

Modi, Boris float global solar grid plan on fringes of COP26

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GLASGOW: Taking a big step to put solar power at the core of the global renewable energy map and leverage smaller developing nations, Prime Minister Modi along with his UK counterpart Boris Johnson launched a transnational grid initiative — called One Sun One World One Grid (OSOWOG) — on the sidelines of the UN climate conference (COP26) here on Tuesday.

The grid will be set up over the next few years by the International Solar Alliance (ISA), another initiative authored by India initially, to transport solar power to different countries under its Green Grid Initiative.

Johnson on the occasion praised India's role in making the transnational grid a reality and, while inviting Modi to speak, referred to "One Sun One World One Grid and One Narendra Modi" as a compliment amid all-round

applause from participants.

Modi also announced that the country's space agency, ISRO, would come out with a "solar calculator application" to detect availability of sunshine in different countries in real-time using satellite data which would help these nations in planning a host of activities.

"Solar power potential of any country can be mapped with the help of this calculator. This will help in deciding location of solar projects and strengthen the 'One Sun One World One Grid' initiative," said Modi while addressing the gathering of the launch function which was also attended by the US President Joe Biden and other leaders.

"The One Sun One World One Grid and Green Grids Initiative is an idea whose time has come. If the world has to move to a clean and green future, these interconnected transnational grids are going to be critical solutions," said Modi.

He said the transnational grid would not only help in reducing global carbon footprints but also bring countries closer through cooperation while harnessing the benefits of solar power unlike the industrialisation backed by fossil fuel in the past which impoverished nature and resulted in geo-political tensions.

"The UK is working hand-in-hand with our friends in India to transform the future of the power sector and ensure clean and reliable electricity is accessible everywhere by the end of this decade. It's fantastic that over 80 countries have backed our newly launched Green Grids Initiative, whose collaboration will not only see greater growth, jobs and investment in our global green future, but also make sure no one is left without access to energy," said Johnson.

The announcement was accompanied by the "One Sun Declaration", which stated that, "realising the vision of 'One Sun One World One Grid' through interconnected green grids can be transformational, enabling all of us to meet the targets of the Paris Agreement to prevent dangerous climate change, to accelerate the clean energy transition, and to achieve the sustainable development goals. These efforts can stimulate green investments and create millions of good jobs. By sharing the sun's energy, we can help to build a more peaceful and prosperous world".

The declaration has been endorsed by 80 ISA member countries. Implementation of the OSOWOG will revolve around the concept that the 'Sun Never Sets' and is, therefore, a constant at some geographical location, globally, at any given point of time.

"This network has the potential to be a modern engineering marvel, and a catalyst for greatly expanding renewable electricity generation, and effectively mitigating climate change in the next decade. At a global level, almost 2,600 GW of interconnection capacity may be possible up to 2050, delivering estimated power savings of 226 billion euros per year," said Ajay Mathur, director general of the ISA.

According to the ISA's concept note on OSOWOG, the global solar grid will be implemented in three phases. In the first phase, the 'Indian Grid' will interconnect with the Middle East, South Asia and Southeast Asia grids to share solar and other renewable energy resources for meeting electricity needs, including during peak demand.

It will then be interconnected with the African power pools in the second phase. The third phase would cover global interconnection of the power transmission grid to achieve the OSOWOG's vision.