Climate Crisis across the World

Why in news?

There have been alarming changes in climate across the countries in the world.

What is the climate issue across the countries?

Europe's case

- **Drought**- The 2018 drought was described as the worst in 500 years.
- The precipitation has been far less than usual, while temperatures have soared to unprecedented levels.
- **Record heat**- Unusually high temperatures have led to increased evaporation of surface water and soil moisture.
- The Netherlands, which receives plenty of rainfall, is having one of the driest years ever, and Germany received only half its normal rain in July.
- **Waterways**- With water levels down to less than a metre in some stretches, most large ships have been rendered unusable to move cargo in an economical manner.
- **Power-** Lack of adequate water has affected the operation of nuclear power plants, which use large amounts of water as coolant.
- The result has been a shortage of electricity and an unprecedented rise in energy prices.
- **Food crisis**- And this has come on top of the massive energy and food-supply implications of the Ukraine war.

China's case

- **Heatwave**- China has been grappling with its worst heatwave in over 60 years, with temperatures in several regions crossing 40 degree Celsius.
- The country issued its first national drought alert of the year.
- The country issued a red alert heat warning, the highest of its four-tier warning system to at least 165 regions across the country.
- **Rainfall**- In some parts, authorities are attempting to induce rainfall through **'cloud seeding'** — a process through which rockets carry chemicals into the sky to induce rainfall in drought-affected regions.
- **Power outages**- Shanghai authorities have switched off lights at some of the city's most popular sites to conserve power.
- **Rivers drying up**- The country's longest river, Yangtze, which caters to about a third of the Chinese population, is seeing water levels drop to record lows.
- Two of the country's biggest freshwater lakes, Poyang and Dongting, have touched their lowest levels since 1951.

- **Wildfires-** Amid the ongoing heatwave, wildfires have also swept across forests and mountains in multiple districts across Chongqing.

At present, the world is about 1.1-1.3 degrees warmer than during pre-industrial times.

What is the Climate & Health Bill signed by Joe Biden?

- The Inflation Reduction Act, signed by President Joe Biden will make big investments in the environment and health care, and increase taxes on some key groups.
- The Bill includes policies
    - lowering the prices of prescription drugs
    - increasing the generosity of Medicare benefits
    - encouraging the development of renewable energy
    - reducing the impact of climate change
- It will raise taxes on some corporations and bolster the ability of the Internal Revenue Service to crack down on wealthy tax evaders to lower the federal deficit.
- The current Bill also includes clean electricity incentives.
- It also pairs new climate spending with several major concessions to the fossil fuel industry.

The Inflation Reduction Act is projected to reduce deficits by roughly $275 billion over 10 years, while the Build Back Better plan passed by the House in November would have added about $160 billion to deficits.

References

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