UN climate conference COP31 opens in Antalya, Türkiye (9–20 November)

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News

The 31st Conference of the Parties (COP31) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) opened on 9 November 2026 in Antalya, a Mediterranean coastal city of Türkiye, and runs until 20 November. A World Leaders' Summit is scheduled for 11–12 November. For the first time the presidency is split between two countries: Türkiye is host, and its Minister of Environment, Urbanisation and Climate Change, Murat Kurum, is COP31 President, while Australia's Climate Minister Chris Bowen is 'President of Negotiations'. Under a deal struck at COP30 (Belém, Brazil), Australia gave up its hosting bid in return for the negotiations role. The key agenda includes climate finance, adaptation support for vulnerable nations, a faster clean-energy transition, moving away from fossil fuels and implementing the Paris Agreement. Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav said India will press for equitable, solution-oriented climate action and work with the G77+China, LMDC and BASIC groups.

Key facts for the exam

Point	Details
Conference	UNFCCC COP31 (CMA8 of the Paris Agreement)
Venue, dates	Antalya, Türkiye – 9–20 November 2026

Point	Details
COP31 President	Murat Kurum – Türkiye's Minister of Environment, Urbanisation & Climate Change
President of Negotiations	Chris Bowen – Australia (first split presidency)
Previous COP	COP30 – Belém, Brazil (Nov 2025); 'Belém Package' – triple adaptation finance by 2035
India's new NDC (2031–35)	47% cut in emissions intensity of GDP vs 2005; 60% non-fossil share of installed power capacity
UNFCCC	Opened for signature at 1992 Rio Earth Summit; in force 1994; secretariat in Bonn, Germany

Background

- The UNFCCC was opened for signature at the June 1992 'Earth Summit' in Rio de Janeiro and came into force on 21 March 1994. The first COP was held in Berlin in 1995. The 1997 Kyoto Protocol set binding targets only for developed countries; the 2015 Paris Agreement (COP21) made every country submit Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), aiming to keep warming well below 2°C and pursue 1.5°C.
- 'Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities' (CBDR-RC) is the basis of India's climate stance. India targets net zero by 2070. Its new NDC, approved by the Union Cabinet on 25 March 2026, aims by 2035 for a 47% cut in emissions intensity of GDP from 2005, a 60% non-fossil share of installed power capacity, and a carbon sink of 3.5–4 billion tonnes CO2e through forest and tree cover from the 2005 level.
- Antalya, on Türkiye's south-western Mediterranean coast at the foot of the Taurus Mountains, is the tourist hub of the 'Turkish Riviera'. Türkiye spans Asia (Anatolia) and Europe (Thrace), with the Black Sea to the north, the Aegean to the west and the Mediterranean to the south.
- Climate finance is the central issue. COP29 (Baku, 2024) adopted a New Collective Quantified Goal of at least US$300 billion a year by 2035, which developing countries criticised as too little. At COP30, a fossil-fuel transition roadmap was left out despite calls from more than 80 countries.

Tamil Nadu link: Tamil Nadu is among the pioneer states in setting up a dedicated climate governance structure. The Tamil Nadu Governing Council on Climate Change, chaired by the Chief Minister, was constituted in October 2022 and guides the Tamil Nadu Climate Change Mission; the Green Tamil Nadu Mission and the Tamil Nadu Wetlands Mission also function.

Frequently asked questions

What is this news about?

The 31st Conference of the Parties (COP31) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) opened on 9 November 2026 in Antalya, a Mediterranean coastal city of Türkiye, and runs until 20 November.

What are the key facts to remember for the exam?

Conference: UNFCCC COP31 (CMA8 of the Paris Agreement); Venue, dates: Antalya, Türkiye – 9–20 November 2026; COP31 President: Murat Kurum – Türkiye's Minister of Environment, Urbanisation &

Climate Change; President of Negotiations: Chris Bowen – Australia (first split presidency).

What is the background to this news?

The UNFCCC was opened for signature at the June 1992 'Earth Summit' in Rio de Janeiro and came into force on 21 March 1994.

Practice questions (with answers)

1. Under COP31's split-presidency deal, the 'President of Negotiations' is a minister from which country?

A) New Zealand

B) Fiji

C) Australia

D) Brazil

Answer: C – Explanation: Australia (Chris Bowen) – in return for giving up its hosting bid. The COP31 President is Türkiye's Murat Kurum.

2. The UNFCCC was opened for signature at the 1992 'Earth Summit' held in which city?

A) Stockholm

B) Kyoto

C) Johannesburg

D) Rio de Janeiro

Answer: D – Explanation: Rio (1992); in force from 1994. Stockholm hosted the 1972 Human Environment conference; Kyoto the 1997 Protocol; Johannesburg the 2002 summit.

3. Under India's new NDC, by how much is the emissions intensity of GDP to be cut from 2005 levels by 2035?

A) 33–35%

B) 45%

C) 50%

D) 47%

Answer: D – Explanation: 47% (2031–35 NDC). The 2015 NDC aimed at 33–35% by 2030; the 2022 update raised it to 45%. Net zero target: 2070.

4. Who chairs the Tamil Nadu Governing Council on Climate Change, set up in 2022?

A) Chief Minister

B) Governor

C) Chief Secretary

D) Environment Minister

Answer: A – Explanation: The Chief Minister chairs it; the Environment, Climate Change & Forests Secretary is convenor. It guides the TN Climate Change Mission.

5. Antalya, the Turkish city hosting COP31, lies on the coast of which sea?

A) Mediterranean Sea

B) Black Sea

C) Aegean Sea

D) Sea of Marmara

Answer: A – Explanation: The Mediterranean – the 'Turkish Riviera', below the Taurus range. The Black Sea is north, the Aegean west, Marmara near Istanbul.

Sources: UNFCCC; Türkiye Ministry (iklim.gov.tr); Australian Govt DCCEEW; Outlook; eNCA (AFP); PM India (Cabinet, 25 Mar 2026); Climate Home News; Down To Earth; News On AIR; DT Next. © Shanmugam IAS Academy.