

CABINET NOD FOR CLIMATE PLEDGES

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Net zero: India aims to put an end to dependence on fossil fuels by 2070. PTI

India ratified pledges made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Glasgow last November to accelerate the country's reliance on renewable energy to power the economy and be effectively free from use of fossil fuels by 2070. However, the approved pledges were fewer than those Mr. Modi committed to.

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Mr. Modi, on Wednesday approved an update to India's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC). Mr. Modi had laid out five commitments, or *Panchamrit*, as the government references it, namely: India will increase its non-fossil energy capacity to 500 GW (gigawatt) by 2030; will meet 50% of its energy requirements from "renewable energy" by 2030; will reduce the total projected carbon emissions by one billion tonnes from now till 2030; will reduce the carbon intensity of its economy by more than 45%; and will achieve the target of "net zero" by the year 2070, when there will be no net carbon dioxide emitted from energy sources.

A press statement, following the Cabinet approval, only mentions two of these promises, namely that India is committed to reduce emissions intensity of its GDP by 45% by 2030, from the 2005 level and achieving 50% cumulative electric power installed capacity from non-fossil fuel-based energy resources by 2030.

India's NDC did not "bind it" to any sector-specific mitigation obligation or action and that India's goal was to reduce overall emission intensity and improve energy efficiency "while protecting the vulnerable sectors of economy and society," the press note added.

Independent experts said that while the NDCs reflected India's commitment to sustainable development they were a climbdown from the ambition India had expressed at Glasgow.

"India's updated NDC does not include all the promises made at COP26 in Glasgow," Vibhuti Garg, Energy Economist & India Lead, Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis, said in a statement.

Madhura Joshi, Senior Associate, India Energy Transition Lead, E3G, said: "India's updated NDC targets are a welcome move... these targets, while lower than the *panchamrits*, are actionable. A reiteration of the renewables focus would have provided a fresh impetus for the renewables sector."

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