IPCC Draft Report on Global Warming

What is the issue?

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A recent Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC) draft report on climate change response draws global attention.

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What is the report on?

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- The report comes on the direction of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 2015.
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- Accordingly, IPCC was asked to prepare a special report by 2018.
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- This would be on the impact if the planet grew hotter by 1.5°C over the global average surface temperatures between 1850 and 1900.
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What are the highlights?

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- The basic message is that the world is not doing enough to keep the planet from heating up excessively.
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- If the emissions continue at the present rate, global warming will exceed by 1.5°C over the reference period by around 2040.
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- The current measures such as rise of renewable energy and electric vehicles are just not enough.
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- The inevitable consequences will be more
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i. floods and droughts
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ii. forest fires
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iii. islands losing ground to rising sea waters
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iv. water scarcity
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v. vector-borne diseases
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- This reiterates what the UN Environment Programme has been emphasizing in its annual Emission Gap Reports.
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- In 2016 report, it said that even if countries stick to their Paris deal commitments, the target would not be met.
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What are the concerns and challenges ahead?

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- **Paris deal** - At Paris in 2015, all countries agreed to limit global warming to 2°C by the turn of this century.
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- This aside, they also agreed on an ambitious goal to limit global warming to 1.5°C.
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- But the Agreement is loosely-worded, and leaves everything to voluntary action with no penal provisions.
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- **US** - The United States has recently pulled out of the Paris accord.
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- It has also begun to support coal, a fuel chiefly responsible for the climate change.
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- Further, the US has slashed its contribution to the Global Environment Facility (GEF).
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- Resultantly, developed countries' funding to GEF has come down by $300 million.
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- Notably, GEF is a big funder of climate projects in developing countries.
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- **Australia** - Australia is also following the US's example.
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- It has also said that coal would have an important role in the country's energy mix.
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- **Coal** - With US and Australia backing coal, poor countries like Indonesia are taking the opportunity.
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- Having seen good returns in exporting coal over the last decade, it wants to do more.
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- The situation is likely to worsen with the development of a new Russia-funded railway.
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- The railway will open up new areas of Kalimantan (Indonesian part of Borneo island) for coal.
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- Banks are also not doing enough to restrict funding for coal projects.
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- **Deforestation** - According to Stockholm Environment Institute, permits for mining cover 6.3 million hectares of Conservation Forest and Protected Forest areas.
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- In 2017, the tropics lost nearly 16 million hectares (size of Bangladesh) to deforestation.
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- **Measures** - A recent International Energy Agency report looked at 35 areas requiring action, to be consistent with the 2°C goal.
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- Out of the 35, only four were on the right track and these are solar PV, LED, e-vehicles and data centres.
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- The IPCC report comes as a wake up call for nations to relook and reassess the climate strategies.

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Source: BusinessLine

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