

PM Modi launches 5 key projects in Ladakh

NEW DELHI, Oct 15 (PTI)

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday virtually inaugurated five development projects covering airport infrastructure and strategic road connectivity in Ladakh worth around Rs 3,350 crore.

The projects include a new passenger terminal at the Kushok Bakula Rimpochee Airport in Leh, built for Rs 640 crore. Spread over 23,800 square metres, the modern terminal is designed to handle 35 lakh passengers annually, officials said. It incorporates geothermal energy to enhance energy efficiency and reduce its carbon footprint, reflecting the importance of sustainable infrastructure in Ladakh's ecologically sensitive environment.

Blending modern passenger amenities with elements of

Ladakh's rich cultural heritage the terminal will improve passenger convenience and

city education, gain opportunities to learn new technologies, and not depend on other cities.

with Darcha in Himachal Pradesh through the remote Zaskar Valley, the road provides an alter-



Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the launch of multiple development projects for Ladakh via video conferencing. (PTI)

strengthen air connectivity with the rest of the country, the officials said.

He also said special attention is being given to the youth of Ladakh so that they receive equal

Modi also dedicated to the nation the 298-km-long Nimmu-Padum-Darcha Road, constructed by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO).

Connecting Nimmu in Leh

native connectivity corridor to Ladakh, supplementing the Srinagar-Leh and Manali-Leh highways, an official statement said. Traversing the challenging

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S-W monsoon withdraws from entire country: IMD

NEW DELHI, Oct 15 (PTI)

THE South-West monsoon withdrew from the entire country on Thursday, IMD said, noting that the north-east monsoon rainfall activity commenced over parts of south India on the same day. Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Karaikal, coastal Andhra Pradesh, Rayalaseema, south interior Karnataka, Kerala and Mahe witnessed activity under the northeast monsoon, the IMD added.

“With the onset of the North-East monsoon, a wet spell with isolated heavy falls is likely over many parts of south peninsular India till October 21,” it said in its daily forecast.

There are two notable types of monsoon in India: the South-West monsoon, which is active from June to September, and the north-east monsoon -- also known as the retreating monsoon -- which affects parts of the country from October to December.

EC to conduct Special Summary Revision of electoral rolls in 17 States, UTs

NEW DELHI, Oct 15 (PTI)

THE Election Commission on Thursday announced that Special Summary Revision of electoral rolls will be conducted in 17 States and Union Territories, including those where Assembly polls are due next year.

In a letter to Chief Electoral Officers of these States and Union Territories, including Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Manipur and Goa, the poll authority said January 1, 2027, will be the qualifying date.

The Special Summary Revision (SSR) aims to enroll eligible voters, particularly young and first-time electors, correct electoral roll entries and improve the purity of voter lists. While the term of the 403-member Uttar Pradesh Assembly ends on May 22 next year, the terms of 60-member Manipur, 40-member Goa, 117-member Punjab and 70-member Uttarakhand Assemblies end on different dates in March 2027.

FM Nirmala holds bilateral talks with UK, Swiss, Japanese counterparts in Bangkok

NEW DELHI, Oct 15 (PTI)

FINANCE Minister Nirmala Sitharaman held a series of bilateral meetings with her counterparts from the UK, Switzerland and Japan in Bangkok and discussed ways to deepen financial and economic cooperation.

In her meeting with UK Chancellor of the Exchequer John Healey on the sidelines of the World Bank-IMF annual meetings, Sitharaman discussed the successful conclusion of the fourth India-UK Financial Markets Dialogue, fintech meetings and associated India-UK Financial Partnership (IUKFP) meetings, building on the outcomes of the previous Economic and Financial Dialogue (EFD). Both sides agreed to hold the next EFD in December 2026, the Finance Ministry said in a post on X.

Sitharaman also reaffirmed India's commitment to working closely with the UK on shared priorities and ensuring a constructive and inclusive G20 process.

In a separate meeting with Swiss Federal Councillor and Head of the



Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman during a meeting with UK Chancellor of the Exchequer, John Healey, in Bangkok. (PTI)

Federal Department of Finance Karin Keller-Sutter, the two sides discussed the India-EFTA Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) and the early conclusion of a mutually beneficial India-Switzerland Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT).

Sitharaman highlighted India's strong macroeconomic fundamentals, supported by fiscal discipline, robust domestic demand and infrastructure modernisation, as offering significant opportunities for Swiss investors. The two sides also

explored investment opportunities through the National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) and GIFT City.

Cooperation in cross-border digital payments, FinTech, regulatory innovation and AI in financial services also featured in the discussions, the Ministry said in another post. During her meeting with Japanese Finance Minister Satsuki Katayama, Sitharaman reviewed the India-Japan Strategic Global Partnership and welcomed Japan's commitment to facilitate JPY 10 trillion in private investment into India. She handed over a written invitation for a visit by the Japanese side to India in 2027 to mark the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations through high-level engagements.

"FM Smt. @nsitharaman highlighted that a huge chunk of the India-Japan Fund corpus has been deployed in clean energy, electric mobility, critical minerals and resilient supply chains. She also welcomed the Development Bank of Japan's commitment to @NIIFIndia's private market fund, and noted the scope for further co-

investment in manufacturing and infrastructure," a separate post said.

She invited Japanese institutions to participate in India's growing long-term savings pool, including through green infrastructure and environmental, social and governance-linked pension products. She also sought Japan's expertise in pension sustainability, annuity design and long-term care financing to support India's emerging silver economy.

The two Ministers discussed cooperation between the Reserve Bank of India and the Bank of Japan, including a formal fintech cooperation framework, central bank digital currency use cases and sharing India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) experience as Japan modernises its Zengin payment system in 2027.

Cybersecurity cooperation and the role of AI in financial services also featured in the discussions.

Sitharaman further invited Japanese banks, insurers, reinsurers, asset managers and universities to establish operations at GIFT City's International Financial Services Centre (GIFT IFSC).

MoD inks Rs 4,106 crore contracts for IAF communication satellite, Navy torpedoes

NEW DELHI, Oct 15 (PTI)

THE Government on Thursday signed contracts worth nearly Rs 4,106 crore for acquisition of a dedicated communication satellite capability for the Indian Air Force and heavy weight torpedoes for the Navy to boost their combat capabilities.

The two contracts mark a significant step towards advancing the development of domestic defence manufacturing capabilities while promoting self-reliance in critical technologies in line with the Aatmanirbhar



Bharat and Make-in-India vision of the Government, the Defence Ministry said.

The Ministry inked the contract for dedicated communication satellite GSAT-7C, valued at Rs 2,563 crore, with New Space India Limited, Bengaluru.



"This indigenously designed, developed and manufactured satellite will enhance the secure, resilient and seamless communication capabilities for the assets of the Indian Air Force, thereby strengthening operational effectiveness," the min-

istry said in a statement.

The second contract for Varunastra torpedoes worth Rs 1,543 crore was signed with Bharat Dynamics Limited, Hyderabad. Varunastra is an indigenous ship-launched anti-submarine torpedo developed by the Naval Science and Technological Laboratory. Equipped with advanced manoeuvring capabilities, it is capable of engaging enemy submarines at long ranges, thereby enhancing the anti-submarine warfare capability of the Indian Navy, the Ministry said.

Earth's climate system destabilising rapidly: Study

NEW DELHI, Oct 15 (PTI)

EARTH'S climate system is moving deeper into "uncharted territory", with seven of 16 climate-related planetary vital signs now at record extremes, a new study has found.

Published in the journal 'BioScience', it tracked greenhouse gas concentrations, temperatures, the oceans, ice, Earth's energy balance, and wildfire. Human activities driving the changes too were monitored, including energy use, food production, economic growth, and land-use change.

"We are witnessing the rapid destabilisation of the Earth's climate system. This is no longer a warning for the future: it is a diagnosis of the present," the authors wrote.

"Earth's climate system is moving deeper into uncharted territory," they said.

Concentrations of carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide all reached record levels again in 2026, the study found.

Fossil fuel consumption rose by 0.9 per cent in 2025, with oil, coal, and gas all reaching record highs, and annual energy-related carbon

dioxide emissions surpassed 41 gigatonnes for the first time, the researchers said.

The authors noted that the rate of global warming may have accelerated, from about 0.05 degrees Celsius per decade between 1880 and 1970 to about 0.36 degrees Celsius per decade between 2010 and 2024.

"At current rates, 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels could be reached before 2050," they said.

The authors also highlighted escalating risks from climate tipping elements,

**7 of 16
planetary
vital signs of
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finds the
study**

including an increasing vulnerability of the Amazon rainforest, where "the combined effects of warming and deforestation could push it past an irreversible threshold at just 1.5 degrees Celsius - 1.9 degrees Celsius of warming."

Despite the worrying trends, however, the researchers point to encouraging signs of change.

Low-carbon sources provided roughly 43 per cent of global electricity generation in 2025, and solar and wind energy consumption grew by approximately 18 per cent.

"In 2025, for the first time in

more than a century of coal-dominated electricity generation, renewable energy sources (solar, wind, hydropower, and other renewables) have surpassed coal globally, marking a potentially historic turning point in the transition toward clean energy," the authors said.

However, progress remains far below the scale and speed is needed to stabilise Earth's climate system, they added.

Cutting emissions remains essential, but it must now be accompanied by rapid adaptation, the team said, highlighting

ing "fast-track" measures to reduce near-term risks while delivering co-benefits.

"Mangrove restoration can offer protection against storm surges while enhancing carbon sequestration," the researchers suggested.

Shifts toward plant-based diets can reduce the risk of climate-related food system instability while increasing soil carbon and reducing pressure on biodiversity, they said.

Distributed solar can reduce the risk of storm-related grid failure while increasing energy security, the team added.