

Ahead of COP31, India calls for balanced climate action

NEW YORK, Oct 17 (ANI)

INDIA has called for balanced and equitable climate action ahead of COP31, stressing the need for greater climate finance, technology transfer and capacity-building for developing countries while respecting their national circumstances and development priorities.

Soumya Nair, Counsellor at India's Permanent Mission to the United Nations, on Friday delivered India's statement at a special event convened by the President of the UN General Assembly (PGA) ahead of COP31, entitled 'A Planet Fit for the Future: Restoring Trust through Climate Action'.

In the statement shared by India at the UN in New York in a post on X, Nair said, "As India emphasised at Pre-COP in Fiji, our shared ground exceeds our differences. COP31 must restore trust through balanced implementation."

"Implementation must respect national circumstances and



Soumya Nair, Counsellor at India's Permanent Mission to the United Nations.

development imperatives, with practical support enabling developing countries to pursue nationally determined climate pathways," she added.

Highlighting India's priorities, Nair said that greater finance, technology transfer and capacity-building were essential for enhancing climate ambition.

"The Article 9.1 work program under the Paris Agreement should advance developed countries' finance obligations, addressing scope and modalities first. Article 6 cooperation can mobilise additional resources," she said. She further called on COP31 to advance the "Bellm

Technology Implementation Program" and remove barriers to technology transfer.

On climate adaptation, Nair stressed that the global goal on adaptation must serve vulnerable communities and be supported by predictable and accessible finance, technology and capacity-building, without becoming overly technical or imposing additional reporting burdens.

"India is finalizing its first national adaptation plan," she said, adding that the country had demonstrated climate-resilient agricultural technologies in 448 villages across 151 vulnerable districts. She also highlighted India's Jal Shakti Abhiyan programme, which strengthens water conservation and rainwater harvesting.

On just transition, Nair called for the operationalisation of a mechanism grounded in equity and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities (CBDR-RC).

UNSC deadlocked over election of next Secy-General

UNITED NATIONS, Oct 17 (IANS)

THE election for the next Secretary-General is deadlocked, with the top three candidates getting two negative votes each from permanent members and only 76 days left for a new leader to succeed Antonio Guterres.

In the straw poll held on Friday, UNCTAD head Rebecca Grynsman, with nine overall positive votes, was slightly ahead of former Guyana Foreign Minister Carolyn Rodrigues-Birket and International Atomic Energy Agency Director-General Rafael Grossi, all of whom got two negative votes from permanent members.

This was the sixth round of anonymous, informal voting in the Council to assess the sentiments towards the seven candidates, and the first to use colour-coded votes to tell permanent members apart.

The results are supposed to be secret, but they were leaked to PassBlue and 1for8Billion, which cover the UN in-depth.

With the top three candidates now known to be opposed by two permanent members each, serious negotiations could start among the veto-wielders, and between the candidates and permanent members.

Yet another possibility is for new candidates to spring up.

The candidate who wins ten

votes without a veto from a permanent member will be recommended to the General Assembly, which routinely rubber stamps the Council recommendation, usually made unanimously in the final stage.

In the straw polls, members vote "encourage", interpreted as positive, "discourage", a negative, and "no opinion" or neutral and in the previous five there were no distinctions between the votes of the permanent members and elected members without veto powers.

Grynsman, who is from Costa Rica, received a total of five negatives and one neutral.

She led in five of the six polls, except the second one in August,

when Rodrigues-Birket led the field.

This time Rodrigues-Birket received eight positives, six negatives and one neutral, the same as Grossi. But he got only two positives from permanent members, while she got three.

Olara Otunnu, a former UN under-Secretary-General and Uganda's Foreign Minister, former Senegal President Macky Sall, and Maria Fernanda Espinosa, a former President of the General Assembly and Ecuador's Foreign Minister, got three negatives each from permanent members, and Ivonne A-Baki, a former Ecuadorian ambassador to the US, got five negatives.

Global oil demand to rise sharply in 2027, led by India, non-OECD Asia: OPEC

NEW DELHI, Oct 17 (ANI):

GLOBAL oil demand is expected to rise by 2.4 million barrels per day (mb/d) in 2027, with India and other Asian economies emerging as key drivers of consumption growth, according to the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

In its statement to the International Monetary and Financial Committee during the IMF-World Bank Annual Meetings, OPEC projected global oil demand to average 108.2 mb/d in 2027, compared with 105.8 mb/d in 2026.

The anticipated increase would be supported by healthy economic activity, particularly in non-



OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) economies, with transportation fuels and petrochemical feedstock expected to drive demand recovery.

"With India and Other Asia expected to lead oil demand growth," the statement said, adding that China and the Middle East would also contribute sig-

nificantly to the increase in consumption. For 2026, OPEC expects global oil demand to grow by around 0.4 mb/d, reflecting strong requirements from Latin America and non-OECD Asia, supported by economic activity, mobility, air travel and stable private investment.

Demand in non-OECD economies is forecast to increase by around 0.5 mb/d this year to average 59.7 mb/d.

In contrast, demand in OECD economies is expected to decline by about 110,000 barrels per day year-on-year to average 46.1 mb/d, with Europe and Asia-Pacific expected to record contractions. OPEC expects oil demand in OECD economies to

recover by around 0.4 mb/d in 2027, led by Europe and Asia-Pacific, while demand in non-OECD economies is projected to increase by approximately 2 mb/d.

On the supply side, liquids production from countries outside the DoC is forecast to rise by 0.6 mb/d in both 2026 and 2027. Brazil, the United States, Canada and Argentina are expected to drive growth this year, while Qatar, Canada, Brazil and Argentina are projected to lead in 2027.

OPEC said sustained investment in upstream production would remain essential to meeting future energy demand and maintaining adequate spare capacity.

Trump waives tariffs on Russian oil buyers

Signs an executive order waiving the threat of up to 100% tariffs on goods from the world's largest purchasers of Russian oil or gas including India and China.



■ By Sagar Kulkarni
WASHINGTON, Oct 17 (PTI)

US PRESIDENT Donald Trump has waived tariffs of up to 100 per cent on goods imported from the five largest purchasers of Russian oil or gas, along with

India's Russian crude binge to continue

NEW DELHI, Oct 17 (PTI)

INDIA is expected to keep importing Russian crude at close to current levels after US President Donald Trump waived sanctions and tariffs mandated by a new law on major buyers of Russian oil, analysts said.

Trump issued an executive order late on Friday waiving the "sanctions, restrictions, and duties" under the Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act, a day before a 30-day deadline for enforcement expired. He signed the law on September 18. The law authorised tariffs of up to 100 per cent on goods from the five largest importers of Russian crude and

(Contd on page 3)

specified sanctions provisions under a new law targeting Moscow, citing the national interest of the United States.

"I am hereby waiving the application of such sanctions, restrictions, and duties provided for in the Graham Act," Trump said.

Trump said he had submitted a certification to Congress stating that issuing the waiver at this

time was in the national interest of the United States.

US Senator Richard Blumenthal criticised the move

in a post on X. "These waivers (Contd on page 3)

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Pakistani forces kill many Afghan Taliban personnel

PESHAWAR, Oct 17 (PTI)

PAKISTANI security forces on Saturday killed several Afghan Taliban personnel in retaliatory action after alleged unprovoked firing along the border in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, according to security officials. The firing was reported in the Taida sector, Upper Kurram and Ghuz Garhi areas, where the Afghan Taliban allegedly opened fire to facilitate the cross-border infiltration of militants, a security official said.

The Pakistan Army retaliated, killing several Afghan Taliban personnel near the Ghuz Garhi border area, the official said.

In the Upper Kurram sector, Pakistani forces targeted the

Afghan Taliban's Topsar post and Shipola base camp.

The Shipola base camp was completely destroyed in the retaliatory action, he said.

Several Taliban personnel also allegedly abandoned their border post following the Pakistani forces' response, the official said.

Earlier this month, Pakistan conducted what its Ministry of Information described as well-planned and calibrated aerial strikes on terrorist hideouts in Afghanistan, killing multiple militants belonging to Fitna al-Khawarij. The Federal Government uses the term 'Fitna al-Khawarij' for terrorists belonging to the banned terror outfit Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan.

18,093 villages declared Adarsh Grams under PM-AJAY

NEW DELHI, Oct 17 (PTI)

A TOTAL of 18,093 villages have been declared 'Adarsh Grams' under the Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jaati Abhyuday Yojana or PM-AJAY, while 785 student hostels have been completed under the scheme, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment said.

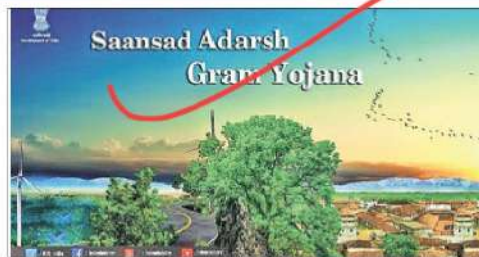
Under the Adarsh Gram component, more than 47,200 villages benefiting over 47.79 lakh citizens across the country have been covered, it said.

A total of 46,944 development works have been completed, and 27,032 village development plans (VDPs) have been prepared

under the scheme, the Ministry said in a statement earlier this week. The scheme seeks to develop Scheduled Caste-dominated villages into model villages by addressing critical gaps in infrastructure and essential services.

An Adarsh Gram is envisioned as a village where people have access to basic services, the minimum needs of all sections are met, and disparities are reduced to a minimum.

PM-AJAY aims to advance the socio-economic and educational empowerment of Scheduled Caste (SC) communities through infrastructure development, livelihood promotion, education and improved access to basic



services. The scheme has three components: development of SC-dominated villages into Adarsh Grams, grants-in-aid for socio-economic projects at the State and district levels, and construction and repair of hostels.

Under the grants-in-aid component, financial assistance is provided for State and district-level projects aimed at the socio-economic advancement of SCs.

It focuses on increasing the income of the target population through comprehensive livelihood projects, skill development and related infrastructure, the Ministry said. The component also seeks to improve the socio-economic development indicators by creating adequate infrastructure in SC-dominated villages, while promoting literacy and school enrolment among SC students through residential schools wherever required.

About Rs 1,730 crore was released directly to the States under this component from 2021-22 to 2025-26. The support extended skilling and livelihood opportunities to more than 2.5

lakh individual and group beneficiaries, the Ministry said.

Under the hostel component, the Ministry seeks to enable and encourage SC students to pursue quality education. The hostels are particularly beneficial for students from rural and remote areas as they provide accommodation and educational opportunities, the Ministry said.

As of September 2026, 785 student hostels had been completed under the scheme. For 2026-27, the government has allocated Rs 61.46 crore in central assistance for two hostel projects, one for girls and the other for boys, which will provide accommodation for 264 students.

India's space economy poised to grow to up to \$45 billion in 7-8 years: Dr Jitendra Singh

NEW DELHI, Oct 17 (IANS)

UNION Minister of State Jitendra Singh has said that India's space economy currently valued at around \$9 billion is expected to grow to \$40-45 billion over the next seven to eight years, an official statement said on Saturday.

Addressing a media roundtable organised by the Bloomberg New Economy Forum here, the Minister said India must move beyond demonstrating technological capabilities to building globally competitive commercial space companies.

He stressed that greater domestic and international investment, predictable demand, faster regulatory approvals and sustainable business models would be crucial to scaling up Indian space enterprises and expanding their presence in global markets. The Minister said the opening of the space sector to private participation in 2019-20 under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi had yielded significant results within five to six years.

The priority now was to translate these capabilities into com-



mercially viable businesses capable of competing internationally, he said.

Singh further emphasised that generating demand was essential for the growth of private space companies.

Anchor Government customers and support for proof-of-concept projects could help enterprises demonstrate their technologies and move towards commercial deployment, according to him.

The Minister also called for timely regulatory approvals, lower business costs and stronger supply-chain integration.

Companies seeking installation or export licences should

receive the necessary approvals within defined timeframes, he said, adding that reforms, including GST-related measures for space products, must translate into tangible benefits for industry.

On investment and international cooperation, the Minister stated that India was opening up opportunities for capital and partnerships while continuing to strengthen indigenous capabilities.

Greater investment could support technology development, manufacturing and access to international markets, while domestic capabilities remained important for national security and strategic autonomy, he said.

The Minister called for stronger collaboration between Government institutions and private enterprises in India, complemented by partnerships with international counterparts.

Such cooperation could help Indian companies integrate into global supply chains, expand their customer base and contribute to the wider space economy without compromising national interests, according to Singh.

Airstrike kills 3 children in Yemen; 2 missiles strike airport in port city

DUBAI, Oct 17 (AP)

IRANIAN-BACKED Houthi rebels say that airstrikes from Saudi Arabia killed three children in Yemen's southwestern province of Dhamar. The Houthi-run Health Ministry said on Saturday that the strikes a day prior hit houses in al-Ar village in the Dawran Aness district, killing one child aged 8 and two children aged 10 and wounding more than a dozen people.

The Houthis blamed Saudi Arabia for the strike, which comes amid heightened fighting between the group and the kingdom and its Yemeni allies. Saudi Arabia didn't immediately comment on the strike.

The children are among 124 people the Houthis say have been killed in their territories since

fighting resumed in September, according to the Ministry.

Earlier, two missiles struck the airport in Yemen's port city of Aden on Friday night, police said, blaming Iran-backed Houthi rebels for the second such attack on the airport in less than 10 days.

Police said no casualties were reported as fighting escalates in the latest front in the Iran war, one in which the rebels have attacked both neighbouring Saudi Arabia and Yemen's internationally recognised government, which is backed by the kingdom.

'Tanker attacked northeast of Saudi'

LONDON, Oct 17 (IANS)

A TANKER has reportedly been attacked 78 nautical miles northeast of Al Jubail, Saudi Arabia, the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) said on Saturday.

The master of the tanker reported being attacked by a rocket-propelled grenade from a small boat, resulting in damage to the aft port quarter, according to the UKMTO.

Crew are accounted for and reported safe, and a complete damage assessment and environmental impact are unknown, said the UKMTO.

Air India, Al Express cancel Saudi Arabia flights till Oct 24

NEW DELHI, Oct 17 (PTI)

AIR India and Air India Express on Saturday announced the extension of flight cancellations to Saudi Arabia until October 24 due to escalating geopolitical tensions in the region.

"In view of the prevailing situation, Air India and Air India Express have temporarily suspended flights to and from Jeddah, Riyadh and Dammam until 24 October 2026," Air India said in a post on X.