

The shape of a five-year climate agenda for India

As the new government settles in, what it does to scale up climate action will affect every Ministry, new and old, and every sector, big and small. Some of its choices would be pivotal to how India structures its economic path in a sustainable way, positions itself as the voice of the Global South at the right tables, and fights for climate finance and justice over the next five years.

India's transformation

Over the last decade, India has shown significant climate intent and progress on many fronts. It has moved on from being a hesitant participant reacting to developments in the global climate discourse to being a bold leader shaping narratives and institutions. First, it has laid the foundation for global institutions such as the International Solar Alliance, the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure, and the Global Biofuels Alliance, as well as shaped the Green Development Pact under its G-20 presidency last year. Second, for the first time, India has started talking about bolder and more ambitious emission mitigation targets. The 2070 net-zero target and ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) are milestones. With the net-zero announcement, India has acknowledged the criticality of absolute emission reductions over the near-term relative emissions-intensity-based targets. The net-zero goal has changed the debate domestically with various actors, policymakers and the private sector. Third, sustainability-linked domestic economic policies are no longer on the margins. The creation of an Indian emissions carbon trading scheme, an institution that should operate for at least 30-40 years, is a case in point.

In the next five years, the government must accelerate and show the world that economic development can be sustainable, too. India should follow the mantra of 'go higher, go wider,



Vaibhav Chaturvedi

a Senior Fellow at the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) and leads its low carbon economy and carbon markets research

The new government should aim to take India's global climate leadership to the next level with a 'higher, wider, deeper' plan

go deeper' to align its climate leadership with economic prowess.

A plan sheet for India

'Go higher' relates to India's global leadership. The country could, sooner or later, host important international climate summits. If it were to host the United Nations Conference of Parties in 2028, it would need to be as successful as the G-20 Presidency. In global negotiations, four years is not that far. Does India want 'the world agrees to no new investment in oil and gas after 2030' as part of the decision text? Does it want a big commitment on adaptation finance so that developing countries can shield themselves against increasing heatwaves, storms, floods and droughts? It takes at least four to five years to achieve consensus on contentious issues. Deciding on what could potentially be the big wins in 2028 and socialising these across countries to stitch alliances and ally concerns must start right away. Alongside, India should continue doubling down on the narrative of equity in international forums, and create leadership space for itself in global institutions that can deliver climate finance.

'Go wider' means India has to adopt and strongly communicate sectoral emission reduction targets that go beyond the power sector. India has achieved significant progress in the power sector and will continue to do so to keep pace with its international non-fossil share-related and domestic renewable energy capacity targets.

The next step is to broaden the target to other sectors. For instance, it could be related to the private mobility space, giving a clear target for zero-carbon two- and four-wheelers. This is not just an urban India project. It will help rural India become mobile, drive jobs in clean energy and sustainability, and promote economic growth. As the last decade has shown, credible policy goals

have been powerful signals and forced relevant industries and stakeholders to act. The NDC for 2035, due to be submitted next year, can be an opportunity for going wider with India's energy transition targets.

State-level plans are important

Finally, going deeper implies that sub-national climate action and resilience must come to the fore in this term of the government. Some shoots of this are already visible. The Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) is working across many States in India to support their net-zero plans through long-term climate and energy modelling. For instance, we collaborated with Tamil Nadu and Bihar for their recently-released plans for a transition towards a net-zero future. The government should think about creating a Centre-State coordination group, incentivising State-level climate actions through the Sixteenth Finance Commission, promoting a deeper integration of scientific modelling capabilities in policymaking, and facilitating a unified data measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) architecture at the State level. Given India's federal structure, this recommendation does not mean centralising climate actions, but ensuring that State-level actions are better coordinated without compromising their autonomy. This is possible only if the process goes beyond States individually trying to understand and respond to the climate crisis, and the Centre comes in as an active facilitator.

The new government should aim to take India's global climate leadership to the next level in its new term. It should look ahead for at least the next four to five years, and not just a year at a time. On most international tables now, India has a seat. It must now demonstrate prowess.

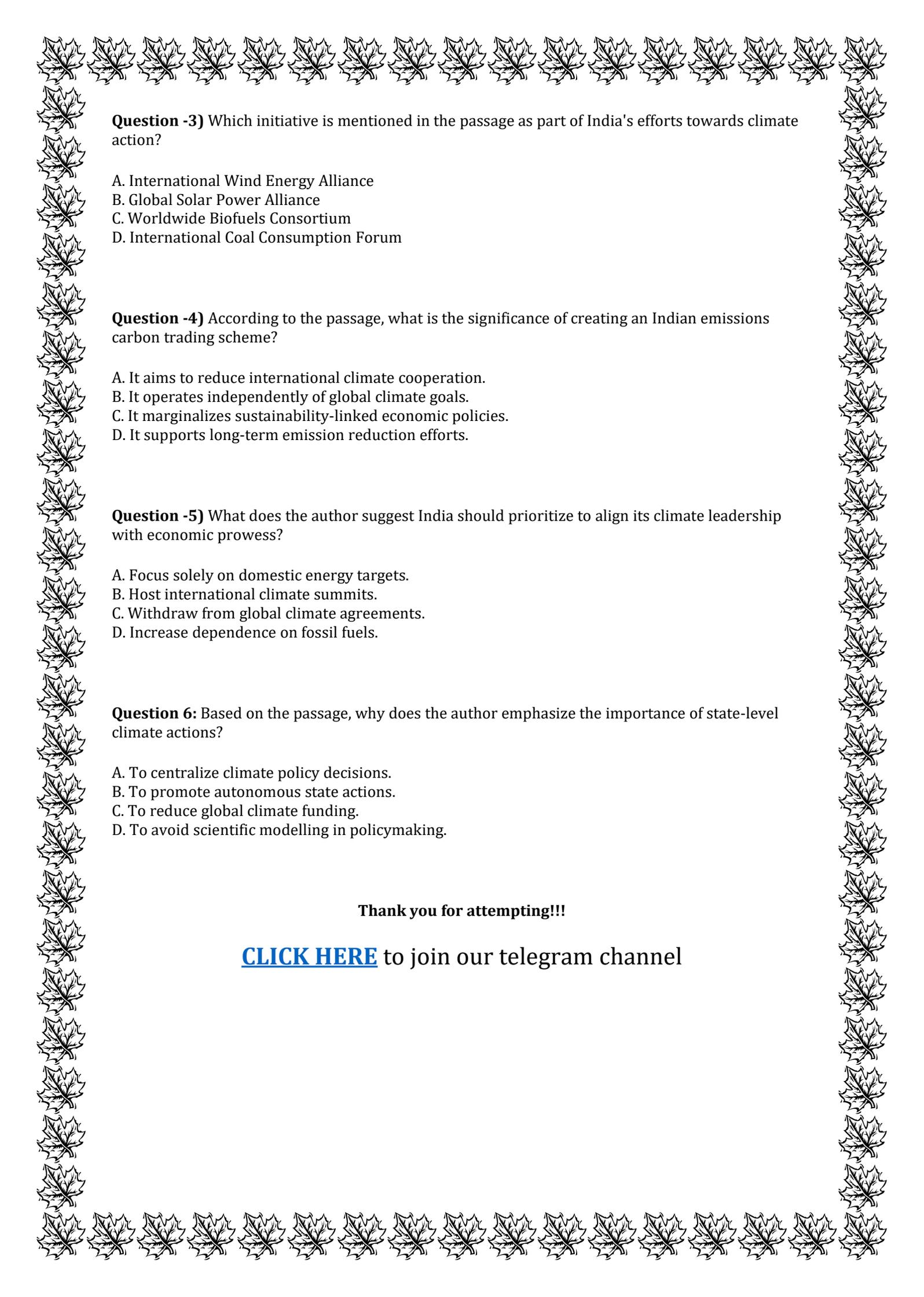
The views expressed are personal

Question -1) Which of the following best describes India's role in global climate discourse according to the passage?

- A. India has been a passive observer.
- B. India has gradually become a hesitant participant.
- C. India is now a bold leader shaping narratives.
- D. India has always resisted global climate agreements.

Question -2) According to the passage, what is one outcome of India's net-zero announcement?

- A. Decreased international cooperation.
- B. Increased debate on emission intensity targets.
- C. Shift towards absolute emission reductions.
- D. Reduced focus on sustainability-linked economic policies.



Question -3) Which initiative is mentioned in the passage as part of India's efforts towards climate action?

- A. International Wind Energy Alliance
- B. Global Solar Power Alliance
- C. Worldwide Biofuels Consortium
- D. International Coal Consumption Forum

Question -4) According to the passage, what is the significance of creating an Indian emissions carbon trading scheme?

- A. It aims to reduce international climate cooperation.
- B. It operates independently of global climate goals.
- C. It marginalizes sustainability-linked economic policies.
- D. It supports long-term emission reduction efforts.

Question -5) What does the author suggest India should prioritize to align its climate leadership with economic prowess?

- A. Focus solely on domestic energy targets.
- B. Host international climate summits.
- C. Withdraw from global climate agreements.
- D. Increase dependence on fossil fuels.

Question 6: Based on the passage, why does the author emphasize the importance of state-level climate actions?

- A. To centralize climate policy decisions.
- B. To promote autonomous state actions.
- C. To reduce global climate funding.
- D. To avoid scientific modelling in policymaking.

Thank you for attempting!!!

[CLICK HERE](#) to join our telegram channel