

## Is It Possible For India to Economic Growth and Development With Net Zero?

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ARTICLE ID: 69

### Introduction

- ❖ Recently, India has promised to cut its emissions to net zero by 2070 in the Climate Change Conference (COP26) at Glasgow in Scotland,
- ❖ In simply, net zero refers to the balance between the amount of greenhouse gas produced and the amount removed from the atmosphere or means not adding to the amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.
- ❖ The country is world's fourth biggest emitter of carbon dioxide after China, the US and the EU.
- ❖ India emitted 1.9 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per head of population in 2019, compared with 15.5 tonnes for the US and 12.5 tonnes for Russia that year.
- ❖ So, there is global pressure on India to commit net zero emission by 2050.
- ❖ On one hand, few argue that India should pledge to reduce its net emission (emission minus uptake of emission) to zero by 2050, backed by a climate law . This will make India Hypercompetitive, attract investment and create job
- ❖ While on the other hand there is a longstanding principle of common but differentiated responsibility that requires richer countries to lead and argue against any pledge that risk prematurely limiting energy use for development
- ❖ Prime Minister Narendra pledges that India will reach its net zero carbon emission target by 2070 as he laid out the country's climate action plan.

### Can India achieve its 2070 target?

- India is still largely dependent on fossil fuels like oil and coal and its economic priorities are mostly focused on domestic issues. The country's energy demand is expected to rise sharply over the next decade as the economy continues on its growth trajectory.



- In developed countries, emissions have already peaked. Their decision is only about the path to net-zero. Emerging economies like India, instead, will go through a high-growth phase with rising energy demand and emissions. So, before a net-zero year can be targeted, India must discuss options for its peaking year
- The country is trying to balance its growing energy needs with demands to slash emissions, which could make the goal of achieving carbon neutrality difficult.
- India has to navigate potential challenges — such as ensuring that coal workers are not left behind, energy prices do not rise in the near term and getting the state governments on board. Power distribution reforms are also “absolutely necessary” to pave the way for the transition to happen.

### **Suggestive measures**

- ✚ India’s road to net zero carbon emissions will be long and challenging — while it’s not impossible, it will need a lot of strategic planning in the decades ahead
- ✚ Given the massive shifts underway in India’s energy system, we would benefit from taking stock of our actions and focusing on near-term transitions.
- ✚ This will allow us to meet and even over-comply with our 2030 target while also ensuring concomitant developmental benefits, such as developing a vibrant renewable industry.
- ✚ We can start putting in place the policies and institutions necessary to move us in the right direction for the longer-term and also better understand, through modelling and other studies, the implications of net-zero scenarios before making a net-zero pledge.
- ✚ It would also be in India’s interest to link any future pledge to the achievement of near-term action by industrialised countries.
- ✚ That would be fair and consistent with the principles of the UNFCCC and also enhance the feasibility of our own actions through, for example, increasing availability and reducing costs of new mitigation technologies.

### **Conclusion:**

The world is not going to achieve its targets of halting global warming unless India is able to reduce its carbon emissions and India changes its trajectory right now. India is now rightly recognized for having come of age and becoming a major global power. But coming of age also brings with it the ability to take a stand, and resist being buffeted by the winds of



shifting political agendas. While we, like others, have a responsibility to the international community, we also have a responsibility to our citizens to be deliberate and thoughtful about a decision as consequential as India's climate pledge.

