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Q17

Describe the major outcomes of the 26th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). What are the commitments made by India in this conference?

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2021 · GS III · 15 marks · Environment and Conservation

Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.

Core demand of the question

- Describe the major outcomes of COP26 UNFCCC. What are the commitments made by India in this conference?
- **Panchamrit:** 50 per cent installed non-fossil capacity by 2030, not 50 per cent of the energy mix; **500 GW** non-fossil; **net zero 2070**; 1 billion tonnes; **45 per cent intensity**
- Keep the explanation within a 15-mark length

Revision summary

COP26 produced the **Glasgow Climate Pact**, a coal phase-down formula, **Article 6** market rules, and pressure on the USD 100 billion finance gap.

India-UK Green Grids and other side deals sat beside the Pact.

India's Panchamrit includes **500 GW** non-fossil capacity, 50 per cent non-fossil installed capacity by 2030, a 45 per cent GDP intensity cut, 1 billion tonnes less projected carbon, and net zero by 2070.

Fifty per cent of installed capacity is not fifty per cent of the energy mix.

LiFE and OSOWOG were the diplomatic companions to those numbers.

Introduction

COP26 at Glasgow in November 2021 produced the **Glasgow Climate Pact** and a set of side deals on methane, coal, forests, and carbon markets. India announced **Panchamrit**: five domestic climate numbers, including **net zero by 2070** and **about 50 per cent of installed electricity capacity from non-fossil fuels by 2030**. That capacity share is not a promise that half of India's total energy mix will be renewable.

Body

Major outcomes of COP26

- The **Glasgow Climate Pact** asked parties to keep **1.5°C** within reach and to **revisit and strengthen 2030 NDCs**.
- On coal, the final text used **phase down** of unabated coal power, not **phase out**, after late objection involving India and others. That wording is an outcome, not a footnote.

- Developed countries were pressed on the missed **USD 100 billion** climate-finance goal and asked to deliver it urgently, with a process toward a new post-2025 goal.
- **Article 6** rules for cooperative carbon markets were agreed after years of deadlock, with some accounting and corresponding-adjustment language.
- **Side coalitions: Global Methane Pledge** (many States; India did not join that pledge), **Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests**, and the **Green Grids Initiative-OSOWOG** (India-UK).
- Adaptation, loss and damage, and a **dialogue** on loss and damage were pushed by developing countries; a full loss-and-damage facility was not yet created at COP26.
- Non-state net-zero announcements multiplied. Their quality varies.

India's commitments (Panchamrit)

- Raise **non-fossil installed electricity capacity to 500 GW by 2030**.
- Meet **50 per cent of installed (electric) capacity from non-fossil sources by 2030**. Do not write this as **50 per cent of the energy mix** or of total primary energy. Coal, oil, and traditional biomass still dominate energy use even when half of power **capacity** is non-fossil, because utilisation factors differ.
- Cut the **emissions intensity of GDP by 45 per cent by 2030** from 2005 levels (an update of the earlier 33-35 per cent intensity pledge).
- Reduce **total projected carbon emissions by 1 billion tonnes** between then and 2030.
- Achieve **net-zero carbon emissions by 2070**.
- India also spoke of **LiFE** (Lifestyle for Environment) as a mass behavioural complement, and co-led **OSOWOG / Green Grids** with the UK.

How to read the pledges

- Capacity is not generation, and generation is not the whole energy basket (heat, transport fuel).
- 2070 net zero is later than many rich-country dates, which India defends with equity and remaining carbon space.
- Implementation still depends on **finance, grids, storage, and a just coal transition**.

Flow diagram

COP26 Glasgow Pact -> 1.5 COP26 Glasgow Pact NDCs coal phase-down
 COP26 Glasgow Pact -> Finance Article 6
 India Panchamrit -> Net zero 2070
 India Panchamrit -> 500 GW and 50 percent non-fossil capacity
 India Panchamrit -> 45 percent intensity and 1 bn t
 500 GW and 50 percent non-fossil capacity -> Not 50 percent energy mix

Conclusion

COP26's Pact kept 1.5°C language, phased down coal, unlocked **Article 6**, and shamed the 100-billion gap. India's Panchamrit set **500 GW** non-fossil, a 50 per cent non-fossil **capacity** share, a **45 per cent intensity** cut, a 1-billion-tonne reduction, and net zero in 2070 - not a 50 per cent renewable energy-mix slogan.

Facts & figures

Glasgow Climate Pact

Cover decision of COP26 covering mitigation, adaptation, finance, and the coal phase-down phrase.

500 GW

Indian target for non-fossil electricity capacity by 2030.

50 per cent capacity

Share of installed electric power capacity from non-fossil sources by 2030, not share of total energy use.

45 per cent intensity

Emissions intensity of GDP versus 2005, to be cut 45 per cent by 2030.

Net zero 2070

India's announced year for net-zero carbon emissions.

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