













ISSUE BRIEF

THE ROAD FROM PARIS: INDIA'S PROGRESS TOWARDS ITS CLIMATE PLEDGE

India is largely on track to meet, and even exceed, its Paris Climate Agreement targets: reduce emissions by 33 to 35 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP) by 2030 from 2005 levels and achieve 40 percent of installed power capacity from non-fossil fuels by 2030, with some more work to do on its goal of creating an additional carbon sink. With solar and wind energy at the heart of India's climate goals, the country aims to install 175 gigawatts (GW) of renewable energy (excluding large hydro) by 2022 and an ambitious 450 GW by 2030, larger than India's current total grid capacity. In August 2021, India passed a milestone of 100 GW of renewable energy (excluding large hydro), with renewables now making up a quarter of India's total installed capacity. In response to the urgent need for newer, bolder action, India announced new climate goals at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Glasglow in November 2021.

India Announces New Climate Actions

At the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Glasgow, Indian Prime Minister Modi announced five key actions on climate:5

- **1. India's non-fossil energy capacity to reach 500 GW by 2030.** Achieving the goal would make 60 percent of India's power capacity fossil-free by 2030, a significant increase from the 40 percent that India committed under the Paris Agreement. India's new announcement is a formalization of previously stated goals to reduce dependence on fossil fuels by installing an ambitious 450 GW of renewables by 2030.
- 2. India will meet 50 per cent of its energy requirements with renewable energy by 2030. Meeting half the country's energy needs through renewable energy would be a significant jump for India. In 2021, less than 20 percent of India's energy requirement has been met through renewable energy, a number which constitutes a little over a fourth of the total power capacity. Increasing the share of renewable energy would need strong investment in grid upgradation, energy storage, and would be good for greening India's industry and transportation sectors as well.
- **3. India will reduce its total projected carbon emissions by one billion tons between now to 2030.** This is a significant goal for a country with annual emissions of about 2.6 billion tons of carbon dioxide, expected to continue to grow in the coming years. India's focus on energy-efficient buildings, appliances, and equipment can play a major role in reducing carbon emissions.
- **4. By 2030, India will reduce the carbon intensity of its economy to less than 45 percent.** This is a significant increase from India's previous Paris Climate Agreement target to decrease the intensity of its GDP by 33 to 35 percent from 2005 levels by 2030.8
- **5.** By 2070, India will achieve the target of net zero emissions. The world needs every major economy to move to a net zero emissions goal to avert the worst climate impacts and India has joined other major economies in committing to this pathway. With the enhanced near-term goals that India has announced, the country could potentially switch to a new carbon-free growth paradigm even earlier.

National Overview

Despite very low per capita emissions, India is the world's third-largest greenhouse gas (GHG) emitter, with absolute emissions expected to rise in the near-term. India's 2021 total $\rm CO_2$ emissions are set to be almost 200 metric tons (Mt) higher than 2020 levels (atypically low due to COVID-19) or 1.4 percent (30 Mt) above 2019 levels (equivalent to 132 Mt $\rm CO_2$). $\rm ^9$ CO $_2$ emissions in India are now at 2.35 gigatons, broadly equivalent with emissions in the European Union, though they remain 60 percent below the global average on a per capita basis. $\rm ^{10}$ India is also an economic powerhouse with an average GDP growth rate of 6.7 percent over the last decade. $\rm ^{11}$ With the COVID-19-induced economic slowdown, India's GDP contracted by 7.3 percent in 2020 but is expected to expand at least 9.5 percent in 2021, despite an unexpectedly severe second COVID-19 wave. $\rm ^{12}$

Renewable energy –i.e., solar, wind, and biomass—have been on a fast growth trajectory, with the share of renewable energy capacity increasing to 26 percent (more than 100 GW out of 387 GW) in August 2021. Though fossil fuels still account for the majority of India's power generation, the share of thermal capacity has decreased to 60.7 percent. However, as part of the economic recovery in 2021, coal demand has rebounded and driven up emissions. In 2021,

coal-fired electricity generation is expected to be three times higher than generation from renewables.¹⁵

Climate Updates - 2021



01

Rapidly Growing Renewables

The share of installed capacity from renewable energy sources (not including large hydro) has increased to 26 percent (more than 100 GW out of 387 GW) in August 2021 while the share of thermal capacity is at about 60.7 percent.¹⁷



02

Hydrogen Mission Gaining Steam

To support its clean energy transition, India has launched a new hydrogen mission, which explores how green hydrogen can be utilized by existing end users of hydrogen such as refineries and fertilizer plants, blended with natural gas for CNG users and piped natural gas, used as fuel for longer-range vehicles and heavy-duty trucks, and used in heavy industries like cement and steel.¹⁸

04

Advancing Electric Mobility

Under Phase-II of the Faster Adoption and Manufacture of (Hybrid and)
Electric Vehicles (FAME) Scheme, India allocated ₹10,000 crore (US \$1.4 billion) to advance electric mobility in public transportation fleets, four-wheelers, and three-wheelers, privately owned two-wheelers, as well as electric vehicle charging infrastructure. ²²

003

Increasingly Competitive Solar Power

- Tariffs for solar energy projects reached record lows of 1.99 Indian rupees (₹) per kilowatt-hour (kWh) (US\$ 0.0269/kWh) at a December 2020 auction for solar projects in Gujarat.¹ Four companies quoted the low bid, and NTPC, India's largest power company, secured 200MW of solar capacity.¹9 Solar power tariffs continually fell throughout 2020, showing investor confidence despite the pandemic.²0
- India took encouraging steps towards Round-The-Clock (RTC) renewable power supply in August 2020 when ReNew Power signed a PPA with Solar Energy Corporation of India, a central government-owned entity, to supply RTC renewable electricity, the first of its kind in India.²¹



USD numbers refer to 2021 exchange rates.

Factoring in large hydro and nuclear, India's fossil fuelfree power totaled 39.3 percent of the country's installed capacity, nearly equal to the 2030 goal. On its third key Paris Agreement goal of creating an "additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e)," the Indian government recognizes the need to expand efforts as India's forest and tree cover has increased by only 5,188 km², yielding a 42.6 Mt carbon sink increase.16

05

Advancing Energy Efficient Buildings

As of July 2021, 18 states and two Union Territories have notified the Energy Conservation Building Code (ECBC). The Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) also recently announced the National Energy Efficiency Roadmap for Movement towards Affordable and Natural habitat (NEERMAN) Awards for Energy Efficient Buildings in India, to highlight and acknowledge exemplary building designs that comply with the ECBC.23







06

Ratifying Cooling Action Plans

In August 2021, India committed to ratifying the Kigali Amendment, the global pact to phase down super climate-polluting hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) commonly used in cooling appliances and insulating foams.24



07



Reducing Air Pollution

- As part of its goal to achieve a 20 to 30 percent air pollution reduction by 2024, India launched a national clean air program in 2019, and allocated funds to states for reducing air pollution under the 2020 and 2021 budgets.25
- ▶ The Indian government has issued directions to enable power distribution companies to exit power purchase contracts that are more than 25 years old. This will enable power distribution companies to purchase a greater share of electricity from renewable energy generators, which produce less air pollution than traditional sources.26

08

Assessing the Impacts of Climate Change on India

Recent assessments, including the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Sixth Assessment report and the Ministry of Earth Sciences' Assessment of Climate Change over the Indian Region, have highlighted how the Indian region is likely to see disproportionate sea level rise, rising average temperatures, and increasing monsoon extremes. The already extreme heat and rainfall events will occur with greater frequency, resulting in both more flooding and more droughts.27

09

Emerging Policy Developments

- ► The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change released a Draft Environmental Impact Assessment Notification, superseding the 2006 version and proposing new rules on industrial projects; the environmental merits of the draft policy are still being debated.28
- ► The Ministry of Power released the Draft Electricity (Amendment) Bill 2020 with provisions that can potentially bring more renewable energy players into the market.²⁹
- The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) released a draft policy framework for developing and promoting Decentralized Renewable Energy (DRE) Livelihood Applications.30 The objective of this framework is to develop an enabling market ecosystem to ensure widespread adoption of DRE for sustainable livelihood creation in the country, compliment grid electricity, and reduce reliance on diesel backup.

India's Paris Agreement Targets

In 2015, 196 nations came together to approve the Paris Agreement during the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP21) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The Paris Agreement aims to limit global temperature rise to well below 2°C and to make best efforts to hold warming to 1.5°C. As part of the Paris Agreement, all countries submitted Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) detailing plans to cut emissions to meet the global temperature goal.³¹

India ratified the Paris Agreement in 2016, and laid out a comprehensive approach to limit climate impacts while fostering economic growth. India's pledge includes the following commitments:

- To put forward and further propagate a healthy and sustainable way of living based on traditions and values of conservation and moderation.
- To adopt a path that is climate-friendly and cleaner than the one followed hitherto by others at a corresponding level of economic development.
- To reduce the emissions intensity of its GDP by 33 to 35 percent by 2030 from 2005 levels.
- To achieve 40 percent cumulative electric installed power capacity from non-fossil-fuel energy sources by 2030 with the help of technology transfer and low-cost international finance, including support from the Green Climate Fund (GCF).
- INDIA WILL CUT
 ITS EMISSIONS
 INTENSITY BY

 33-35%

 OF 2005 LEVELS

- To create an additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tons of CO₂e through additional forest and tree cover by 2030.
- To better adapt to climate change by enhancing investments in development programs in sectors vulnerable to climate change, particularly agriculture, water resources, the Himalayan region, coastal regions, health, and disaster management.
- To mobilize domestic funds and new or additional funds from developed countries to implement the above mitigation and adaptation actions, given the resources required and the resource gap.
- To build capacities, create a domestic framework and international architecture for quick diffusion of cutting-edge climate technology in India and collaborative research and development for such future technologies.³²

Before COVID-19, India's NDC was already one of the few rated by the Climate Action Tracker as compatible with limiting temperature rise to below 2°C.³³ In the most recent update, the Climate Action Tracker has reranked the countries on alignment to 1.5°C, and placed India with other developing countries that "need to update their targets and policies, but also show a pathway for how they could also reduce their emissions as fast as possible if they were supported financially - and to clearly indicate the support they need."³⁴

National Action

Even before India signed the Paris Agreements, the country developed the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) in 2008 to chart a low carbon development path. The plan has eight missions focusing on solar, energy efficiency, sustainable habitat, water, ecosystems, forest cover, sustainable agriculture, and climate research. The NAPCC outlines India's strategic mission to promote sustainable economic development while encouraging private sector action on climate mitigation and adaptation. This national plan lays a foundation for achieving India's climate action while simultaneously advancing other critical national priorities.

Renewable Energy

India has committed to achieving 175 GW of renewable energy by 2022, including 100 GW of solar and 60 GW of wind, 10 GW from biomass, and 5 GW from small hydropower.³⁷ With power demand growing rapidly, in 2019, India increased its target to 450 GW renewable energy (excluding large hydro) by 2030, over five times India's then installed renewable capacity and more than India's current

BY 2030.



Solar hybrid system installed by Mahila Housing Trust (MHT) at a house with mod roof technology to reduce the impact of heat waves and lower the electricity bills in Vishwasnagar slum, Ahmedabad. Source: MHT

total installed capacity (387 GW).³⁸ As of August 2021, India is more than halfway toward meeting its 175 GW by 2022 goal, with renewables (excluding large hydro) reaching the 100 GW milestone and a strong pipeline of projects to come online in the next twelve months.³⁹ While some analysts estimate India might need longer to reach 175 GW partly due to the impact of COVID-19, India's MNRE is confident of reaching the goal by 2022.⁴⁰

Green Hydrogen

India has launched a new hydrogen mission to further explore decarbonization of its energy needs. Green hydrogen is zero-carbon hydrogen production through the electrolysis of water (splitting of water into hydrogen and oxygen) using renewable electricity. It can be used as fuel for longer-range vehicles and heavy-duty trucks, in the power sector for longer-term energy storage, and in heavy industries like cement and steel. A recent report estimated that the costs of hydrogen from renewables in India will fall by more than 50 percent by 2030 and will start to compete with hydrogen produced from fossil fuels.

Solar Energy

The National Solar Mission aims to install 100 GW of solar energy by 2022, and scale it to 280 GW by 2030.⁴³ While these goals are ambitious, India's solar energy potential is considerable - it is estimated to be 750 GW.⁴⁴ Because of this, India remains one of the most attractive global markets for renewable energy.⁴⁵ By sustaining a transparent and competitive market through its reverse auction system, India has been able to drive down the levelized cost of solar despite high borrowing costs and a limited number of available subsidies.⁴⁶

India's solar energy capacity is 43.9 GW as of July 31, 2021.⁴⁷ Due to India's strong long-term policy goals and solar's rapidly declining costs, solar energy is expected to continue to grow quickly.⁴⁸ However, in order to capitalize on this opportunity as the country recovers from COVID-19, the solar market must respond to challenges such as intermittency, high cost of capital, and capacity constraints.⁴⁹ The solar industry is also experiencing headwinds with upcoming basic customs duties on solar modules, less competitive domestic manufacturing, land availability, the uncertainty of compliance with power purchase agreements, decreased subsidies and outstanding dues from distribution companies that have slowed solar capacity additions.⁵⁰

Tariffs for solar energy projects reached record lows of ₹1.99/kWh (US \$0.0269/kWh) at a December 2020 auction for solar projects in Gujarat. Four companies quoted the low bid, and NTPC, India's largest power company, secured 200 MW of solar capacity.⁵¹ Solar power tariffs have been continually falling throughout 2020, showing investor confidence despite the pandemic.⁵² In comparison, the lowest thermal power tariff by a three-company bid was ₹3.26/kWh (US \$0.0436/kWh) in February 2020.53 Solar tariffs, in some instances, have dropped to more than 30 percent below the cost of existing thermal power in India.⁵⁴ However, analysts warn that solar tariffs could again rise by about 20 percent when a 40 percent basic customs duty on solar modules and 25 percent duty on solar cells goes into effect in April 2022 as India continues to prioritize domestic manufacturing.55

In an encouraging step towards RTC renewable power supply, Renew Power announced in August 2020 that it had signed a PPA with Solar Energy Corporation of India, a central government-owned entity, to supply RTC electricity, the first of its kind in India.⁵⁶ In the first year, supply will be at ₹2.90/kWh (US \$0.039/kWh).⁵⁷

Wind Energy

India aims to install 60 GW of wind energy by 2022 with 55 GW of onshore wind and 5 GW of offshore wind. India is currently the world's fourth-largest wind energy market, with nearly 40 GW of installed capacity, as of July 2021. Mind energy amounts to over 10 percent of India's total installed power capacity. Installed wind capacity nearly doubled from 2015 to 2021, increasing by 15 GW. 59

The year 2020 was forecasted to be a breakout year for the wind industry in India; however, that progress was delayed in part due to COVID-19. India only installed 1.1 GW of the projected 3.3 GW of wind power in 2020.60 The remaining capacity was postponed until 2021. The sector is expected to rebound with more than 20 GW of additional capacity to be installed between 2021-2025.61 To do so, the wind energy market in India must respond to challenges such as the question of viability around ultra-low tariffs in the reverse auctions regime, competition with low solar tariffs, resource variability as well as financial difficulties and land availability concerns. 62 India seems likely to miss its 2022 wind targets. 63 Yet, the opportunity for continued growth in wind power generation is promising, with an estimated 700-1500 GW of onshore wind energy potential and an estimated 70 GW of offshore wind potential.64

Renewable Energy Job Growth

Achieving India's target of 175 GW of renewable energy by 2022 could employ over 300,000 workers and create 1 million job opportunities in the country. 65 With the new target of 450 GW of renewable energy by 2030, this figure is expected to grow tremendously.66 To develop a skilled workforce and meet the renewable industry's needs, the Government of India established the Skills Council for Green Jobs (SCGJ) under the National Skill Development Mission in 2015. Since its inception, SCGJ has developed 51 Qualification Packs across renewable energy sectors (solar, wind, bioenergy, clean cookstoves) along with waste and wastewater management domain. It has cumulatively affiliated 423 training partners, 4879 certified trainers, 761 certified assessors along with 28 assessment agencies across India.67 SCGJ has also trained approximately 5 lakhs (500,000) candidates including 1 lakh (100,000) in solar and other renewable energy domains and the remaining in waste/waste water management across the country.68 A complementary initiative of SCGJ is the Suryamitra Skill Development Programme, instituted in 2017 and run by the National Institute of Solar Energy under the skill development initiative of the MNRE. The aim is for youth to develop skills related to employment opportunities in solar power project installation, operation, and maintenance in India and abroad. As per an impact assessment carried out by SCGJ on Suryamitra trainings, over 88 percent trained survamitras have reported enhanced employability and better job opportunities along with over 80 percent reported increased income and improved livelihoods post trainings. 69

Recovery from COVID-19 and Clean Energy Opportunities

India has been battling multiple crises this year, including the deadly COVID-19 pandemic and the climate crisis. With devastating heat waves and power shortages in addition to increased health risks, the compounded impact of the crises has illuminated the need for reliable health systems and energy infrastructure for both long-term resilience and near-term support. While national lockdowns resulted in a short-term decline in the commercial and industrial energy load, India has been moving forward to realize its full renewable energy potential. A India continues to recover from the COVID-19 crisis and rebuild after devastating climate disasters, there is an opportunity to continue to expand clean energy to help stimulate the economy, curb climate change, and improve air quality. Policy decisions regarding tariffs, capacity expansion, asset retirement, and financial management made following COVID-19 will shape the direction of the energy market in India for years to come. The following policy actions would support clean energy expansion:

- Air quality: As cities are reopening, there is an opportunity to take actions such as mobility electrification and point-source pollution reduction,
 like from thermal plants, to ensure Indians can breathe clean air, have better health, and promote climate resilience in cities across the country.
- **Job opportunities:** Employment generation is a major priority as the economy recovers from the recession induced by COVID-19. Estimates suggest renewables can add 3 million new jobs in India by 2030.⁷² Investing in skills needed for renewable energy jobs, upskilling and cross-skilling people employed in related traditional energy jobs is vitally important.
- Renewable Energy Grid Integration: The short-term decline in energy demand at the COVID-19 peak introduced opportunities for fossil fuel asset retirement and new tariff determinations, providing further opportunities for renewable energy sources to become a part of the grid mix.⁷³
- Equity and empowerment for the most vulnerable: People who have suffered the most are often the poor living in India's many villages.

 This is an opportunity to build resilience and to invest in entrepreneurs, particularly women, who often act as catalysts for change and improve the livelihood of their families and communities as they grow, as demonstrated in several case studies.⁷⁴

Energy Access and the Power Sector

India prioritized household electricity access with the Saubhagya Yojana program, which provided ₹16,320 crore (US \$2.5 billion) for electrification expansion.75 The program aimed to electrify every household by March 2018, and according to government estimates published in March 2019, India achieved nearly 100 percent household electrification with only a small portion of households in Chhattisgarh remaining.⁷⁶ While India has made tremendous progress in electrification, energy poverty remains.⁷⁷ An average Indian household receives 20.6 hours of power supply from the grid per day. The average daily supply in urban areas (22 hours) is longer by a couple of hours than in rural areas (20 hours). While there is a need to identify and electrify the remaining 2.4 percent households, we also need to review and consistently implement ultra-low tariffs for poor households with lifeline consumption. Sustaining electricity remains a challenge in villages with high reliance on diesel generators and solid fuels.78

In terms of agricultural electricity use, estimates suggest that expenses from the use of diesel for irrigation can amount to 30 to 50 percent of agriculture production costs.79 India has 30 million irrigation pumps across the country – 70 percent electrical and 30 percent diesel.80 To promote solar-based irrigation, India launched Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan (PM-KUSUM) in 2019.81 The scheme has three key objectives as stated in the February 2020 budget update - to establish 10 GW of ground-mounted grid-connected decentralized renewable energy plants by 2022, to install over 2 million standalone solar-powered agricultural pumps, and to install an additional 1.5 million grid-connected solarpowered agriculture pumps. To incorporate the learnings from the first year of implementation, MNRE expanded and amended the scope of the scheme in November 2020 to include installation of solar power plants on pastureland and marshy land in addition to barren, fallow and agricultural land, reduced the size of solar plants to enable participation of small farmers, allowed financial assistance for more beneficiaries for cluster-based irrigation systems and amended the tender and testing procedures.82 The government has allocated ₹34,422 crore (around US \$5 billion) for the PM-KUSUM scheme. If the targets of the scheme are achieved, 30.8 GW of solar capacity can be added by 2022.83,i However, diverse regulatory, financial, operational, and technical challenges have affected the scheme's progress.84 The scheme needs a renewed push to accelerate the installation of solar-powered pumps. This can be done by improving coordination between different state departments like agriculture, irrigation and power, providing small and marginal farmers easy access to bank finance, and creating a level-playing field for distributed solar plants.⁸⁵

In order to improve access to clean cooking energy in the country, the Government of India launched Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) in May 2016. Between 2016 and 2019, the government distributed more than 80 million liquified petroleum gas (LPG) connections under the PMUY at subsidized connection costs.86 However, despite increased LPG access, 38 percent of Indian homes (mainly rural) stacked LPG with solid fuels, primarily due to high refill prices.87 Under the FY 21-22 budget, provision for release of additional 10 million LPG connections under the second phase of the *Ujjwala* scheme has been made, with special focus on migrant families.88 However, there is a need to provide targeted subsidies to poorer households to make LPG affordable. The government also needs to create an opportunity cost for biomass for those who procure and prepare biomass to meet their cooking energy needs.



Energy efficient appliances adopted by rural households in Gujarat as part of the green village plan implementation. Source: SEWA

Villages are a green economic opportunity. Empowering families living in India's villages with renewable energy and energy efficient appliances can help improve livelihoods, create jobs and enhance resilience to climate impacts. SEWA, NRDC and other partners are implementing green village plans in 10 villages in India. Led by women, green village plans bring together local communities, suppliers, financiers, and government officials to implement effective clean energy solutions for villages. If scaled up across India, green village plans have the potential to avoid 8,500 metric tons of CO_2 every year and act as an economic development model that is sustainable, rural-focused and genderinclusive.⁸⁹

PM KUSUM's initial targets were 1.75 million standalone pumps (component B) and 1 million grid-connected pumps (component C). This was increased in the February 2020 budget announcement to 2 million for component B and 1.5 million for component C.

Energy Efficiency

With skyrocketing urbanization, the demand for buildings, appliances, and industry is rising. Buildings and industry already account for over 70 percent of India's annual energy usage. ⁹⁰ With India's growing economy, advancing energy efficiency will be critical to saving energy, increasing energy access, and combating pollution.

Buildings

Residential and commercial buildings in India account for nearly 30 percent of total electricity consumption, and this is expected to increase to 48 percent by 2042.91 In 2017, the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) released an updated Energy Conservation Building Code (ECBC).92 The ECBC sets minimum energy standards for commercial buildings and designates state agencies to certify and enforce ECBC by notifying the code. As of July 2021, 18 states and two Union Territories, including Andaman & Nicobar, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram, Odisha, Puducherry, Punjab, Rajasthan, Telangana, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal have notified ECBC. Five states have incorporated the ECBC into their by-laws: Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Telangana, and Uttar Pradesh, Four states - Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Telangana, and Uttar Pradesh—have taken additional steps to add transparent compliance processes and enforcement mechanisms.93

Over 225 commercial buildings have been certified under BEE's Star Rating Program. ⁹⁴ India ranks third in the world for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification with more than 1,400 LEED-certified buildings, including schools, hospitals, offices, residential buildings, and more. ⁹⁵ It has certified 3,369 LEED projects, totaling over 167 million gross square meters of certified space. ⁹⁶ If states across India adopt energy-saving building codes and leading developers go beyond minimum code requirements for commercial buildings, an estimated 3,453 TeraWatt hours of electricity could be saved cumulatively by 2030, equivalent to powering 358 million Indian homes annually between 2014 and 2030. ⁹⁷

To further promote building energy efficiency, BEE announced a new initiative—the NEERMAN Awards in July 2021. The awards will provide national-level recognition for exemplary building designs that comply with BEE's ECBC. BEE also released a revised and a complete version of residential building energy code—Eco Niwas Samhita 2021, which now includes all building systems in addition to the building envelope (from the earlier code). This code

will help drive energy savings in India's residential buildings sector, also expected to grow rapidly in the coming decades.

Green Appliances and Sustainable Cooling

India has made significant progress on energy-efficient appliances. Established in 2006, BEE's Standards and Labeling Program consists of both mandatory and voluntary schemes for 26 major appliances, including refrigerators, air conditioners, tube lights, color televisions, and electric geysers.¹⁰⁰ India has a specific program for addressing lighting and has successfully implemented one of the most extensive lightbulb replacement programs in the world. As of July 2021, the UJALA program distributed more than 367 million LED lights resulting in an annual emission reduction of 38.6 million tons of CO₂e. 101 BEE claims that their STAR Labelling Program for room ACs saved up to 4.6 billion units of energy in FY 2017-2018 translating into 38 million tons of CO₂ emission reduction. 102 The UJALA program has been successful in transforming the lighting sector in India. Nearly two-thirds of the lighting stock in Indian homes now comprises LED bulbs and tube-lights. 103

As of January 2020, India requires that all room air conditioners have a default temperature setpoint of 24°C (75.2°F), potentially resulting in significant energy savings. ¹⁰⁴ BEE has also released an updated room air conditioner standard that requires an Indian Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio (ISEER) of 3.3-5.0 for split air conditioners and an ISEER of 2.7-3.5 for window air conditioners effective January 2022. ¹⁰⁵

India was one of the first countries to release a national plan on cooling—the India Cooling Action Plan (ICAP) in 2019. The ICAP is a comprehensive plan that prioritizes energy efficient, climate-friendly, and affordable cooling for all. ¹⁰⁶ Working with civil society groups (including NRDC), the Government of India has now initiated the implementation of the plan and formed several thematic working groups to strategize implementation.

India's major inverter air conditioning market has been proactive in its efforts to reduce the high-global warming refrigerant HFCs that are used in air conditioning units while leapfrogging to the more climate-friendly R32 refrigerant. India's Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL) initiated a first of its kind Super-Efficient Air Conditioning Programme, under which consumers can buy the Super-Efficient Air Conditioners distributed by EESL at competitive prices. These super-efficient ACs provide 1.5 Tons of Refrigeration (TR) cooling capacity at high ambient temperature while also reducing the cost of cooling by 50 percent. 107 These ACs are more energy efficient than a 5-star labelled AC in the

market and use the low-global warming potential (GWP) refrigerant R-32.

Passive cooling techniques such as cool roofs, energy-efficient buildings, mobile air conditioning and cold-chain improvements are also part of the ICAP, which aims to reduce the demand for cooling.

In April 2021, with a view to expand sustainable cooling and enhance access to cooling, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) working with partners NRDC and Indian Institute of Public Health-Gandhinagar (IIPH-G), released a "Heat Wave Season 2021: Cool Roofs Challenge." 23 states and over 100 cities have developed Heat Action Plans (HAP) and several of them have included cool roofs targets as part of HAPs. ¹⁰⁸

Industrial Energy Efficiency

The National Mission for Enhanced Energy Efficiency (NMEEE) aims to improve efficiency in industry and implement demand-side management programs. The main program, Perform Achieve Trade (PAT), establishes an energy trading program for high emitting industries – cement, aluminum, steel, iron, textiles, and paper and pulp. Under PAT Cycle I from 2012-2015, over 31 million tons of CO2e were avoided.¹⁰⁹ PAT Cycle II from 2016-2019, which included an expanded list of sectors, is believed to have avoided an additional 31 million tons of CO₂e emissions. PAT Cycle III seeks to cover six energy-intensive sectors: thermal power plants, cement, aluminum, pulp and paper, iron and steel, and textile. Under PAT Cycle III energy consumption is projected to be lowered by 3 percent annually for regulated industries. PAT Cycle IV and V are notified and seek to expand the certified energy trading to more industry sectors. 110 India is a major industrial hub globally, and the decarbonization of industry will be critical for India to continue to chart a low-carbon future. India has taken steps to form international alliances to help curb emissions in hard-to-abate sectors such as steel and cement.111

Transportation Sector

Even though walking remains the top mode of mobility in India, the transportation sector still accounts for upwards of 16 percent of total $\rm CO_2e$ emissions and over 33 percent of particulate matter (PM) pollution. ¹¹² In 2020, India was the fifth-largest global auto market, with approximately 3.49 million units sold in the passenger and commercial vehicles categories combined. COVID-19 has presented India's automotive sector with unprecedented challenges, as well as a liquidity crunch, higher acquisition costs, and weaker customer demand, which have all contributed substantially



Electric taxis getting charged in Delhi. Source: BluSmart

to the downturn the industry has been grappling with since the third quarter of fiscal year 2018. ¹¹³

Despite the recent slowdown, domestic automobile production increased at a 2.36 percent compound annual growth rate (CAGR) between FY16-20. 26.36 million vehicles were manufactured in the country in FY20. Overall, domestic automobiles sales increased at 1.29 percent CAGR between FY16-FY20 with 21.55 million vehicles sold in FY20. 114

Vehicle Emissions Standards

India adopted the Bharat Stage VI (BS VI) vehicular and fuel emission standards as a part of its Auto Fuel Policy. Effective April 2020, India now has ultra-low sulfur fuel (10 parts per million or ppm) in use across the country. The BS VI emission norms for 2-wheelers are also among the most stringent in the world. The BS VI emissions standards will result in up to 40 percent reduction in particulate matter emissions and 43 percent reduction in NOx compared to BS IV emission standards. 115 Real Driving Emission testing will be implemented in 2023 to prevent the use of cheating devices and to regulate vehicle emissions. Additionally, India introduced a first phase of Corporate Average Fuel Efficiency (CAFE) standards in April 2017, aimed at increasing the efficiency of internal combustion engine vehicles, with a target to bring about an 18 percent improvement in fuel consumption of passenger vehicles by 2022, compared to 2012. 116 Recently the Government of India made its intention clear by rejecting automakers' plea to extend the deadline for CAFE norms tightening past 2022, citing that the industry is meeting stringent anti-pollution standards in countries to which they are exporting vehicles, hence the same standards must be adhered to in India as well.¹¹⁷

In Phase 1 (2017-2022), CAFE norms require average corporate fleet $\mathrm{CO_2}$ emissions to be less than 130 g/km by 2022. In Phase II (2022 onwards), these limits would be reduced to less than 113 g/km and could be further tightened to 108 or 104 g/km. 118

Electric Vehicles

India's electric vehicle journey started in 2013, with the Government putting out the National Electric Mobility Mission Plan 2020 with the aim to subsidize the cost and facilitate the sale of 6 to 7 million hybrid and electric vehicles by 2020. 119 With 236,802 electric vehicles (EV) sold during the financial year 2020-2021 (1.3 percent of total vehicles sold during this period), India ramped up its investment in electric mobility with FAME-II, which provides ₹10,000 crore (US \$1.4 billion) for demand incentives and charging infrastructure subsidies across market types including electric public buses, commercial vehicles, three-wheelers, and privately owned two-wheelers. 120 In 2021, the Government of India extended FAME-II until 2024 and also increased the demand incentives for electric two wheelers from 10,000 per kWh to 15,000 per kWh. 121

However, for vehicles to be eligible for demand incentives under the FAME-II scheme, vehicle original equipment manufacturers need to meet the localization criteria as specified under the Phased Manufacturing Program. Specifically, the scheme requires half of the vehicle parts to be locally sourced in India.¹²² To strengthen battery storage, the National Mission on Transformative Mobility and Battery Storage is designed to support battery and EV component manufacturing in India. 123 To promote the Make in India initiative, the Government of India also approved the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for manufacturing advanced chemistry cell battery with an estimated outlay of 18,100 crore (US \$16 billion). 124 The proposal aims to achieve manufacturing of 50 GW of battery storage, which is critical to India's renewable energy and EV mission. To raise India's stature as a manufacturing hub, the Government is planning to extend the PLI schemes under the Global Champion plan to 10 other key sectors, including automotive, with budgetary support of US \$26 billion. 125

The Ministry of Power further amended the charging infrastructure guidelines, making them technology agnostic and encouraging both private and public sector entities to set up charging/swapping stations. ¹²⁶ In early 2020, the Indian government approved the establishment of 2,636 publicly funded charging stations in 62 cities across 24

states and union territories.¹²⁷ The government also intends to set up charging stations at approximately 69,000 fuel pumps across India.¹²⁸ State and municipalities have also begun to lead the way on electric vehicle incentives and policies. Starting with the notification of the Karnataka Electric Vehicle and Energy Storage Policy in 2017, a total of 15 Indian states (Karnataka, Delhi, Kerala, Maharashtra, Uttarakhand, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Telangana. West Bengal, Bihar, Chandigarh, Punjab, Haryana, Gujarat, Assam and Himachal Pradesh) have notified or have draft EV policies as of July 2021.¹²⁹

Public Transit

India has a rail network of over 68,155 km, including a 660 km network of metro rail, which have proven to be an efficient means of transportation considering energy consumption, space occupancy, and numbers transported.130 This railway network is the fourth largest in the world and is second in terms of rail passenger volume. 131 India is working to electrify its rail network, and in July 2020, Indian Railways announced that it would target net-zero carbon emissions by 2030. 132 Currently, 12 Indian cities have metro rail networks - Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi, Gurgaon, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Kochi, Kolkata, Lucknow, Mumbai, and Nagpur. Public buses and private buses are also a growing form of transportation, and in 2017 there were 1.7 million privately owned and 1.5 million public buses. 133 Moreover, the central government has allocated ₹35.45 billion (US \$486 million) in incentives to support the adoption of 7,090 e-buses and to date, 5,595 e-buses have been sanctioned to 64 cities and State Transport Undertakings. 134 Major Indian states and cities, including Gujarat, Maharashtra, New Delhi, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Kerala, also have their own programs for the expansion of electric bus fleets. 135

Mobilizing Green Investment

While India has received more than US \$42 billion in green investment since 2014, US \$500 billion in investment is needed to achieve India's target of 450 GW of clean energy by 2030 target. ¹³⁶ This includes investment in transmission and storage to support grid integration besides investments in RE generation. Investments needed in RE generation alone are approximately US \$200 billion. ¹³⁷ In the near term, India needs over US \$35 billion in investments for renewable energy infrastructure (not including transmission lines) to meet its 175 GW by 2022 target. ¹³⁸

India is working to provide funding for clean energy through government programs, private investments, and international climate finance. However, public funds by themselves will not produce the capital required; catalytic finance is needed to help expand the clean energy market. Catalytic finance leverages limited public funds to bring in greater private investment. Catalytic financial mechanisms and institutional facilities such as "green windows" can be effective in transforming the India clean energy market. India has two dedicated clean energy finance institutions, the Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA) and Tata Cleantech Capital Limited (TCCL). IREDA is planning to pilot the first green window in India to develop and implement catalytic finance solutions. 139 India's support for the green window could attract more concessional funding and open up the Indian clean energy market to new classes of international investors. TCCL is the world's first private sector Green Bank. It is a member of the global Green Bank Network and the first private sector entity to partner GCF to mainstream rooftop solar financing in India.¹⁴⁰

Green bonds are another beneficial investment instrument. IREDA and National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) have used masala bonds to increase the number of green bonds in the market. From 2014-2021, Indian developers raised over ₹78,200 crore (US \$11 billion) through green bonds issued in international markets. Hard According to a recent study by the Council on Energy, Environment and Water, that trajectory seems to be on an upswing. In the first half of 2021, a record-breaking US \$3.6 billion was raised—more than even previous 12-month periods. Apart from IREDA and NTPC, Greenko, ReNew Power, Azure Power, TCCL and Adani Green Energy have been integral to issuing green bonds. Greenko and ReNew Power have accounted for nearly 70 percent of all issuances by value. 143

Most power distribution companies (DISCOMs) have weak financial health. The DISCOMs debt has risen to ₹1.3 lakh crore (US \$18 billion). Have the reports suggest that debt could increase to ₹4.5 lakh crore (US \$66 billion) in FY 2021. Have a part of the economic stimulus measures, the national government has extended a ₹90,000 crore (US \$13 billion) liquidity line to DISCOMs. The loan will help DISCOMs pay outstanding dues owed to power generation companies through March 2020. Power Finance Corporation and Rural Electrification Corporation (both public sector institutions) have co-financed the loan. Have the results of the sector institutions and the sector institutions where the sector institutions is the sector institution of the public sector institutions in the sector institutions.

In the wake of the COVID-19 economic slowdown, capital investments will prioritize economic development and job creation. The economic recovery is an opportunity to increase public investment in clean energy. Historically low oil prices represent an opportunity to reduce fossil fuel subsidies, free up public capital and redefine future energy consumption trends.¹⁴⁷

To help India meet its clean energy finance needs, the OECD's Clean Energy Finance and Investment Mobilisation team and NRDC are jointly developing a roadmap for Clean Energy Finance Investment in India to put forward solutions for these clean energy segments that require investment support over the next five years. ¹⁴⁸ The Roadmap will bring government and private sector stakeholders together to agree upon a clear action plan that identifies and addresses bottlenecks constraining financial institutions and investments, outline opportunities to tailor market and policy interventions to unlock further private finance, and focus on specific solutions for clean energy segments that require investment support.

The Impacts of Climate Change on India

Recent assessments, including the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Sixth Assessment report and the Ministry of Earth Sciences' Assessment of Climate Change over the Indian Region, have provided dire new warnings about the impacts of climate change on the Indian subcontinent. Sea levels are disproportionately increasing, average temperatures have risen, monsoon extremes are likely to increase, and the already extreme heat and rainfall events will occur with greater frequency, resulting in more flooding and droughts. The reports call for a greater emphasis on meeting growing energy needs with clean and renewable energy, as well as bold adaptation and mitigation responses, recommending increased monitoring, research, and investment in partnerships that promote community resilience.

- According to the IPCC, the sea level around Asia has increased faster than the global average. Coastal area loss and shoreline retreats are
 already in progress and the regional mean sea level is expected to continue rising in the years to come.¹⁵¹ Already, there was a high level of
 confidence that the rate of global mean sea level will rise by 26 centimeters by 2050, which would exacerbate the destructive potential of
 storm surges from cyclone storms.¹⁵²
- India's average temperature has increased by 0.43°C from 1986 to 2018, which is projected to increase the total duration of heatwaves to 40 days by the end of the twenty-first century under a business-as-usual high emission scenario.¹⁵³
- The new IPCC report indicates that both annual and summer monsoon precipitation will increase during the 21st century, with a higher degree of year-to-year variation in monsoon precipitation. According to climate models, precipitation will increase over much of Asia, threatening increased flooding, including in cities such as Mumbai, Chennai, and Kolkata.¹⁵⁴
- The rise in mean surface temperature over India increases the frequency and intensity of warm days and warm nights, which can trigger temperature-related illness and fatalities.¹⁵⁵
- The Himalayan and Tibetan plateau have experienced substantial warming, which is significant as this region has the most extensive ice cover outside of the poles, and snowmelt accounts for a large portion of India's freshwater supply. 156

Strengthening Resilience to Extreme Heat and Air Pollution

Extreme Heat

The National Heat Guidelines developed by the NDMA, Indian Metrological Department and partners expand heat action plans to states and cities in India. The city of Ahmedabad implemented South Asia's first-ever heat action plan in 2013, providing an early warning and preparedness system to increase residents' resilience to extreme heat events. Since then, more than 23 states and over 100 cities in India have followed suit.¹⁵⁷

Climate solutions, such as cool roofs, are critical for protecting communities from extreme heat, as included in heat action plans and the ICAP.¹⁵⁸ Cool roofs are shown to yield a 2-5°C (3-5°F) reduction in indoor air temperature; the cities of Ahmedabad and Hyderabad are developing citywide cool roofs program pilots.¹⁵⁹ India also implemented the National Adaptation Fund for Climate Change, which was established in 2015 to help states become more resilient to the adverse effects of climate change. States can submit project proposals to the NAFCC program and will then receive subsequent program funding.¹⁶⁰

NDMA, along with some sub-national disaster management authorities and local governments, have initiated the inclusion of medium- and long-term adaptive measures for building community level resilience to extreme heat. This includes incorporation of better thermal efficiency principles in model building codes, as well as the integration of other ongoing government projects, such as state action plans on climate change and smart city programs.

Air Quality

India's National Clean Air Program (NCAP), released in 2019, aims to reduce particulate matter by 20 to 30 percent by 2024, compared to 2017 levels. 161 Under the program, 124 cities have prepared city-level action plans by the Central Pollution Control Board to meet the specified NCAP targets. The city-specific plans are primarily standalone measures without an airshed component, and the NCAP provides limited budgetary allocation.¹⁶² Several cities, such as Ahmedabad, Pune, and New Delhi, have developed city clean air plans, including a focus air quality index and health risk communications. In addition, several states are expanding the New Delhi's Graded Response Action Plan to respond to air pollution emergencies, including odd and even license plate programs, shutting down thermal power plants, limiting construction and industrial activities, and other measures.¹⁶³ The NCAP is the first of its kind national level policy formulated to address air quality in Indian cities. It is a significant intervention to address air quality; however, state-level implementation and budgetary allocation are needed to achieve NCAP goals.

The Fifteenth Finance Commission report for 2020-2021 recommends a new grant program for ambient air quality improvements. The grant program targets cities with 1 million or more residents and Urban Agglomerations (UAs). The Finance Commission recommends ₹4,440 crore (US \$604 million) per grant used for air quality improvement measures, monitoring, and local body capacity building. In a subsequent Finance Commission Report for 2021-26 released in February 2021, this grant program has been deepened and renewed, with the total allocation of ₹12,139 crore (US \$1.65 billion) over a period of 5 years. ¹⁶⁴ To date,



42 cities have received the grant, and these funds have been linked to the improvement of air quality indicators in the UAs, with better performing cities receiving greater funding.

Another major development is the establishment of an all-powerful California Air Resources Board-styled Air Quality Commission. Called the CAQM, it has major implications for setting a template for regional airshed level air quality management, and can potentially be replicated in other air quality hotspots across the country. ¹⁶⁵

The COVID-19 lockdown and decline in mobile and industrial activity had a temporary but dramatic effect on air quality in India. An official report by the Central Pollution Control Board found a striking 50 percent drop in fine particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$) and PM_{10} levels in Delhi. ¹⁶⁶ From April to May 2020, $PM_{2.5}$, PM_{10} , No_2 (nitrous oxide), and CO dropped across India's metropolitan cities while ozone increased in some areas. The largest decline occurred in Ahmedabad (68 percent), Delhi (71 percent), Bangalore (87 percent), and Nagpur (63 percent) for $PM_{2.5}$, PM_{10} , NO_2 , and CO, respectively. ¹⁶⁷

Global Engagement

Stepping up climate cooperation, India and France launched the International Solar Alliance (ISA) during COP21 in 2015. The ISA aims to mobilize more than \$100 billion by 2030 to promote solar power globally. As of July 2021, 89 countries have signed the framework agreement, and of those, 79 have also ratified. The International Solar Alliance recently launched a plan "One Solar, One World, and One Grid" that aims to support greater renewables penetration through interconnected grid systems.

The Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol, the global pact to phase down super-climate-pollutants called HFCs, is moving towards implementation. As of August 2021, 123 countries, including China, have ratified the agreement; with the United States' moving towards ratification, and India's recent announcement of intent to ratify, all major economies are now on board. India was central to the formation of the Kigali Amendment, and has for decades played a key role in bringing about the success of the Montreal Protocol, arguably the most successful international environmental treaty to date. The government's recent commitment through ratification is a strong signal of support and will also boost the Indian industry in transitioning away from HFC usage. 169

To support the construction of climate-resilient infrastructure, India launched the international Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure at the September 2019 Climate Action Summit in New York.¹⁷⁰ India also co-created the Leadership Group for Industry Transition, a cooperative to promote innovation and technology exchange. The initiative will target steel, cement, and aviation to reach net-zero emissions from heavy industry by mid-century.¹⁷¹ In March 2020, this collaborative was extended to support energy research and innovation, and India and Sweden established a co-funding mechanism to support the research and development of smart grid technologies.¹⁷²

At the UNFCCC COP in November 2021, all countries are expected to submit progressively stronger NDCs and work to intensify efforts on finance and adaptation. Since the last COP in 2019, the United States has rejoined the Paris Agreement on President Biden's first day in office, providing a renewed vigor to the discussions. In April 2020, the United States submitted an enhanced NDC to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 50-52 percent by 2030 from 2005 levels – nearly double the Obama-era target, setting the stage for other large economies to follow suit. China has committed to carbon neutrality by 2060, and peak carbon emissions by 2030. As one of the three major economies, India remains a critical international stakeholder when it comes to increasing ambition and charting a low carbon future.

India's commitments under the Paris Agreement are robust and achievable. Prime Minister Modi has announced even higher ambitions at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Glasglow. This sets the right tone for other countries to raise their ambitions as well. Meeting India's and the world's climate goals would need a significantly large investment and wealthier countries need to step up their climate finance contributions.. India has been an engaged stakeholder to the Paris Agreement, and India's commitment to be energy independent further signals that India is rising up to meet the climate challenge. Given the urgent need for all countries in the world to do more to combat the climate crisis, the time is right for India to accelerate its transition away from fossil fuels and ensure a green and sustainable future for all.

This is the thirteenth edition of NRDC's Series on India's Climate Actions.

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