentage points, highest

share increase among European partners in the period.

Similarly, India's exports to Germany increased 9.3 per cent

from USD 6.8 billion to USD 7.5 billion during the eight months of this fiscal.

"With a 2.6 per cent share in India's total exports and a positive share gain of 0.2 percentage points, Germany continues to provide stable demand for Indian products," an official said. The country's shipments to Belgium edged up from USD 4.2 billion to USD 4.4 billion during April-November 2025-26. India's exports to Poland grew 7.6 per cent to USD 1.82 billion during the period from USD 1.69 billion in April-November 2024.

"Taken together, these trends highlight a nuanced European strategy for India's exports. Rapid growth in Spain, steady expansion in Germany, and resilience in Belgium reflect a balanced export profile combining market diversification from traditional markets and consolidation in mature economies," the official said.

With India and the EU negotiating a free trade agreement, the bilateral trade between the two is expected to register healthy growth despite the global economic uncertainties.

Iran warns against US strikes as activists say, protest death toll at 538

DUBAI, Jan 11 (AP)

IRAN'S Parliament Speaker warned on Sunday that the US military and Israel would be "legitimate targets" if the US strikes the Islamic Republic over the ongoing protests roiling the country, as threatened by President Donald Trump.

Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf made the threat after nation-wide protests challenging Iran's theocracy saw protesters flood the streets in the country's capital and its second-largest city into Sunday morning, crossing the two-week mark. At least 538 people have died in violence surrounding the demonstrations, activists said, with fears the death toll is far higher.

With the Internet down in Iran and phone lines cut off, gauging the demonstrations from abroad has grown more difficult.

Those abroad fear the information blackout is emboldening hard-liners within Iran's security services to launch a bloody crackdown.

Trump offered support for the protesters, saying on social media that "Iran is looking at FREEDOM, perhaps like never before. The USA stands ready to help!!!" The New York Times and Wall Street Journal, citing anonymous US officials, said on Saturday night that Trump had been given military options for a strike on Iran, but hadn't made a final decision.

Iranian state television broadcast the Parliament session live. Qalibaf, a hard-liner who has run for the presidency in the past, gave a speech applauding police and Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, particularly its all-volunteer Basij, for having "stood firm" during the protests. He went on to directly threaten Israel, "the occupied territory" as he referred to it, and the US military, possibly with a pre-emptive strike.

It remains unclear just how serious Iran is about launching a strike, particularly after its air defences were destroyed during the 12-day war in June with Israel.

Countdown for launch of PSLV-C62 rocket commences

SRIHARIKOTA, Jan 11 (PTI)

ISRO on Sunday commenced a 22.5-hour countdown for the launch of a PSLV rocket that will place an Earth observation satellite along with 14 other co-passenger satellites into orbit, marking the space agency's first launch of the year.

Undertaken by the NewSpace India Ltd (NSIL), the commercial arm of ISRO, the 14 other co-passenger satellites belong to domestic and overseas customers.

The lift-off of the PSLV-C62 rocket, with a lift off mass of 260 tonne, has been rescheduled to 10.18 hrs on January 12 from the earlier 10.17 am on Monday, ISRO said.

"Yes. Countdown started at 12.48 pm. 22 hours 30 minutes duration. Launch is at 10.18 hrs tomorrow," ISRO sources said.

The PSLV-C62/EOS-N1 mission would initially deploy the Earth Observation Satellite built by Thailand and the United Kingdom, followed by 13 other co-passenger satellites into the Sun-synchronous orbit around 17 minutes after lift-off.

Subsequently, the separation of the fourth stage of the rocket (PS4) and demonstration of Kestrel Initial Technology Demonstrator (KID) capsule, weighing about 25 kg, belonging to a Spanish startup, is expected to take place in over 2 hours after the launch.