

Coal phase-out in COP28 pledge

December 4, 2023 • vajiramandravi.com



What's in today's article?

- Why in news?
- Why India will continue to rely on coal for foreseeable future?
- News Summary: Coal phase-out in COP28 pledge
- Key highlights: Coal phase-out in COP28 pledge

Why in news?

- India refrained from signing the pledge to triple global renewable energy capacity by 2030 as the draft text mentioned phasing out coal.
- Also, a mention of health sector emissions is expected to keep India away from a declaration on health as well.

Why India will continue to rely on coal for foreseeable future?

- Background

- Recently, India said it would continue to rely on coal for electricity generation for the foreseeable future, even as it rapidly expanded its renewable energy sources.
- In recent years India has steadily increased its coal production.
- Experts believe India's stand on coal is in stark contrast to the country's ambitious plans of achieving net-zero.
 - India has promised to meet 50% of its electricity requirements from renewable energy sources by 2030, and 100% by 2070.
- India's growing energy demand
 - The power demand in India is surging. In 2022, the requirement grew about 8%, around more than 149.7 terawatt-hours (TWh) in comparison to the previous year.
 - The primary reason for this increase is higher economic activity.
 - Industrial and commercial activity are among the biggest consumers of energy in the country.
 - Homes account for a fourth of India's power use and agriculture for more than a sixth in recent years.
 - India will witness the largest energy demand growth of any country or region in the world over the next 30 years, according to the latest World Energy Outlook by the International Energy Agency (IEA).
- Coal dependency
 - India has doubled down on its coal production.
 - It spiked from 778 million tons in 2021-22 to 893 million tons in 2022-23, a 14% growth, according to the coal ministry.
 - India has also set a target of 1.31 billion tonnes of coal production for 2024-25 and aims to increase it to 1.5 billion tons by 2030.
- Why coal is the only fix for India's growing energy demand?
 - Although India has been trying to push up its renewable share of power generation in recent years, it is nowhere near meeting the requirement.
 - Currently, out of the total energy produced in the country, only 22% of it comes from renewable sources.
 - Fossil fuels, mainly coal, still provide 75% of India's power supply.
 - Renewables are not a reliable source of power generation.
 - To ensure a steady supply, India has to heavily invest in battery storage.
 - However, grid-scale battery storage is expensive due to supply chain disruptions.
 - Hydropower, a key renewable energy source for India, has its own complexities.
 - Numerous hydropower projects are under construction or in the planning stages in the Himalayan region, including in Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim.
 - But they have come under fire as the projects have caused ecological damage and raised concerns about the potential conflicts over water resources in the area.
 - The country's plans to generate energy with the help of nuclear power plants have not really taken off.
 - During 2021-22, the plants produced about 3.15% of the total electricity generated in India.
- What's next
 - India aims to reach 500 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2030, about three times the current capacity of about 180 GW.

- However, given the constraints regarding renewable energy, it will continue to fall back on coal-generated electricity.
- India is implementing plans to phase down coal use, not phase out.

News Summary: Coal phase-out in COP28 pledge

- A reference to coal phase-out prevented India from endorsing a renewable energy pledge at the COP28 climate meeting.

Key highlights: Coal phase-out in COP28 pledge

- Pledge on tripling global renewable energy
 - The pledge was mainly about tripling global renewable energy installed capacity by 2030.
 - This is something that India had already backed as part of the G20 grouping.
 - Included references to coal phase-out and an end to fresh investments in that sector
 - The pledge included references to coal phase-out and an end to fresh investments in that sector, something that India could not sign on to.
 - The pledge was not part of the COP discussions
 - This pledge was a part of an initiative by the host country to forge alliances on some specific subjects to create a momentum for greater climate actions.
 - These pledges or alliances have no legal sanctity. India has rarely been part of such platforms.
 - India is unlikely to endorse a health declaration as well
 - For the first time, COP had a dedicated health day Sunday.
 - The declaration that expressed the grave impact of climate change on human health and well-being. It emphasised on urgent climate action to reduce such impacts.
 - However, the text has references to curbing of emissions from the health sector, and assessment of greenhouse gas emissions of health systems.
 - India has reiterated its position it does not want to align itself with these kind of sectoral approaches outside the UNFCCC framework.
 - Such pledges and declarations are not negotiated documents and do not contain the nuance language that comes out of negotiations.
 - India has generally kept away from becoming a part of such initiatives, particularly those that contain issues it is sensitive to.
 - This is because they could prejudice its positions at the climate change negotiations.
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Q1) What is Coal?

Coal is a sedimentary rock that is black or brownish-black in color. It is mostly made up of carbon, but also contains other elements like hydrogen, sulfur, oxygen, and nitrogen. Coal is combustible and is used as a fuel.

Q2) What is International Energy Agency (IEA)?

The International Energy Agency (IEA) is an intergovernmental organization that provides data, analysis, and policy recommendations on the global energy sector. The IEA was established in 1974 by members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in response to the 1973 Arab oil embargo.

Source: [Coal phase-out in COP28 pledge, India refrains from endorsing it](#) | [The Print](#) | [Economic Times](#) | [Indian Express](#)

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