



UPSC &amp; STATE PCS CURRENT AFFAIRS · UJIYARI.COM

**DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS**

# India Withdraws COP33 Hosting Bid: Climate Leadership at the Crossroads

18 April 2026

ENVIRONMENT

IR

GS3

GS2

CURATED &amp; WRITTEN BY

**Bharat Choudhary**

UPSC Educator &amp; Content Creator

[linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)**ALSO FROM THE CREATOR****BharatNotes**Free UPSC notes, MCQs, PYQ analysis. **100% Free.**[bharatnotes.com](http://bharatnotes.com) →**ADVERTISE****Advertise with Ujiyari**

Reach thousands of UPSC aspirants daily.

[epicbharat@gmail.com](mailto:epicbharat@gmail.com)

# India Withdraws COP33 Hosting Bid: Climate Leadership at the Crossroads

18 April 2026 · 6 min read ·

2 tags ▾

## WHY IN NEWS:

The **Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)** formally confirmed in mid-April 2026 that India has **withdrawn its bid to host the UNFCCC Conference of Parties (COP33)** scheduled for 2028. The bid was originally announced by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi at COP28 in Dubai in December 2023**. India's government cited "a review of commitments for 2028" as the reason. **South Korea** — particularly the province of Jeollanam-do — has emerged as the leading alternative host. The withdrawal raises significant questions about India's climate leadership trajectory and the rotation of climate summit hosting among Global South nations.

## WHAT IS COP, AND WHAT WAS INDIA'S BID?

### The UNFCCC Architecture

The **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)** was adopted at the **1992 Earth Summit (Rio)**. Its **Conference of Parties (COP)** is the supreme decision-making body, meeting annually since 1995. Key milestones:

COP	YEAR	LOCATION	SIGNIFICANCE
COP3	1997	Kyoto	Kyoto Protocol – binding emission cuts for developed countries
COP15	2009	Copenhagen	Failure to reach binding agreement
COP21	2015	Paris	<b>Paris Agreement</b> – universal participation
COP26	2021	Glasgow	India announced <b>Net Zero by 2070</b>
COP28	2023	Dubai	<b>India announced COP33 hosting bid</b>
COP29	2024	Baku	Climate finance year – \$300 billion goal
COP30	2025	Belém, Brazil	First COP in Amazon
COP31	2026	Türkiye (planned)	
COP32	2027	Ethiopia (planned)	
<b>COP33</b>	<b>2028</b>	<b>India bid withdrawn – South Korea emerging host</b>	

## Hosting a COP: Logistical and Political Significance

Hosting a COP confers:

- **Diplomatic prestige** – agenda-setting power, host country sets political priorities.
- **Climate finance leverage** – host can shape developed-country financial commitments to developing world.
- **Technology transfer agenda** – host can foreground green technology cooperation.
- **Soft power and tourism** – 30,000-50,000 delegates, global media attention.

But also requires:

- **Massive infrastructure** – venue, security, transport.
- **Hospitality scale** – 30,000+ delegates over 2 weeks.
- **Operational budget** – typically \$200-400 million for a major COP.

## WHY DID INDIA WITHDRAW?

### Stated Reason: Commitment Review

The MEA's official rationale is “**review of commitments for 2028**” — but the unstated reasons appear to include:

#### 1. Domestic Political Calendar

**2027 General Elections** could complicate hosting in 2028. Elections may produce policy continuity questions, transition uncertainty, or shifting priorities.

#### 2. Fiscal and Operational Costs

Hosting a major COP requires sustained \$200-400 million spending. Given competing priorities — semiconductor mission, AI mission, infrastructure expansion — the opportunity cost is significant.

#### 3. Strategic Re-evaluation

India may be reassessing whether hosting maximises its climate diplomacy returns. The **G20 presidency 2023** demonstrated India's convening power. A COP hosting would amplify this — but also expose India to direct accountability questions about its own emission trajectory and coal dependence.

#### 4. North-South Climate Politics

Hosting in 2028 (after the **Global Stocktake**, after India's own NDC target year of 2030 looms) would have placed India under intense scrutiny on:

- Coal phase-down trajectory.
- Climate finance contributions vs receipts.
- Loss and Damage Fund operationalisation.
- Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (EU CBAM) impact on India's exports.

These pressures may have made hosting a less attractive proposition than initially anticipated.

## WHAT INDIA'S WITHDRAWAL SIGNALS

### Soft Power Costs

India's withdrawal weakens its **Voice of the Global South** narrative — a position cultivated through:

- G20 presidency 2023.
- International Solar Alliance (ISA) leadership.
- Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI).

- Global Biofuels Alliance (GBA, launched 2023).
- Mission LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment) launched 2022.

## Climate Diplomacy Repositioning

India retains substantial climate-diplomacy assets even without COP33 hosting:

- **ISA membership now exceeds 120 countries** – major geopolitical platform.
- **CDRI** is becoming a major channel for resilience financing.
- **GBA** expands to ethanol/biofuel cooperation.
- **G20 Triumvirate engagement** with Brazil (G20 2024) and South Africa (G20 2025) on climate-development integration.

The withdrawal does not foreclose climate leadership but redirects it through plurilateral coalitions rather than UNFCCC-system hosting.

## INDIA'S CLIMATE ACTION LANDSCAPE

### NDC Targets (Updated 2022, post-Glasgow)

TARGET	SPECIFICS
Emission intensity reduction	45% from 2005 levels by 2030
Non-fossil capacity	50% of installed power by 2030
Carbon sink	2.5-3 billion tonnes additional via forests by 2030
Net-zero	2070

### Major Domestic Programmes

- **National Solar Mission** – ambitious solar deployment.
- **National Hydrogen Mission** – green hydrogen ecosystem.
- **PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana** – rooftop solar.
- **National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA).**
- **Compensatory Afforestation Fund (CAMPA).**
- **MISHTI** (mangrove plantation, Budget 2023-24).
- **Project Him Sarovar** (Ladakh water security, 2026).

## Renewable Capacity Trajectory

- **Current installed (April 2026):** ~210 GW renewable.
- **2030 target:** 500 GW non-fossil.
- **Solar + wind dominate** — but base-load gap remains nuclear and hydropower priority.

## THE CLIMATE FINANCE DIMENSION

A core unfinished agenda for COP33 is **climate finance**. Key debates:

### Developed-to-Developing Flows

- **Goal at Copenhagen (2009):** \$100 billion per year by 2020 — never fully met.
- **New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG)** at COP29 (2024): \$300 billion per year by 2035 — significantly below the \$1.3 trillion the Global South sought.
- **India's stance:** needs much higher climate finance flows to support transition.

### Loss and Damage Fund

Operationalised at **COP27 (Sharm el-Sheikh, 2022)**; **Initial pledge \$700 million** (against need estimated at \$400 billion+/year). India has supported the Fund but has not contributed to it (as a recipient-eligible country).

### Carbon Markets — Article 6 Operationalisation

**Article 6** of the Paris Agreement governs international carbon market mechanisms. Operationalisation has been slow; **COP29 made progress on Article 6.4 (centralised mechanism)** but **Article 6.2 (bilateral cooperation)** rules remain contentious.

## WHAT THIS MEANS FOR INDIA'S CLIMATE DIPLOMACY

### Plurilateral Reorientation

Without COP33, India will likely:

- **Strengthen ISA leadership** — adding solar storage, green hydrogen mandates.
- **Expand CDRI** beyond its current ~60-member network.
- **Lead within G20 climate working groups** (currently Brazil-South Africa-USA cycle).
- **Engage in BRICS climate dialogue** as the bloc expands.

## Domestic Action Continues

---

- **Coal phase-down trajectory** to be defined explicitly.
- **Carbon market** operationalisation under the Energy Conservation Act 2022 amendments.
- **Climate finance taxonomy** to channel green finance domestically.
- **Climate adaptation** investment under National Adaptation Fund for Climate Change (NAFCC).

## WAY FORWARD

### Short-Term (2026-27)

---

- ① **Clarify diplomatic positioning** — official MEA statement on the withdrawal rationale to avoid speculation.
- ② **Strengthen ISA institutional architecture** — secretariat capacity, financing window.
- ③ **CDRI expansion** with focus on Small Island Developing States (SIDS).
- ④ **Climate finance leadership** at G20 within Brazil-South Africa-USA cycle.

### Medium-Term (2027-30)

---

- ① **Engage post-2026 Census delimitation processes** with explicit climate-fiscal-federal integration.
- ② **Carbon market operationalisation** with international linkages under Article 6.
- ③ **Net-zero pathway clarity** — sector-by-sector **decarbonisation** roadmap.
- ④ **Climate-trade integration** — addressing EU CBAM through bilateral and WTO frameworks.

### Long-Term (2030-70)

---

- ① **Net Zero pathway implementation** with intermediate milestones.
- ② **South-South climate cooperation institutionalisation.**
- ③ **Climate-resilient infrastructure** as default for all public investment.

## UPSC RELEVANCE

PAPER	ANGLE
GS-3 Environment	UNFCCC, COP, Paris Agreement, Net Zero, NDCs, climate finance, Loss and Damage Fund, Article 6 carbon markets
GS-2 IR	Climate diplomacy, Voice of Global South, ISA, CDRI, GBA, G20, BRICS climate engagement
GS-3 Economy	Climate finance (\$100B → \$300B NCQG), green hydrogen mission, EU CBAM, energy transition costs
GS-2 Governance	NDC implementation, multi-stakeholder climate governance, Centre-state climate coordination
Mains Keywords	UNFCCC, COP33 withdrawal, COP28 Dubai bid, COP29 Baku, NCQG \$300 billion, Loss and Damage Fund, Paris Agreement, NDC, Net Zero 2070, ISA, CDRI, Global Biofuels Alliance, Mission LiFE, Article 6 carbon markets, EU CBAM, India climate diplomacy

## FACTS CORNER

ITEM	DETAIL
COP framework	UNFCCC (1992 Rio Earth Summit)
COP33 scheduled year	2028
India's original bid	Announced by PM Modi at COP28 Dubai, December 2023
Withdrawal confirmed	Mid-April 2026 (MEA)
India's stated rationale	"Review of commitments for 2028"
Leading alternative host	South Korea (Jeollanam-do province expressed interest)
Other recent COPs	COP31 Türkiye (2026), COP32 Ethiopia (2027)
India's NDC: emission intensity	45% reduction by 2030 vs 2005
India's NDC: non-fossil capacity	50% of installed by 2030
India's Net Zero target	2070
Climate Finance Goal (NCQG)	\$300 billion/year by 2035 (COP29)
Loss and Damage Fund pledged	\$700 million initial
India's climate platforms	ISA, CDRI, GBA, Mission LiFE

← **NEWER ARTICLE**

**India's 100 GW Nuclear Roadmap by 2047: Tenfold Expansion,...**

**OLDER ARTICLE** →

**Article 21A and Early Childhood Education: The Supreme Court...**

## RELATED EDITORIALS

---

### BUSINESS STANDARD

#### [India's 100 GW Nuclear Push: Strategic Necessity, Liability Gridlock, and the Private-Sector Question](#)

18 Apr

---

### BUSINESS STANDARD

#### [COP33 Withdrawal: India's Climate Leadership at the Crossroads](#)

18 Apr

---

### MINT

#### [India-China After Ladakh: Pragmatic Re-engagement Without Strategic Concession](#)

18 Apr

---

### INDIAN EXPRESS

#### [India's Migration Governance: From Crisis Response to Continuous Architecture](#)

17 Apr

---

## RELATED KEY TERMS

---

### KEY TERM

#### [Act East Policy](#)

India's strategic foreign policy framework prioritising active...

---

### KEY TERM

#### [Agri-Photovoltaic](#)

A dual land-use technology that integrates elevated solar panels with...

---

### KEY TERM

#### [Aquifer](#)

Underground layer of permeable rock, sediment, or soil that stores and...

---

### KEY TERM

#### [BBNJ Treaty](#)

The first legally binding international agreement for conservation and...

---



CURATED &amp; WRITTEN BY

## Bharat Choudhary

UPSC Educator &amp; Content Creator

[in linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)[Read Full Article on Ujiyari →](#)<https://ujiyari.com/daily/2026/04/18/india-cop33-withdrawal-climate-leadership/>

### ALSO FROM THE CREATOR

## BharatNotes

Free UPSC study platform — subject-wise notes across all 4 GS papers, Prelims MCQs, Mains answer frameworks, PYQ analysis & progress tracking. **100% Free • No Login Required.**

[Start Preparing → bharatnotes.com](http://bharatnotes.com)

### 📌 OPPORTUNITY

## Advertise with Ujiyari

Reach **thousands of serious UPSC & State PCS aspirants** daily through our PDFs, website, and social channels.

**Ideal for:** Coaching institutes • EdTech platforms • Book publishers • Exam prep apps

[✉ epicbharat@gmail.com](mailto:epicbharat@gmail.com)

Write to us for rates & media kit

Free UPSC & State PCS Current Affairs · [ujiyari.com](http://ujiyari.com) · [bharatnotes.com](http://bharatnotes.com)