

It is negotiation time. With less than a month to go for the G20 Leaders' Summit in New Delhi next month, officials from multiple countries are busy giving the final touches to proposals. But they won't be losing any sleep over one.

The Global Biofuels Alliance (GBA), aimed at slashing the use of petrol and diesel in global transport and accelerating the adoption of cleaner fuels, has already found in-principle support from most G20 members. Its formal launch at the summit will mark the third multilateral initiative created by the government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The first was the International Solar Alliance (ISA), launched in November 2015 on the sidelines of the climate conference in Paris, and the second, the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI), launched in September 2019 on the sidelines of the United Nations Climate Action Summit.

The three India-led climate action outreach bodies showcase New Delhi as a rising player in consensus-driven global policymaking and further its "Vishwaguru" positioning. However, not everything is going to plan.

The ISA was projected to be for clean energy what the OPEC — Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries — is for oil. The solar alliance does not lack in ambition or scale (see: *India-led Climate Action Outreach Bodies*). Ajay Mathur, director-general of the ISA, told *Business Standard* last year the alliance, as a project facilitator, had opened up an opportunity of 9.5 Gw for private investors in countries such as Mali, Cuba, Venezuela, Prague, Uganda, and Ethiopia.

However, discontented voices can be heard now.

"The energy community is unsure of what diplomatic role the ISA is playing. Even in G20, the MEA (Ministry of External Affairs) and NITI Aayog have the lead, but why not the ISA? It was meant to be the one-stop destination for any global dialogue on solar," said an executive of a global energy association.

Clean energy investors say the ISA has not facilitated investment opportunities in the geopolitically crucial nations of Africa. "Most of these mineral-rich nations have realised they are sitting on a mine of wealth and they will not come easily to the table," said an executive of an Indian renewable energy company.

Mathur did not respond to a request for speaking on this report.

The CDRI was first proposed by Prime Minister Modi in 2016 at the Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, reported to have stemmed from his experience of handling the 2001 earthquake in Gujarat when he was the chief minister. Bringing together national governments, UN agencies, multilateral development



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with French President Emmanuel Macron at the founding conference of the International Solar Alliance in New Delhi on March 11, 2018

# REALITY BITES

## Three climate action outreach bodies showcase New Delhi as a rising player in global policymaking, but not everything is going to plan

banks, the private sector, and global knowledge institutions, the CDRI aims to promote the resilience of infrastructure systems, ensuring sustainable development, which has for long been a policy focus for developed economies.

"India and its partners from the Global South have now demonstrated that they are capable of driving the narrative on this. The specific economic and environmental challenges that come up after a disaster in developing economies can be met by tapping into local solutions and not only by relying on Western-style rehabilitation packages," says a serving Indian diplomat.

The CDRI's Infrastructure for Resilient Island States initiative aims to provide technical support on issues posed by infrastructure systems in 58 Small Island Developing States across the Caribbean, the Pacific Ocean, the Atlantic, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Sea. To be implemented till 2030, these projects will be funded through a \$50 million trust fund announced last year.

The GBA, meanwhile, aims to emphasise strengthening of markets, facilitating global

biofuels trade, and developing policies to provide technical support for national biofuels programmes worldwide. Biomass, unlike other renewable energy sources, can be converted directly into liquid fuels, or biofuels. In India, though the list of alternative fuel resources includes agriculture and forest residue, municipal solid waste, and cow dung, the government's focus is on ethanol.

India is the world's largest producer and consumer of sugar as well as its second largest exporter. However, its sugar industry suffers from cyclic issues of demand-supply mismatches, low-cost recuperation, and wastage. As a result, the livelihoods of millions of sugarcane farmers hang in the balance every sugar marketing season. The government has pushed for diverting sugarcane supplies towards ethanol production to address this.

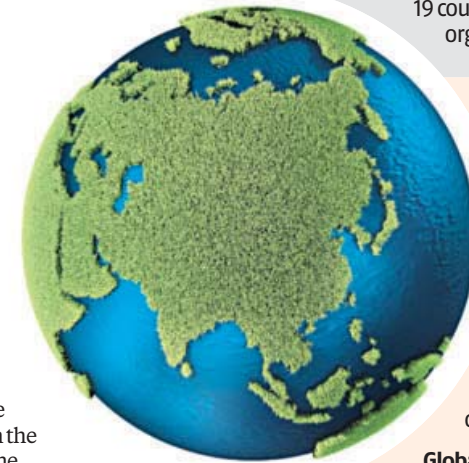
The country is keen to raise the share of ethanol in petrol for use as transport fuel. The phased rollout of E20 — 20 per cent ethanol blending in gasoline — had already reached 1,900 retail outlets across the country, the petroleum

ministry said earlier this week.

The NITI Aayog believes having a global alliance will increase the role of biofuels in the global fuel basket. The International Energy Agency says there will be nearly \$180 billion worth of biofuels in the international market by 2025. New Delhi wants to dominate the policy space that dictates this market.

However, major energy producers such as Russia, China and Saudi Arabia remain unconvinced of joining the GBA. India is now actively securing the participation of nations outside the G20 grouping. The country's diplomatic missions are reaching out to a wide range of nations to ensure a full house when the Alliance is inaugurated by Prime Minister Modi during the G20 Leaders' Summit.

That means only one thing: a more hectic negotiation time.



## INDIA-LED CLIMATE ACTION OUTREACH BODIES

### VISION

**International Solar Alliance**  
Cost-effective, transformational solar energy for low-carbon growth, especially in least developed countries

**Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure**  
Resilient infrastructure to expand universal access to basic services

**Global Biofuels Alliance**  
Develop a global biofuels market, intensify the use of sustainable biofuels

### MEMBERSHIP

**International Solar Alliance**  
116 nations have signed, 94 have ratified

**Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure**  
31 nations, 6 multilateral bodies, 2 private organisations

**Global Biofuels Alliance**  
19 countries, 9 international organisations may join

### INVESTMENT TARGETS

**International Solar Alliance**  
\$1,000 billion, delivering 1,000 Gw of capacity for 1 billion people by 2030

**Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure**  
A \$50-m, multi-donor trust fund to support global action on disaster resilience of infra systems

**Global Biofuels Alliance**  
Not yet known

### LAUNCH DATE

**International Solar Alliance**  
November 2015, on the sidelines of the COP21

**Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure**  
September 2019, on the sidelines of UN Climate Action Summit

**Global Biofuels Alliance**  
Set for launch on September 9-10, at G20 Summit in New Delhi

