



# AIR Discussions (November 1<sup>st</sup> Week)

## AIR SPOTLIGHT: UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE IN GLASGOW

### Context:

- **COP 26 United Nations Climate Change Conference is being hosted by the UK.**
- Leaders at the CoP26 global climate conference in Glasgow have pledged to stop deforestation by the end of the decade and slash emissions of methane to help slow climate change.
- India announced that it will reach carbon neutrality by 2070 as part of a five-point action plan that included reducing emissions to 50% by 2030.

### Key Highlights:

#### Net Zero:

- Net Zero is a state in which a country's total emissions are offset by absorptions of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, like that done by trees and forests, and physical removal of carbon dioxide through futuristic technologies.
- More than 70 countries have promised to become Net Zero by the middle of the century, and this is being considered vital for meeting the Paris Agreement goal of keeping global temperatures within 2 degrees Celsius from pre-industrial times.

#### 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



### **Methane Pledge:**

- EU and the US have launched a landmark pledge to slash emissions of the powerful greenhouse gas methane, a commitment that could prevent 0.2 degrees Celsius of global warming.
- The alliance's members will seek to lower global emissions of methane - the second-largest contributor to climate change after carbon dioxide - by 30% below 2020 levels by 2030.
- Besides the EU and the US, more than 103 countries have signed up so far, including major methane emitters like Nigeria and Pakistan.
- China, Russia and India - have not signed up, while Australia has said it will not back the pledge.

### **Deforestation Pledge:**

- More than 100 national leaders pledged to halt and reverse deforestation and land degradation by the end of the decade, underpinned by USD 19 billion in public and private funds to invest in protecting and restoring forests.
- In 2020, the world lost 258,000 sq km of forest — an area larger than the United Kingdom, according to WRI's Global Forest Watch.
- The agreement vastly expands a commitment made by 40 countries as part of the 2014 New York Declaration of Forests, and promises more resources.

### **Call for Climate Finance:**

- India noted that climate finance cannot continue at the levels decided in 2009 (100 billion USD), and emphasised that it should be at least USD 1 trillion to meet the goals of addressing climate change.
- India underlined the unity and strength of Like-Minded Developing Countries (LMDC) as fundamental in the UNFCCC negotiations.

### **Infrastructure for Resilient Island States:**

- India launched this initiative that would focus on building capacity, having pilot projects, especially in small island developing states.
- ISRO will build a special data window for them to provide them timely information about cyclones, coral-reef monitoring, coast-line monitoring etc. through satellite.

### **One Sun One World One Grid Group:**

- It is an initiative by India and the United Kingdom to tap solar energy and have it travel seamlessly across borders.
- It includes a group of governments called the Green Grids Initiative (GGI) - One Sun One World One Grid group.
- The aim of GGI is to help achieve the pace and scale of reforms to infrastructure and market structures needed to underpin the global energy transition.



### Other important points:

- US also re-joined the **High Ambition Coalition**, a group of developed and developing countries that ensured the 1.5C goal was a major focus of the Paris Agreement.
- The country joined the UK, India, China and others by agreeing to participant in the **Glasgow Breakthrough Agenda**, a commitment to join forces to accelerate the development and deployment of the clean technologies and sustainable solutions
- A new energy partnership between the UK, EU, and US was created with South Africa. The **Just Energy Transition Partnership** is a long-term project to support South Africa's pathway to low emissions and climate resilient development,.
- **African countries also committed to establishing a green economy** after agreeing to spend at least \$6bn from their tax revenues to help adapt to the effects of climate change, in addition to calling on the wealthier developed countries to provide \$2.5bn per year for the next five years.
- To reduce fossil fuel development, over 20 countries and financial institutions including the US, UK, Denmark, Costa Rica, and the European Investment Bank committed to redirecting \$8bn a year to green energy.
- **Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net Zero** (GFANZ) saw pledges worth \$130tn from the world's biggest banks and pension funds to ensure that by 2050 all assets managed by the institutions will take a net zero stance.
- 28 more countries joined the **Powering Past Coal Alliance**, a group dedicated to phasing out coal.
- COP President Alok Sharma urged ministers to **consider youth priorities** in COP negotiations and national climate action.

### COP 26 Goals:

According to the United Nations Climate Change Framework Convention (UNFCCC), COP26 will work towards four goals:

#### 1. Net Zero by 2050:

- To secure Global Net-Zero by Mid-Century and keep 1.5 Degrees within reach.
- Countries are being asked to come forward with ambitious 2030 emissions reductions targets that align with reaching net zero by the middle of the century.

**2. Adapt to Protect Communities and Natural Habitats:** Countries will work together to 'protect and restore ecosystems and build defences, warning systems and resilient infrastructure and agriculture to avoid loss of homes, livelihoods and even lives.'

**3. Mobilise Finance:** Developed countries must make good on their promise to mobilise at least USD100bn in climate finance per year.

**4. Work Together to Deliver:** Another important task at the COP26 is to 'finalise the Paris Rulebook'.

### About Conference of Parties (COP):

- The Conference of Parties comes under the UNFCCC which was formed in 1994.
- The UNFCCC was established to work towards "stabilisation of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere.
- COP is the apex decision-making authority of UNFCCC.
- COP members have been meeting every year since 1995.
- The UNFCCC has **198 parties** including India, China and the USA.
- **Generally it meets in Bonn, the seat of the secretariat, unless a Party offers to host the session.**
- The **office of the COP President normally rotates among the five United Nations regional groups** which are – Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Central and Eastern Europe and Western Europe and Others.



- The **President is usually the environment minister of his or her home country.**

### Challenges for COP:

- **Trust:**
  - The key relationships that led to success at the major climate conference in Paris in 2015 have all taken a battering.
  - The so-called "high ambition coalition" of island states, developing economies and the EU that really pushed things forward in France in 2015, is now not the force it was.
- **Credibility**
  - Key to any success in Glasgow has to be the credibility of the host nation.
  - France is generally seen as setting the bar for what a successful presidency looks like, when it hosted the Paris COP in 2015.
  - UK government has run into trouble over plans for a coal mine in Cumbria.
- **The workload**
  - One of the biggest challenges for this COP is the sheer volume of work.
  - Questions on transparency, carbon markets, and having the same timeframes for cutting carbon emissions, have defied the best efforts of negotiators in the six years since Paris.
- **The process itself**
  - There is a growing sense among many participants that this UN negotiating process is no longer fit for purpose.
  - The need for consensus from 197 parties, and the legalistic and technical nature of the talks, means there is, in reality, very little room for actual negotiations.

### Way Forward:

- **To deliver on Net Zero targets, countries will need to:**
  - Accelerate the phase-out of coal
  - Curtail deforestation
  - Speed up the switch to electric vehicles
  - Encourage investment in renewables.
- **Finance**
  - A successful outcome at COP26 on finance requires countries such as Australia, Canada, Japan, Italy and the UK committing to an additional \$2 billion to \$4 billion a year to fulfill their fair share of climate finance.
  - An agreement at COP26 will necessitate the trust of groups of countries like the Africa Group, the Climate Vulnerable Forum, Least Developed Countries, and the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS).  
For these negotiating blocks, fulfilling these currently unfulfilled promises made in Copenhagen and Paris is a prerequisite for a negotiated agreement in Glasgow.
- **Energy:** key question remains for rich countries to provide the financial and technical support required for key regions still reliant on coal such as India, South Africa, and South East Asia to transition to clean energy.
- **Mobility:** set a phase-out date for all non-zero emission vehicles complemented by a clear plan on how to achieve it.
- **Heavy Industry and Heavy-Duty Transport:** Decarbonising these sectors requires driving down the so-called green premium -- the additional cost of choosing a clean technology over one that emits a greater amount of greenhouse gases. Governments can help drive these investments by making carbon emissions cost through reaching an agreement on Article 6 Paris Agreement, which is a key outcome for COP26 negotiators.



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## **PRELIMS SPECIAL: NEWS IN BRIEF**

### **National Ayurveda Day 2021**

- National Ayurveda Day is **observed on the occasion of Dhanteras in India.**
- This day has been marked from 2016 to spread awareness on the importance of Ayurveda in our daily lives.
- Theme of National Ayurveda Day 2021: **'Ayurveda for Poshan'**.

### **Draft Mediation Bill for Public Consultation**

- The Government of India, in order to **expedite the process of dispute resolution**, has come up with an appropriate draft bill on Mediation.
- The draft bill on Mediation **establishes a consolidated framework bringing the existing laws on mediation from various enactments under an umbrella legislation.**
- This bill **ensures deep scrutiny of the interchangeability of the terms 'mediation' and 'conciliation'.**
- The bill **facilitates pre-litigation mediation** and thereby protects the interests of litigants approaching the courts in matters where urgent relief is required.
- A **Mediation Settlement Agreement (MSA)**, born out of the consensual agreement between the parties, is ensured as a successful outcome of the mediation with less challenge.
- The **confidentiality of the mediation process will be assured.**
- The **state/district/taluk legal authorities will be entrusted with the registration of MSA within 90 days** and maintenance of all the records of settlement.
- This bill envisages the creation of the **Mediation Council of India and community mediation.**

<https://newsonair.gov.in/News?title=Government-issues-draft-mediation-bill-for-public-consultation&id=429235>