

INDIA AIMS FOR NET-ZERO EMISSIONS BY 2070, MODI TELLS COP26

Relevant for: Environment | Topic: Environmental Degradation - GHGs, Ozone Depletion and Climate Change

NEW DELHI : Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday pledged to cut India's net carbon emissions to zero by 2070, even as he exhorted developed countries to make available funds to the tune of \$1 trillion for climate adaptation and mitigation.

Speaking at the Conference of Parties (COP-26) summit in Glasgow, Modi said India, the world's third-largest emitter of greenhouse gases, would scale up its non-fossil energy generation capacity to 500GW by 2030, meet 50% of its energy requirements from renewables by the same deadline, bring down its total projected carbon emission by 1 billion tonnes by 2030 and also bring down the carbon intensity of the economy to below 45% by the end of the decade.

With India making such commitments to reduce its carbon footprint, it would need finance and technology to fulfil these targets, Modi said. Describing the promises to make available finances for mitigation and adaptation so far as "hollow", Modi said that with countries raising their ambitions vis a vis reducing carbon emission, "the pledges for finance cannot remain the same as they were at the time of the Paris agreement". He was referring to the 2015 climate summit in Paris.

"Today, when India has made a new commitment with new energy to move forward with its promises at a time like this, climate finance and low-cost climate technology becomes more important," Modi said.

India hopes that developed countries make available \$1 trillion for climate finance, he said. Modi's surprise statement announcing India's commitment to net-zero emission by 2070 may take some pressure off from Asia's third-largest economy to help stop global warming. In the run-up to Glasgow, India had shown signs of shying away from committing to a date by which it would achieve net-zero and not updated its Nationally Determined Contributions—pledges given by a country to bring down its GHGs.

But with India seeking time till 2070 to achieve net-zero emissions while others have committed to net-zero by 2050 or 2060, Indian negotiators may face some rough weather ahead. According to news reports, US President Joe Biden chided China and Russia for their seemingly less ambitious climate goals. Just days before Glasgow, China had pledged to achieve net-zero emissions by 2060.

Modi was among the key world leaders who spoke on Monday, the second day of the climate conference, which comes against the backdrop of dire warnings that the world has already warmed 1.1 degrees Celsius (2 degrees Fahrenheit). Current projections based on planned emission cuts over the next decade are for it to hit 2.7C (4.9F) by 2100. The main aim of the Glasgow conference is to agree to curb carbon emissions fast enough to keep global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) below pre-industrial levels. The world has already warmed 1.1 degrees Celsius (2 degrees Fahrenheit).

Modi was greeted by his British counterpart Boris Johnson on his arrival at the Scottish Exhibition Centre to attend the opening ceremony of the COP26 climate summit, where he delivered the national statement.

Johnson opened a global climate summit earlier in the day, saying the world is strapped to a "doomsday device."

Johnson told the summit that humanity had run down the clock when it comes to climate change, and the time for action is now. He pointed out that the more than 130 world leaders gathered had an average age of over 60, while the generations that would be most harmed by climate change aren't yet born.

There were some misgivings that China's Xi Jinping, president of the world's second-biggest polluter, is not attending the Glasgow summit.

But before the UN climate summit, the G-20 leaders, at the close of their meeting over the weekend in Rome, offered some climate pledges instead of commitments of firm action, saying they would seek carbon neutrality "by or around mid-century." The countries also agreed to end public financing for coal-fired power generation abroad but set no target for phasing out coal domestically—a clear nod to China and India.

Meanwhile, Modi in his speech also chided developed countries for their wasteful lifestyles and "mindless consumption" habits that he said had exacerbated the problems related to the environment

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