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World Earth Day 2026 — 'Our Power, Our Planet' and India's Climate Commitments

22 April 2026

ENVIRONMENT

GS3

GS1

CURATED & WRITTEN BY

**Bharat Choudhary**

UPSC Educator & 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 →**ADVERTISE****Advertise with Ujiyari**

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World Earth Day 2026 — 'Our Power, Our Planet' and India's Climate Commitments

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WHY IN NEWS

April 22, 2026 marks the 56th World Earth Day with the global theme “Our Power, Our Planet” — emphasising citizen and community-led clean energy transitions. The theme calls for **tripling global renewable electricity capacity by 2030** as the most impactful lever against climate change. India has announced expansion of **Mission LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment)** to include a “**Net-Zero Households**” incentive scheme covering rooftop solar, rainwater harvesting, and waste segregation for economically vulnerable families. Earth Day 2026 comes as the world is off-track on the 1.5°C Paris Agreement target.

EARTH DAY — HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE

Origin

PARAMETER	DETAIL
First Earth Day	April 22, 1970 — USA
Founder	Senator Gaylord Nelson (USA); Denis Hayes (national coordinator)
Trigger	1969 Santa Barbara oil spill; Rachel Carson’s <i>Silent Spring</i> (1962)
First participation	~20 million Americans; led to creation of US EPA
Global expansion	1990 — Earth Day went global; 141 countries
Current reach	193+ countries; 1 billion+ participants annually
Organiser	Earth Day Network (earthday.org)

Themes (Recent)

YEAR	THEME
2022	Invest in Our Planet
2023	Invest in Our Planet
2024	Planet vs. Plastics
2025	Our Power, Our Planet (first year)
2026	Our Power, Our Planet

THE “OUR POWER, OUR PLANET” THEME

The theme has three dimensions:

1. Renewable Energy Tripling

The **International Energy Agency (IEA)** and **IRENA (International Renewable Energy Agency)** have called for:

- **Tripling global renewable energy capacity** to 11,000 GW by 2030 (from ~3,400 GW in 2022)
- This was endorsed at **COP28 in Dubai (2023)** — the **Global Stocktake** outcome
- India is aligned: target of **500 GW non-fossil power capacity by 2030**

2. Community and Citizen Power

The theme emphasises that energy transition must be **democratised** — not just large utilities but:

- **Rooftop solar** for households
- **Community energy cooperatives**
- **Decentralised renewable grids** for rural areas

3. Political Power

Citizens and communities must use democratic power to demand climate policy — a call to action for **climate-conscious voting** and **civil society advocacy**.

INDIA'S CLIMATE ARCHITECTURE

National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC)

Launched in **2008**, NAPCC is India's primary domestic climate policy framework with **8 National Missions**:

MISSION	FOCUS
National Solar Mission	Solar energy; 100 GW target (exceeded)
National Mission for Enhanced Energy Efficiency	Industrial energy efficiency
National Mission on Sustainable Habitat	Green buildings, urban transport
National Water Mission	Water use efficiency; 20% improvement
National Mission for Sustaining the Himalayan Ecosystem	Glacier/Himalayan conservation
National Mission for a Green India	Afforestation; 5 million hectares
National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture	Climate-resilient farming
National Mission on Strategic Knowledge for Climate Change	R&D, knowledge platform

India's NDCs (Nationally Determined Contributions)

India's **Updated NDC (2022)** targets:

TARGET	GOAL	STATUS
Non-fossil electricity capacity	500 GW by 2030	On track
Renewable share in electricity mix	50% by 2030	On track
Emissions intensity reduction	45% below 2005 levels by 2030	On track
Carbon sink (forest/tree cover)	2.5–3 billion tonnes CO ₂ equivalent additional	Progressing
Net Zero target	2070	Committed

India is among the few G20 countries whose NDCs are rated **"2°C compatible"** by Climate Action Tracker.

MISSION LIFE — LIFESTYLE FOR ENVIRONMENT

Background

Mission LiFE was launched by PM Narendra Modi at **COP27 in Sharm el-Sheikh (November 2022)** as a **global mass movement for mindful and deliberate utilisation of resources** — the philosophy being that individual lifestyle choices aggregate into planetary impact.

PARAMETER	DETAIL
Launched	November 2022 (COP27, Sharm el-Sheikh)
Nodal ministry	Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC)
Philosophy	Pro-planet individual behaviour; P3 (Pro Planet People)
Actions promoted	Save electricity, save water, reduce single-use plastic, adopt sustainable food habits, adopt healthy lifestyles
Target	Mobilise 1 billion people to take individual climate action

Net-Zero Households Scheme (2026 Expansion)

The 2026 Mission LiFE expansion introduces a **“Net-Zero Households” incentive**:

- **Rooftop solar subsidy** enhancement — PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana extended to BPL families with direct installation grants
- **Rainwater harvesting** — MNREGS-linked construction of household-level rainwater collection systems
- **Waste segregation** — wet/dry waste separation at household level linked to SBM-U 2.0 credits
- **Clean cooking** — PMUY LPG + PNG transition as “carbon-free cooking” certification

INDIA'S RENEWABLE ENERGY PROGRESS

Installed Capacity (2026)

SOURCE	INSTALLED CAPACITY
Solar	~220 GW
Wind	~55 GW
Large hydro	~47 GW
Small hydro	~5 GW
Bioenergy	~10 GW
Total non-fossil	~350+ GW
Coal/fossil	~235 GW

India is the **world's 4th largest renewable energy producer** and the **3rd largest solar power producer**.

Key Schemes

SCHEME	FOCUS
PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana	Rooftop solar for 1 crore households; 300 units free/month
National Green Hydrogen Mission	5 MMT green hydrogen production by 2030; ₹19,744 crore
International Solar Alliance (ISA)	India-France initiative; 120+ member countries
KUSUM (Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan)	Solar pumps for agriculture
Production Linked Incentive (PLI) – Solar	Domestic solar manufacturing; ₹24,000 crore

INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE FRAMEWORK

Paris Agreement (2015)

FEATURE	DETAIL
Adopted	December 12, 2015 (COP21, Paris)
In force	November 4, 2016
Temperature target	1.5°C (aspirational); well below 2°C
NDCs	Nationally Determined Contributions – country-specific pledges
Global Stocktake	Every 5 years – 2023 (COP28) was first
India ratified	October 2, 2016 (Gandhi Jayanti)

COP Timeline (Recent)

COP	YEAR	LOCATION	KEY OUTCOME
COP26	2021	Glasgow	Phase-down of coal; methane pledge; India's 2070 net-zero
COP27	2022	Sharm el-Sheikh	Loss and Damage Fund established; Mission LiFE launched
COP28	2023	Dubai	First Global Stocktake; renewable tripling pledge; fossil fuel transition language
COP29	2024	Baku	New climate finance goal (NCQG) – \$300 billion/year by 2035
COP30	2025	Belém, Brazil	Revised NDCs due; Amazon focus

UPSC RELEVANCE

PAPER	ANGLE
GS3 — Environment	Earth Day, Paris Agreement, NDCs, NAPCC, Mission LiFE, renewable energy
GS3 — Energy	Solar, wind, green hydrogen, ISA, PM Surya Ghar
GS2 — IR	COP process, UNFCCC, ISA, Loss and Damage Fund
GS1 — Geography	Climate zones, India's climate vulnerability, Himalayan ecosystem
Mains Keywords	Earth Day, Paris Agreement, NDCs, NAPCC, Mission LiFE, ISA, COP28, PM Surya Ghar, Net Zero 2070, IRENA, Global Stocktake

FACTS CORNER

- **Earth Day:** April 22 annually; first observed 1970 (USA); founded by Senator Gaylord Nelson
- **2026 theme:** “Our Power, Our Planet” — renewable energy tripling by 2030
- **Paris Agreement:** COP21, December 2015; in force November 2016; 1.5°C target; India ratified October 2, 2016
- **India's NDC:** 500 GW non-fossil by 2030; 45% emissions intensity cut from 2005 levels; Net Zero 2070
- **NAPCC (2008):** 8 National Missions covering solar, water, Himalayan ecosystem, green India, agriculture, etc.
- **Mission LiFE:** Launched COP27 (2022); PM Modi; P3 — Pro Planet People; 1 billion people target
- **PM Surya Ghar:** Rooftop solar for 1 crore households; 300 units free electricity/month
- **National Green Hydrogen Mission:** 5 MMT by 2030; ₹19,744 crore; approved January 2023
- **ISA (International Solar Alliance):** India-France; HQ Gurugram; 120+ members
- **COP28 (Dubai, 2023):** Renewable tripling pledge; first Global Stocktake; fossil fuel transition language
- **COP29 (Baku, 2024):** New climate finance goal — \$300 billion/year by 2035
- **India rank:** 4th largest renewable energy producer; 3rd largest solar producer globally
- **Rachel Carson:** *Silent Spring* (1962) — catalysed modern environmental movement

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KEY TERM[Bioaccumulation](#)

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[linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)[Read Full Article on Ujiyari →](#)<https://ujiyari.com/daily/2026/04/22/world-earth-day-2026-our-power-our-planet/>

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