

Hi,

Here is this month's COP26+G20 special edition of the monthly media monitoring newsletter.

I hope you find it useful.

Best,
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This month's key observations

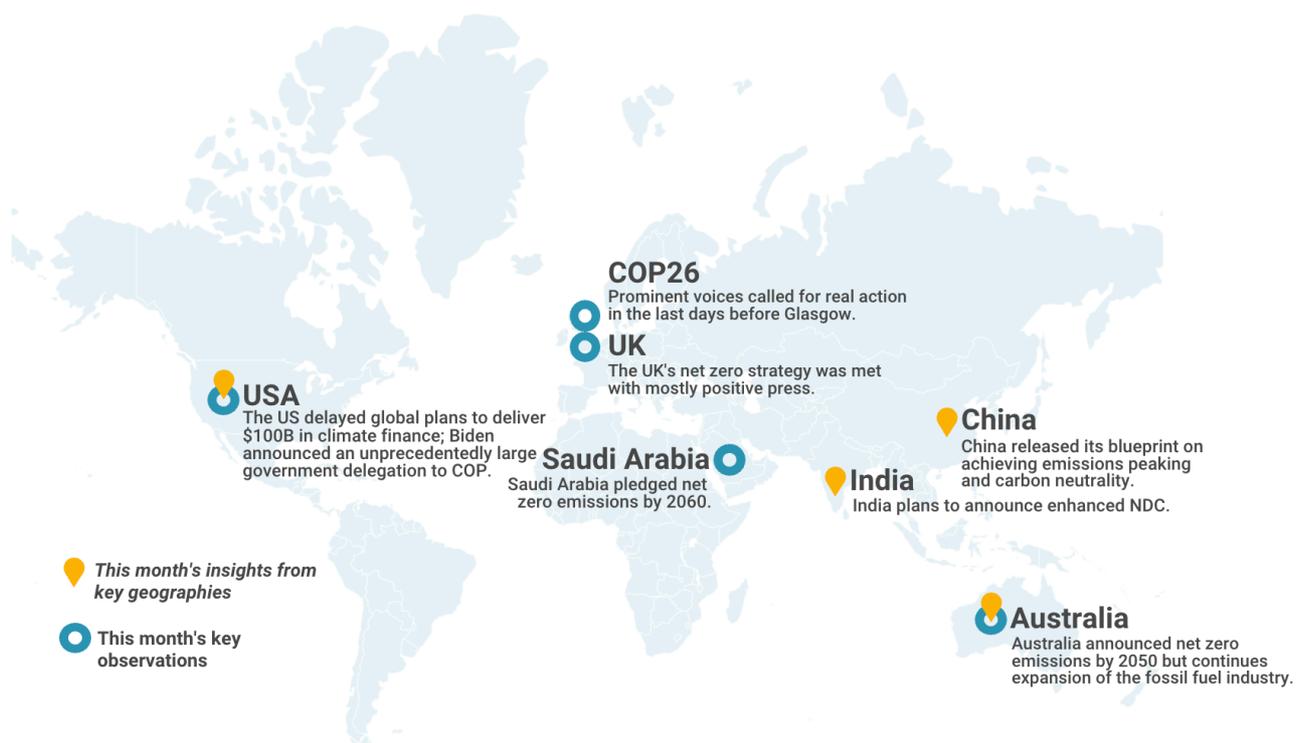
- Due to all the pre-COP reporting, coverage of the monitored topics in top-tier international media more than doubled from the August-September period

(estimated using Factiva), while social media engagement increased by a massive 175%, according to Talkwalker.

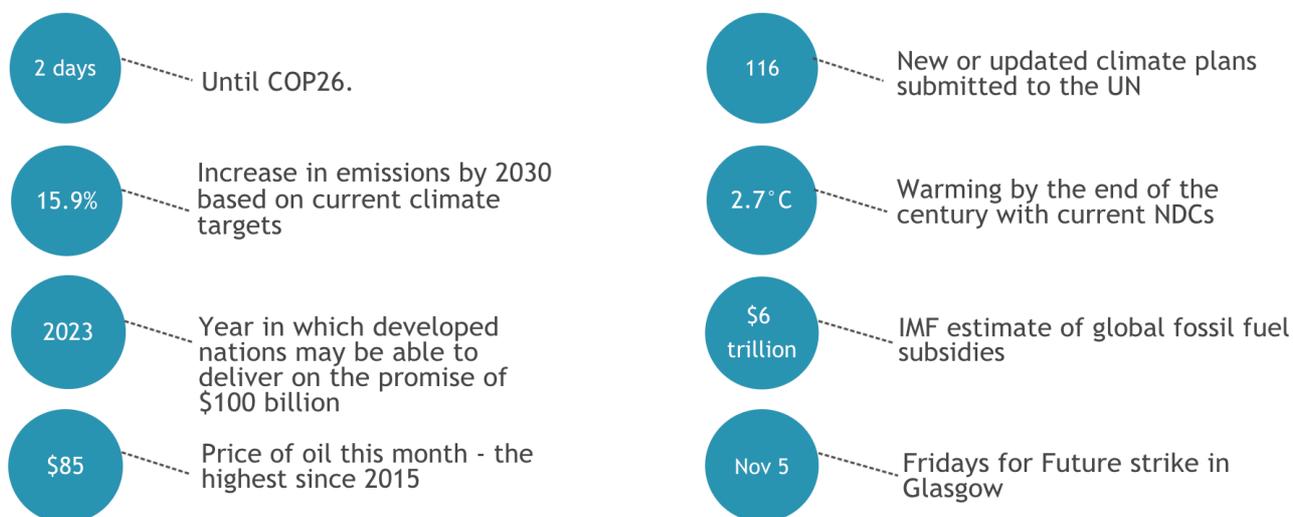
- The doors to COP26 will open in Glasgow on Sunday, and this month's climate coverage has exploded in the run up to the event. Everyone from youth activists, business leaders and academics, to the likes of Sir David Attenborough and Prince Charles, have cautioned that Glasgow needs to deliver real action on climate change.

Four major reports from the IEA, UNEP, the WMO and the UNFCCC have set the stage by warning that current NDCs are far off the Paris targets (our pledges see us on track for 2.7C of warming this century), and that funding to renewables is too low by at least a factor of three.

- New net-zero pledges were announced by Australia and Saudi Arabia. However, critics were quick to point out that these are lacking in real ambition and rely too heavily on carbon removal technology, thus allowing the continued use of fossil fuels. The UK's new net-zero strategy was generally well received.
- Climate finance and equity has been high on the agenda. Developing nations have called for climate finance to be centre stage at COP. A new report also revealed that the target of USD 100 billion a year in climate finance to poorer nations can be reached by 2023 - three years later than it should have been achieved. This is too little too late according to experts, who say that richer nations are showing a “shameful” lack of commitment to the global south.
- Soaring energy prices have also dominated the pre-COP coverage. From Europe to East Asia, gas prices have shot to record highs, as countries scramble to secure enough supply to make it through the winter. Analysts have focused on the increasing demand, which has outpaced supply.



This month in numbers



International media coverage

Major emitters need to deliver radical emissions cuts

As world leaders, climate negotiators, experts, [campaigners](#), [activists](#) and everyone in between prepares to descend on Glasgow, coverage of the upcoming conference ballooned. This month we saw the release of a handful of landmark climate reports, like the [IEA's World Energy Outlook](#), the [UNEP Gap report](#), the [UN's World Meteorological Organization](#), and the [UN's synthesis report on NDCs](#), all setting the uncomfortable and pressing backdrop for the G20 and COP26 negotiations in Glasgow. [G20 emissions are bouncing back after a short dip due to the pandemic](#). The UN reports warn that, at current rates of emissions, the [world will greatly exceed the Paris targets](#), with current NDC's deeply inadequate (covering only [one seventh of the carbon cuts needed](#)) and [setting us up for about 2.7C](#) of warming by the end of the century. Countries are [still planning to extract more fossil fuels](#), releasing double the carbon we can emit to hit a 1.5C target. The IEA urged that clean energy progress is "far too slow", and that spending on [clean energy needs to triple](#) for the world to stand a chance of being Paris-aligned.

In other words, the G20 leaders and COP26 delegates have their work cut out. [According to academic Rachel Kyte](#), there are four main things we need to watch out for in Glasgow, including [concrete rules around carbon markets](#), the crucial issue of climate finance, and keeping track of and verifying the inevitable inflow of new climate pledges - [from governments](#) and corporations alike. Various experts and vulnerable countries are

pushing for [more discussions on loss and damages](#). Methane will also be top priority, starkly exemplified when [scientists reported large methane leaks](#) near Glasgow COP26 center this month. Although expectations are high, as some reporters are pointing out [COP26 will not save the planet](#).

Major voices continued to stress the urgency of November's talks. "[We need a global 'climate prosperity plan' not empty pledges](#)" said Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh [Hassina](#), as representatives from Small Islands States demand action from [the world's largest emitters](#). [Humanity's future depends on staying Paris-aligned](#), according to the UN's Antonio Guterres, while former UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, also [urged the G20 to "be more ambitious"](#) as they face the ["climate test"](#). Ugandan youth activist Vanessa Nakate [warned that climate change is already pushing millions into extreme poverty](#), and [Greta Thunberg confirmed that she will be](#) on the ground for the climate strikes, with the main march set for Nov 5. According to an editorial by the staff of Nature, world leaders travelling to [Glasgow would be wise to listen to these](#) "science-led youth movements". On the opposite end of ambition, a leaked document showed that some nations, like Japan, Saudi Arabia and Australia, [have been "lobbying" for the UN to downplay its language](#) and ambition in the upcoming IPCC report, due March 2021, which is crucial to shaping and informing government policy worldwide.

New net-zero targets have been raining in this month. Australia [made a pledge to hit net-zero greenhouse gas emissions](#) by 2050, but critics have been quick to point out that the plans lack clarity and are heavily reliant on the development of technologies, like carbon capture and storage, which are yet to be proven at scale. This puts Australia very much in the same camp as Saudi Arabia - [which also released a new, albeit sketchy, plan to be net-zero](#) by 2060 this month - [according to Richard Black of the ECIU](#). Both nations are presenting an "alternate view" of net-zero which will allow the continued burning of fossil fuels, he says. [The UK](#), on the other hand, has released its first [roadmap to actually achieving net-zero](#). The [UK's new net-zero strategy](#) has been lauded as a major step forward, with the UK's climate advisers celebrating it as a "comprehensive" start. But issues remain, for example [how to tackle emissions](#) from agriculture and how to sufficiently engage the public in the net-zero transition. The "1" in China's "1+N" package was [released](#) this week. It contains more details on how to achieve the 2030/60 targets, but does not offer groundbreaking new ambition. China also submitted its new NDC leaving climate diplomacy watchers [disappointed](#). Meanwhile in India, a [fierce debate is underway over a carbon neutrality date](#).

Coverage highlights

- [Climate change: UN emissions gap report a 'thundering wake-up call'](#) (BBC)
- [IEA says clean energy progress remains 'far too slow'](#) (CNBC)
- [Gen Z on how to save the world: young climate activists speak out](#) (The Guardian)
- [COP26: Document leak reveals nations lobbying to change key climate report](#) (BBC)
- [Australia makes pledge on net zero emissions by 2050 but remains wedded to fossil fuels](#) (The FT)
- [Saudi Arabia pledges net zero by 2060, but no oil exit plan](#) (Climate Home News)
- [Government's Net Zero Strategy is a major step forward, CCC says](#) (UK's Climate Change Committee)
- [Researchers unveil roadmap for a carbon neutral China by 2060](#) (China Dialogue)

Climate finance and equity are high on the agenda

Ahead of COP26, attention [has turned towards climate finance](#). The longstanding target of delivering the annual USD 100 billion in climate finance to developing nations [will be met within two years](#), according to a new [climate finance delivery plan](#) published by the UK government. The German-Canadian led 'delivery report' arrived late, with the [US being exposed](#) for weakening drafts. Alliance of Small Island States called the delay a "major blow to the developing world". Climate experts have also criticised the delay as developed countries showing [a "shameful" lack of commitment](#) to helping poorer nations. Frustrations [at this failure to deliver have led to tensions](#) ahead of Glasgow, with Guterres conceding that "we are not there yet". Inequality will be at the forefront of the Climate Summit, perhaps more than ever. As climate finance expert Malango Mughogho points out, ["the disparities around vaccine rollout mirror those on climate finance"](#). While [Saleemul Hug](#), director of the International Centre for Climate Change & Development, said COP26 should be judged based on developed countries' willingness to take the issue of loss and damage seriously.

The equity of net zero is also under question, as Simon Stiell, Climate and Environment Minister of Grenada, [said](#): "Net zero by 2050 is wonderful but we will be long gone by then - low-lying islands will be underwater. Hurricanes will have blown us away." As Mohamed Adow from the Power Shift Africa think tank points out, wealthy countries fail to pay off the [climate debts](#) they owe to poorer countries. A group of emerging economies, including major emitters like India, China, Indonesia and Saudi Arabia, have [accused net-zero targets of being unjust ahead of COP26](#). According to them, the new global target of net zero does not take into account historical responsibility. Instead, they ask for developed nations to fully decarbonise this decade, to allow more time for emission peaks in developing countries. Separately, the 46 [Least Developed Countries called](#) for [climate equity to be centre stage at COP26](#), particularly through increased

climate finance, capacity-building and technological support. They also asked for climate threats to agriculture to be discussed, as many of these nations' livelihoods depend on the agriculture sector.

Coverage highlights

- [Ahead of COP26, focus turns to climate finance](#) (DW)
- [U.S. delays global plan to deliver \\$100B in climate finance](#) (E&E News)
- [Emerging economies slam Cop26 net zero push as 'anti-equity'](#) (Climate Home News)
- [The broken \\$100-billion promise of climate finance – and how to fix it](#) (Nature)
- [Climate crisis: Heads of least developed countries call for equitable action ahead of COP26](#) (Downtoearth)
- [Bangladesh PM: We need a global 'climate prosperity plan' not empty pledges](#) (The FT)

Spikes in energy prices have dominated coverage

Global spikes in prices have dominated media coverage of energy ahead of COP26. From Europe to East Asia, gas prices [have surged to record highs](#) as countries [scramble to secure enough supply](#) to make it through the winter. Meanwhile, [India](#) and [China](#) have faced coal shortages forcing them to ration electricity. This has spilled over into oil markets, where prices [have shot up](#) to USD 85 per barrel, their highest levels since 2015. [Energy security](#) is on everyone's mind.

Competing narratives have emerged to explain the crisis. Some point to [the energy transition](#), others to [the overreliance](#) on fossil fuels. Most analysts have focused on [the underlying dynamics](#) of supply and demand in gas markets. Demand has outpaced supply while more extreme weather, such as [the cold snap in Japan](#), has affected global prices. The COVID-19 pandemic [has exacerbated](#) the problem by restricting supply. There is also a geopolitical component, particularly in Europe. Putin has used the crisis [to pressure the EU](#) into approving the Nord Stream II pipeline, a move seen by the EU as part of a [“geopolitical battle”](#). Some [commentators are worried](#) that the energy crisis will distract from COP26 negotiations, as nations work to tackle rising energy costs. However, renewables have proved they can cushion the blow of volatile prices. Across the EU, they [helped save EUR 33 billion](#) in gas costs by displacing gas generation and helping to meet demand. The International Energy Agency [has also called for much greater investment in renewables](#) to help weather future periods of high energy prices.

Coverage highlights

- [Europe's energy crisis: EU 'too reliant on gas', says von der Leyen](#) (Euronews)
- [Putin says Russia could deliver 10% more gas if Nord Stream 2 approved](#) (Financial Times)
- [EU's Borrell fires back at Putin by saying gas price surge is political](#) (Politico)
- [Energy price crunch risks derailing UN climate talks, Iberdrola warns](#) (Euractiv)
- [How China stumbled into a painful energy shortage](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)

Insights from key geographies

Below is a brief summary of media coverage in four key countries, and news that helped shape the narrative.

Australia

Australia will adopt a [non-legislated 2050 net-zero target](#) and take a “projected emission scenario” reduction of 30%-35% by 2030 to COP26. Its current NDC sets out a target of 26% to 28% reduction in GHG emissions below 2005 levels by 2030. The recent announcements (the ‘projected emission scenario’) by the government do not constitute a commitment under the Paris Agreement. The plan has been widely criticised (See coverage from [Guardian](#) and [Sydney Morning Herald](#)) as being highly reliant on both technologies that do not yet exist and offsets. The government has also pledged to continue to expand the fossil fuel industry. It remains to be seen [whether Australia will play a constructive role](#) at COP26. Two Torres Strait Islanders are [suing the Australian government](#), arguing it has breached its duty of care by failing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions enough to prevent damage to the islands. The class action is being modelled on successful climate litigation in the Netherlands.

China

China just released its blueprint for achieving peak emissions and carbon neutrality, often referred to as the guiding documents in the “1+n” policy framework. It provided more details on China's decarbonization pathway, but didn't signal groundbreaking ambition. With the release of the marco-plan, China has also submitted its updated NDC (next week's daily monitoring will have more info on how it was received by the media). On the media front, coverage of climate change and COP26 is picking up in Chinese media thanks to various pre-

COP press conferences and briefings organised by climate champions and NGOs. At this stage, a key focus of media coverage is to explain the importance of COP26 and what to expect, including [Ban Ki-Moon's call](#) on China-US climate cooperation and the need of accelerating climate action across countries. How the [ongoing power crisis](#) will [affect COP negotiations](#) is another focus that journalists are exploring. Some outlets also start to use the time window to raise awareness of climate impacts and its economic risks.

India

India is at a crossroad. Messages coming out from the ministry last week conveyed that it is expected to announce an enhanced NDC factoring in its overachievement on its 2022 pledges, ambitious renewable energy targets, more hydrogen production, and including sector specific emission reduction goals for EVs. However, with the recent announcements of net zero by Saudi and Australia, and China hinting at progress with the announcement of a peak emissions year this decade, there is an expectation for India to step up its game. There are strong arguments being made on the validity of net zero without any clear modelling and strategies, or promise of finance. India has voiced strong concern on the inadequacy of climate finance and its support to vulnerable nations is being bolstered by focusing on Centre for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure. All in all, with many options on the table, [India hasn't ruled out a net-zero announcement](#), though it stands firm on its demand for developed countries to make good on their finance commitments and tech transfer - with a lot of its clean tech hinging on progress here. It has previously been a supporter of carrying over Kyoto offsets but it remains to be seen which solutions it supports for the setting up of carbon markets.

India, along with China and members of Like Minded Developing Countries (LMDC), has also supported the [demand that rich countries make net-negative emission goals long before mid-century targets](#), keeping in view their historical cumulative emissions. Fundamentally, the main question of trust and shifting goal posts is deeply evident as it asks developed countries to make good on their finance promises. Prime Minister Modi is expected to attend the Leaders Summit on the first two days in Glasgow. He will be arriving straight from the G20, which is expected to focus on climate, and there is a sense that more can happen between the crucial hours of the G-20 and the COP26 World Leaders Summit. PM Modi, along with UK PM Johnson, will [launch the Green Grids Initiative](#) - One Sun One World One Grid as part of the International Solar Alliance, which plans to enable a transnational grid to provide solar power across the globe.

USA

US climate and COP-related coverage continues to be dominated by Biden's build back

better legislative effort. It has been framed as having COP26 as a "deadline," and there are efforts to at least reach a topline agreement on price tag and policy contents by the end of October. Much of the US coverage has questioned how much credibility Biden and the US will have in Glasgow if there is no policy in place to curb emissions and meet the 2030 US Paris target announced in April. Some coverage has [pointed to different analyses on the limits of US emission cuts](#) this decade, depending on what happens with the build back better bill and how effective the constituent programmes will be in cutting emissions this decade. Biden has also announced an unprecedentedly [large US government delegation](#) to COP, including a dozen secretaries and many subnational leaders will also be in attendance, to show the world the US is "all in" on addressing climate change, even as big questions continue about how exactly the US will manage its emissions trajectory. Speculation about [tension between the US and China](#) continues, even as Kerry continues to stay in close touch with Xie Zhenhua, and this is sometimes framed as a "stand-off", with the US pressing China to do more on climate. Continued fossil fuel infrastructure build-out has also received more attention, with Biden declining to engage or stop the Line 3 tar sands pipeline between the US and Canada, despite consistent and escalating opposition, particularly from [indigenous groups](#).

Climate coverage with the highest social media engagement

Of all the English-language articles and social media posts related to COP26, NDCs and international climate diplomacy posted over the month, the following pieces attracted the most public engagement on social media, measured by the total number of shares, likes, retweets and mentions. This is compiled using Talkwalker.

Articles from climate and foreign affairs journalists

[‘Blah, blah, blah’: Greta Thunberg lambasts leaders over climate crisis](#) - Damien Carrington
[Fossil fuel industry gets subsidies of \\$11m a minute, IMF finds](#) - Damien Carrington
[COP26: Document leak reveals nations lobbying to change key climate report](#) - Justin Rowlett

& Tom Gerken

[‘Case closed’: 99.9% of scientists agree climate emergency caused by humans](#) - Jonathan Watts

[‘Tired of broken promises’: climate activists launch hunger strike outside White House](#) - David Smith

Online Media

[Prince William blasts billionaire space race, urges focus on saving earth](#) - Prince William said in an interview with the BBC that our greatest minds should be trying to save the earth, not searching for the next planet to live on (CNN)

180.5K

engagements

[The climate disaster is here - this is what the future looks like](#) - What’s the difference between 1.5°C and 2°C of warming? Guardian explains how current climate change impacts will worsen in scenarios (Guardian)

74.7K

engagements

[Greta Thunberg sings Rick Astley hit at climate concert](#) - Did Greta just 'rickroll' the audience of Climate Live 2021? Yes she did (BBC)

50K

engagements

[‘Blah, blah, blah’: Greta Thunberg lambasts leaders over climate crisis](#) - “Build back better. Blah, blah, blah. Green economy. Blah blah blah. Net zero by 2050. Blah, blah, blah... This is all we hear from our so-called leaders. Words that sound great but so far have not led to action. Our hopes and ambitions drown in their empty promises.” (Guardian)

43.4K

engagements

Social media

CALLING ALL #BLINKS! Only a few days to go until #COP26 in Glasgow. Time to step up and come #TogetherForOurPlanet. Watch this space for more #ClimateActionInYourArea ([BLACKPINK Global Blink](#) on Twitter)

126K

engagements

About 200 people wearing only white body paint have walked across a stark desert expanse near the Dead Sea to highlight that it is receding by about a metre a year ([Guardian](#) on Instagram)

103.8K

engagements

104 days after being fined £90m for dumping sewage into the environment and less than 12 hours after Gov voted to protect water companies and not our rivers, @SouthernWater were dumping sewage at 60, yes 60, different locations along the south coast of England. #COP26 hypocrisy ([Feargal Sharkey](#) on Twitter)

71.7K

engagements

100 Awesome Minutes to Help Fix the Planet - Dear Earth is an epic global celebration of our planet and what we need to do to reverse climate change. Sprinkled with musical performances, Dear Earth also contains well-known climate activists, creators, and celebs who will all share ways to make our lives more sustainable ([Youtube Originals](#) on Youtube)

59.7K

engagements

Was a pleasure to speak to Prime Minister @BorisJohnson. We reviewed progress on the India-UK Agenda 2030, exchanged views on climate action in the context of the forthcoming COP-26 in Glasgow, and shared our assessments on regional issues including Afghanistan ([Narendra Modi](#) on Twitter)

34.9K

engagements

Live monitoring dashboard

This shows statistics and top articles for the media space of key issues we care about: Climate, energy, transport, finance and nature, across mainstream and social media from the past 30 days.

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This analysis is based on insight from the social listening tool Talkwalker, English-language media coverage from the media database Factiva, and expert insight from GSCC colleagues.

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