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UPSC 360°

The Hindu Unwrapped - Daily Current Affairs Mastery for UPSC CSE (Clear that it's based on The Hindu editorials / news analyses - very aspirant-friendly)

Significance

India's updated NDC commitment to achieve 60% non-fossil fuel power by 2035 strengthens its leadership under the Paris Agreement. It accelerates clean energy transition, reduces carbon emissions, enhances energy security, and signals policy certainty for investments, supporting global climate goals while balancing developmental needs and sustainable growth.

India Pledges 60% Non-Fossil Fuel Power by 2035 in Updated NDC

Why in News?

- Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting (and I&B) **Ashwini Vaishnaw** briefed the Cabinet on **25 March 2026** about India's updated **Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC)** to be submitted to the UNFCCC by the end of 2025. The updated NDC includes the following ambitious targets to be achieved by **2035**:
- **60% of installed electricity capacity** from non-fossil fuel sources.
- **47% reduction in emissions intensity** of GDP from 2005 levels.
- Increase carbon sink to **3.5 to 4 billion tonnes** of CO₂ equivalent through forest and tree cover.
- These targets build on India's existing 2022 NDC (50% non-fossil power by 2030, 45% emissions intensity reduction by 2030, 2.5-3 billion tonnes carbon sink). The announcement

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comes ahead of the first **Global Stocktake (GST)** assessment under the Paris Agreement and reflects India's commitment to enhanced climate action while emphasising equity, national circumstances, and sustainable development.

Key Features of India's Updated Climate Targets

- **Electricity Mix Target**
 - 60% non-fossil fuel capacity by 2035 (solar, wind, hydro, nuclear, biomass).
 - Current status (as of early 2026): ~52% of installed electricity capacity is non-fossil.
- **Emissions Intensity Reduction**
 - 47% reduction from 2005 levels by 2035 (previous target was 45% by 2030).
- **Carbon Sink Enhancement**
 - 3.5-4 billion tonnes CO₂ equivalent through forest and tree cover (previous target: 2.5-3 billion tonnes).
 - Forest and tree cover currently accounts for ~24.6% of India's geographical area.
- **Broader NDC Elements**
 - Focus on energy efficiency, technology transfer, and climate finance.
 - Emphasis on "Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities" (CBDR-RC) and equity.

Background: Evolution of India's NDCs

- **Paris Agreement (2015)**
 - India submitted its first NDC in 2016 (Panchamrit targets announced at COP26 in 2021).
- **2022 NDC Update**
 - 50% non-fossil power by 2030
 - 45% emissions intensity reduction by 2030

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- 2.5-3 billion tonnes carbon sink

- **Global Stocktake (GST) Context**

- First GST concluded at COP28 (Dubai, 2023) – called for tripling renewable capacity by 2030.
- India's updated NDC is a response to GST and prepares for the next cycle of ambition.

- **Domestic Policy Alignment**

- National Green Hydrogen Mission, PM Surya Ghar, PM-KUSUM, National Solar Mission.
- Net-zero target by 2070.

Implications

- **Energy Transition**

- Accelerates shift from coal (currently ~50% of power mix) to renewables.
- Requires massive investment in grid infrastructure, storage, and green hydrogen.

- **Economic & Developmental**

- Supports long-term energy security and reduces import dependence.
- Creates jobs in renewable manufacturing and services.

- **Climate Leadership**

- Demonstrates India's "strong resolve" and continued leadership from the Global South.
- Balances development needs with climate action (equity principle).

- **Challenges**

- Land availability for solar/wind expansion.

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- Financing gap (developed countries' climate finance commitments remain unmet).
- Just transition for coal-dependent regions and workers.

UPSC CSE & State PCS Relevance

Prelims

- Key terms: Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), Global Stocktake (GST), CBDR-RC, Non-Fossil Fuel Capacity
- Data: 60% non-fossil target by 2035, 47% emissions intensity reduction, Carbon sink 3.5-4 billion tonnes
- Related: Paris Agreement, UNFCCC, COP28, National Green Hydrogen Mission

GS-3 (Environment)

- Climate change mitigation & adaptation
- India's renewable energy targets

GS-2 (IR)

- Global climate governance & equity in Paris Agreement
- India's leadership in Global South climate diplomacy

GS-3 (Economy)

- Energy transition and sustainable development

Essay / Interview

- "Balancing Development and Decarbonisation: India's Updated NDC and the Path to Net-Zero"
- "Equity and Ambition: India's Climate Leadership in a Polarised Global Order"

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MCQs

1. With reference to India's updated climate targets announced in March 2026, consider the following statements:
2. India aims for 60% non-fossil fuel power capacity by 2035.
3. It targets a 47% reduction in emissions intensity of GDP from 2005 levels.
4. The carbon sink target has been raised to 3.5-4 billion tonnes of CO₂ equivalent.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 1 and 2 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (d)

2. The first Global Stocktake (GST) under the Paris Agreement was concluded at:
 - (a) COP26 (Glasgow)
 - (b) COP27 (Sharm el-Sheikh)
 - (c) COP28 (Dubai)
 - (d) COP29 (Baku)

Answer: (c)

3. India's current Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) was last updated in:
 - (a) 2016
 - (b) 2022
 - (c) 2024

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(d) 2025

Answer: (b)

4. Which of the following is NOT part of India's updated 2035 climate targets?

- (a) 60% non-fossil power capacity
- (b) Net-zero emissions
- (c) 47% emissions intensity reduction
- (d) 3.5-4 billion tonnes carbon sink

Answer: (b)

Mains Questions

1. "India's updated NDC targets for 2035 demonstrate enhanced climate ambition while upholding equity and CBDR-RC." Discuss the significance of these targets in the context of the Global Stocktake and India's development priorities. (15 marks / 250 words)
2. Analyse the challenges India faces in achieving 60% non-fossil fuel power capacity by 2035 and suggest measures to overcome them. (10 marks / 150 words)
3. "Climate action must be viewed through the lens of sustainable development rather than emission reduction alone." Examine this statement with reference to India's updated NDC and its carbon sink enhancement target. (15 marks / 250 words)
4. **Essay (250 marks)** "From Paris to 2035: India's Evolving Climate Leadership and the Road to Net-Zero."

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