Marrakech Climate Change Conference

Why in news?

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The twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 22 held in **Marrakech, Morocco**.

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What happened earlier?

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- Rich and industrialized countries are obligated to provide climate finance to the developing nations to help them deal with the impacts of climate change.
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- The rich countries have promised to **mobilize at least USD 100 billion per year from the year 2020**.
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- Developing countries have been demanding to know the progress on this promise, but what has come from the rich world has disappointed as well as angered them.
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- In an estimate released a few weeks ago, the rich countries have claimed that they were on road to raise at least USD 64 billion just from public finance by the year 2020. However, these estimates were based on a **discredited OECD report** released last year which had claimed that more than USD 60 billion dollars in climate finance had already flowed from the developed to the developing world between the years 2010 and 2014. This both disappointed and angered the developing counties.
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What happened in COP22?

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- It had the ambitious task of drawing up the first steps on **enhanced finance**

and technology transfer, which is vital to advance the Paris Agreement that entered into force in November.
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- If the UN framework convention (**UNFCCC) is the World's Constitution** for fighting climate change that they all agreed to in 1992, the **Paris Agreement is the equivalent of a law** and **Marrakech Conference was supposed to come out as a rulebook** for it.
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- It's a settled concept that rules are meant to facilitate the implementation of provisions of a law. But at Marrakech, the developed countries tried to use the rule-making process to subvert the law – the Paris Agreement. Their hostility came as a surprise to many ill-prepared developing economies, including India.
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- One of the biggest victories the rich nations were able to score at Marrakech was in getting **their report on climate finance acknowledged** into the formal negotiations, despite developing countries claiming that it had used dubious accounting methods.
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- This OECD report could now become one of the bases for defining climate finance. The OECD countries had tried this last year at Paris as well and failed. But, they got away with it in Marrakech.
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- They also got ensured to a considerable extent that there would be **little new action to reduce emissions** or enhance climate funding till 2020.
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- The developing countries had demanded that the existing **Adaptation Fund** which provides funds to developing countries from the rich nations continue to live under the Paris Agreement unconditionally. But this was achieved with attached conditions that could constrict it or even eventually choke it by the time Paris Agreement gets implemented.
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- Then there was a list of issues that needed to be sorted out that was likely to fall off the table in coming years. For example\n
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    - For developing countries, one of these priority issues was to have a process for setting a **new collective quantified goal** on climate finance.
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    - For developed countries, it was to have a **common time frames** in

which countries revise their targets periodically under Paris Agreement.
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Was India’s aspirations met at Marrakech?

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- ‘**Climate Justic**e’ did not find a mention. Nor did India’s demand that developed countries adjust their lifestyles to reduce their emissions considerably.
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- Even the reference to the long-standing principles of **equity and common but differentiated responsibilities** could find a very nominal space in the political statement called the Marrakech Action Proclamation.
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- India’s actual negotiating team at the Moroccan capital remained strained for **human-power and greater political leadership**. India was often found missing from the crucial closed door and parallel talks on climate finance.
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- India had to also deal with the fact that the **BASIC group had become less coherent** than ever before. It comprises of South Africa, Brazil, China and India and stumped the EU in 2009 by becoming the group of big developing economies that collectively bargained with the US at Copenhagen to shape the new climate regime. But, South Africa drifted somewhat away from others in its national interest even before the Paris Agreement. At Morocco, Brazil demonstrating that its national interest and political alignments at climate talks had turned closer to those of the US rather than to the BASIC group.
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What is the way ahead?

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- The issues that were the most difficult to resolve at Paris have been all put on the plate for 2017 and 2018 to resolve.
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- The next two years would be politically as low-key as Marrakech which may make political leadership of developing countries take it easy. India’s flip-flop

on ratification and then the weak political preparation this year showed what the consequence can be.
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- A repeat over next two years could land India in a regime where the provisions of the Paris Agreement may say the right things but its implementation would mean lead to just the reverse. The rules could un-write the law.
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