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Q18

Write a review on India's climate commitments under the Paris Agreement (2015) and mention how these have been further strengthened in COP26 (2021). In this direction, how has the first Nationally Determined Contribution intended by India been updated in 2022?

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2025 · GS III · 15 marks · Environment and Conservation

Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.

Core demand of the question

- **Paris 2015 NDC:** intensity, non-fossil, sink
- COP26 Panchamrit including **net zero 2070**
- 2022 updated NDC: 45% intensity, 50% non-fossil capacity

Revision summary

The 2015 NDC promised a 33-35 per cent cut in emissions intensity by 2030, 40 per cent non-fossil power capacity, and a large forest sink.

COP26's Panchamrit raised the political bar, including **500 GW** non-fossil, a billion-tonne cut and net zero by 2070.

In August 2022 India updated the NDC to 45 per cent intensity reduction and 50 per cent non-fossil installed capacity by 2030.

Per-capita equity remains India's diplomatic line.

Pledges now need coal-path honesty and real forest carbon.

Introduction

The **Paris Agreement (2015)** asked every country for a **Nationally Determined Contribution** - a climate promise in its own words. India filed a first NDC, then used **COP26 at Glasgow (2021)** to raise the ambition in a **Panchamrit** of five points, and **updated the NDC in August 2022** to lock two of those points into the Paris file. The review is a **timeline of tightening**, not a claim that the atmosphere is saved.

Body**Paris, 2015, first NDC**

India's first NDC pledged, among other things, to **reduce the emissions intensity of GDP by 33 to 35 per cent by 2030** from 2005; to achieve about **40 per cent of electric power installed capacity** from **non-fossil** fuels by 2030 (with help from the Green Climate Fund as then worded); and to create an additional **carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of CO2 equivalent** through forests by 2030. It also stressed **adaptation, lifestyle** (later LiFE), and the **equity** argument that India's **per-capita emissions** remain far below the rich world.

COP26, 2021, Panchamrit

- At Glasgow, the Prime Minister announced five nectar-points: **500 GW** of non-fossil capacity by 2030; **50 per cent** of energy requirements from renewables by 2030 in the political phrasing of the moment; **reduction of one billion tonnes** of projected carbon emissions by 2030; **45 per cent** intensity reduction; and **net zero by 2070**. **Net zero 2070** is later than the EU's 2050; India argued **development space**. COP26 also closed the Paris "rulebook" on carbon markets in outline. India's **coal phase-down** language was the diplomatic fight of that fortnight.

Updated NDC, 2022

- In August 2022 India formally updated the NDC: emissions intensity of GDP to fall **45 per cent by 2030** from 2005 (up from 33-35); and **50 per cent of cumulative electric power installed capacity from non-fossil** by 2030 (up from 40). The forest sink and other pillars remained in the broader climate architecture. The update **legalised the Glasgow raise** inside Paris. Implementation now sits on **solar-wind auctions, a still-large coal pipeline, a carbon market under the Energy Conservation Act, and forest numbers that satellite teams still argue over**.

A review that stops at pledges is incomplete. A review that ignores the raise from 40 to 50 per cent non-fossil capacity is unfair.

Flow diagram

Paris 2015 NDC -> COP26 Panchamrit
COP26 Panchamrit -> NDC 2022 45 percent 50 percent
NDC 2022 45 percent 50 percent -> Auctions coal path forests

Conclusion

Paris locked India's first intensity, non-fossil and forest-sink pledges. COP26 added **500 GW**, a billion-tonne cut and **net zero 2070**. The 2022 NDC wrote 45 per cent intensity and 50 per cent non-fossil capacity into the treaty file. Delivery is the remaining exam.

Facts & figures

NDC 2022

Cabinet-approved update in August 2022 lifting intensity and non-fossil-capacity targets to match Glasgow.

Net zero 2070

India's announced year for net-zero emissions, later than many rich-country 2050 dates.

500 GW

The COP26 target for non-fossil electricity capacity by 2030, the headline infrastructure number.