

The lowdown on India's Glasgow announcement

1. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's surprise declaration at the COP26 Climate Summit in Glasgow, Scotland, of striking enhancements in India's emissions reduction targets, did not, for several reasons, get the rave reviews the Government may have expected.

2. Except for a few specialists, international commentators expressed disappointment that India was promising net-zero emissions only by 2070 instead of 2050.

3. In India, several analysts praised the new targets as indicating a new climate-oriented development policy.

PM Modi's 5 Big Goals for India:

1. Achieving net-zero by 2070
2. Reducing total projected carbon emissions by one billion tonnes starting now till 2030
3. Increasing renewable energy component to 50% of our total energy requirements by 2030
4. Reducing carbon intensity by 45% by 2030
5. Increasing non-fossil energy capacity to reach 500 GW by 2030

The substance

India's new targets, details perhaps varying in an updated NDC, comprise five elements:

1. Reducing Emissions Intensity (EI), or emissions per unit of GDP, by 45% in 2030 relative to 2005 levels;
2. Cutting absolute emissions by one billion tonnes, presumably from projected business-as-usual (BAU) 2030 levels;
3. 500 GW (1 Gigawatt = 1,000 Megawatts) of non-fossil fuel installed power generation capacity by 2030;
4. 50% electricity generation from renewable sources by 2030;

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5. Net-zero emissions by 2070.


PM MAKES FIVE PLEDGES


- 1 India will increase its non-fossil energy capacity to 500GW by 2030
- 2 India will meet 50% of its energy requirements from renewable energy by 2030
- 3 India will reduce the total projected carbon emissions by one billion tonnes from now to 2030
- 4 By 2030, India will reduce the carbon intensity of its economy by 45% (from a previous target of 35%)
- 5 By 2070, India will achieve the target of net zero


WHAT IS NET ZERO?

Net zero refers to a balance where emissions of greenhouse gases are offset by the absorption of an equivalent amount from the atmosphere. Experts see net zero targets as a critical measure to successfully tackle climate change and its devastating consequences

PLEDGES BY TOP THREE EMITTERS

 CHINA: Beijing announced no new pledges on Monday. It previously pledged net zero by 2060.

 UNITED STATES: The US touted domestic legislation to spend \$555bn to boost renewable power and electric vehicles. It has pledged net zero by 2050.

 INDIA: The country's economy will become carbon neutral by the year 2070

Address the deep inequities

1. The Glasgow pledges come from a few sectors mostly related to electricity generation. However, a truly transformational low-carbon future must embrace many more aspects, as indeed emphasised at Glasgow by the Prime Minister as "Lifestyle for Environment (LIFE)".
2. It is also time that India, hitherto vociferous about equity between nations, now seriously addresses the deep inequity in access to energy and other essentials within India.
3. Climate change is multi-dimensional, not confined to mitigation alone and, as all studies tell us, should be tackled cross-sectorally.
4. Accelerated deployment of electric or fuel-cell vehicles must go alongside a rapid reduction in personal vehicle use and a major push for mass transportation.
5. Carbon lock-ins and energy use need to be minimised through mandatory "green" construction codes for the huge housing and other buildings stock, highways and infrastructure yet to be built.
6. A leap in employment-intensive recycling of waste goods and materials, including in solid and liquid waste management linked to methane recovery, would deliver substantial co-benefits across sectors.

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Where New Delhi slipped

1. Two big disappointments with India's stance at Glasgow deserve mention. First, India refused to join over 110 countries in a declaration to end deforestation by 2030.
2. India's pledges also do not mention the NDC target for forests and tree cover, in which India is known to be slipping, with deleterious impacts on both the environment and livelihoods of tribals and other forest dwellers.
3. Read together, these may confirm the worst fears of many regarding efforts to dilute environmental regulations in favour of corporate interests.
4. Second, India also did not join the Global Methane Pledge by over 100 nations to reduce emissions of the short-lived but potent greenhouse gas by 30% by 2030 from 2020 levels, when methane is among the fastest-growing emissions in India.
5. It would be ideal too if the ongoing updating of the NDC was done through a cross-partisan multi-stakeholder consultative process that would make it truly "nationally determined" and implemented.