India’s Glasgow Announcement

Why in news?

Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s surprise declaration of enhancements in India’s emissions reduction targets at the COP26 Climate Summit in Glasgow did not get the enthusiastic reviews the Government may have expected.

What are the new targets of the government?

- India’s new targets comprise of five elements.
    1. Reducing Emissions Intensity or emissions per unit of GDP by 45% in 2030 relative to 2005 levels
    2. Cutting absolute emissions by one billion tonnes, presumably from projected business-as-usual (BAU) 2030 levels
    3. 500 GW of non-fossil fuel installed power generation capacity by 2030
    4. 50% electricity generation from renewable sources by 2030
    5. Net-zero emissions by 2070
- **Emissions** - India’s current annual emissions are around 2.8 billion tonnes and projected to reach about 4.5 billion tonnes in 2030 on a BAU basis.
- The Prime Minister mentioned the Railways’ net-zero 2030 target cutting 60 million tonnes annually and LED bulbs cutting another 40 million tonnes a year is probably not easy.
- **Renewable source** - India has reached only around 101 GW of solar and wind due to numerous constraints.
- If large hydro and nuclear are added, current RE installed capacity is about 150 GW or lesser than 40% of total which almost achieves the NDC target for 2030 and showing under-projection.
- The current commitments may prove difficult because of the need for storage and grid stability.
- **Infrastructure for Resilient Island States (IRIS)** - India launched an international climate initiative called IRIS to provide technical knowledge and financial assistance to small island nations with the help of developed countries

India’s INDC Targets under Paris Agreement 2015

- *To reduce the emissions intensity of its GDP by 33 to 35 % by 2030 from 2005 level.*
- *To achieve about 40 % cumulative electric power installed capacity from non-fossil fuel based energy resources by 2030.*
- *To create an additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of CO_2 equivalent through additional forest and tree cover by 2030.*

What are the disappointments with India's stance at Glasgow?

- **Ending deforestation -** India refused to join over 110 countries in a declaration to end deforestation by 2030.
- India's pledges do not mention the NDC target for forests and tree cover with deleterious impacts on both the environment and livelihoods of tribals and other forest dwellers.
- **Global Methane Pledge** - India did not join the Global Methane Pledge despite methane being the second-most abundant greenhouse gas in the atmosphere after carbon dioxide.
- **Change in earlier stand** - India had departed from the earlier stance that as a developing country it was not obliged to cut emissions, but now it is willing to contribute to reduction efforts in global emissions.
- Many senior Indian officials were proclaiming the unacceptability of net-zero and the unlikelihood of higher targets by India.
- India insufficiently communicated the significance of its enhanced commitments and little effort was made to leverage India's updated pledge to extract deeper emission cuts from them.

Global Methane Pledge was first announced by the US and EU to cut down methane emissions by up to 30 % from 2020 levels by the year 2030.

How can the inequities be addressed?

- A truly transformational low-carbon future must embrace beyond electricity generation as emphasised at Glasgow as "Lifestyle for Environment (LIFE).
- Since climate change is multi-dimensional and not confined to mitigation alone, it should be tackled cross-sectorally.
- Accelerated deployment of electric or fuel-cell vehicles and a major push for mass transportation must go alongside a rapid reduction in personal vehicle use.

- Carbon lock-ins and energy use need to be minimised through mandatory green construction codes.
- A leap in employment-intensive recycling of waste goods and material including solid and liquid waste management linked to methane recovery would deliver benefits across sectors.
- It would be ideal if the on-going updating of the NDC was done through a cross-partisan multi-stakeholder consultative process.

References

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