Declaring climate emergency in India

What is the issue?

- The impact of climate change is being felt around the world irrespective of whose contribution it is.
- UN and climate experts have called for the declaration of climate emergency worldwide.

How can it be said that climate change is real?

- A few generations from now, our descendants may not see the animals and plants we now regard as commonplace.
- We are depleting 25% more natural resources than the planet can sustain right now.
- Mankind is teetering dangerously close to the precipice of extinction.
- We thought that the impact of climate change would never really be felt by us and it would take a long time, perhaps a couple of centuries.
- Now the effects of climate change are at our doorsteps.
- **Cyclones** such as Fani, Thane, Vardah, Ockhi, Gaja and Vayu had affected India in different times.
- **Floods** caused havoc in Assam, Himachal Pradesh and Bihar in 2019. Kerala witnessed floods for the second consecutive year.
- Meanwhile, Europe saw the **highest temperatures** ever in recorded history. In July 2019, Paris recorded its highest temperature of 42.6°C.
- All these are because of climate change.

Why is it happening?

- Humanity is paying the price for the indiscriminate use of fossil fuels.
- The increase in global temperatures **started with the industrial revolution**.
- If our current **lifestyle** continues, the global temperature will increase further and that will have catastrophic consequences.
- Industries, vehicles, burning of fossil fuels, thermal power plants and large-scale rearing of cattle are emitting heat-trapping **greenhouse gases**.
- The increase in these gases is trapping the sun’s heat and increasing the earth’s temperature.

What could be its impacts?

- Global warming will drastically affect **agriculture** — the production of rice, wheat, maize and soya will decrease significantly.
- Apart from **malnutrition**, climate change will give birth **to newer infections and illness**.
- This imbalance will, in turn, affect the economy which will lead to conflict, war and global unrest.
- Global warming is already **melting** the polar ice caps. If this continues, **sea levels will rise** and submerge coastal cities.
- These natural disasters will make millions of people climate refugees.
- The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report - Averting a climate crisis will require reinvention of the global economy.
- By 2040, there could be global food shortages, inundation of coastal cities and a huge refugee crisis, it says.

What steps should be taken?

- UN and climate experts have called for the **declaration of a global climate emergency**.
- Countries like the **U.K., Canada, France and Ireland** have already declared climate emergencies. So have some local bodies and NGOs.
- Unfortunately, **India and the U.S.** are still slow to act.
- Global warming will affect every individual in every country. It's the duty of every human and government to take steps to stop the climate crisis.
- The Indian government should **declare a climate emergency immediately**.
- **Immediate policy changes** should include,
    1. Reducing the usage of fossil fuels by half by 2030,
    2. Encouraging the use of public transport,
    3. Increasing forest area,
    4. Promoting non-conventional energy,
    5. Devising good water management policies,
    6. Implementing the plastic ban stringently,
    7. Banning the burning of waste,
    8. Promoting innovative urban planning policies
    9. Reducing mass rearing of cattle for human consumption.

Source: The Hindu



SHANKAR
IAS PARLIAMENT
Information is Empowering