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Global Methane Pledge

The Global Methane Pledge launched at the UN COP26 climate conference in Glasgow has been signed by over 90 countries so far.

- This pledge is an effort led jointly by the US and the European Union.
- It is essentially an agreement to stop deforestation and cut down global methane emissions by up to 30% from 2020 levels by 2030.
- **Significance** - Rapidly reducing methane emissions is complementary to action on carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases.
- This is regarded as the single most effective strategy to keep the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius within reach.
- **Signatories** - Among the signatories is Brazil - one of the five biggest emitters of methane.
- China, Russia and India have not signed up, while Australia has said it will not back the pledge.

The latest IPCC report reveals that the methane accounts for about half of the 1.0 degrees Celsius net rise in global average temperature since the pre-industrial era.

Methane

- Methane is the second-most abundant greenhouse gas in the atmosphere, after carbon dioxide.
- Methane is more short-lived in the atmosphere than carbon dioxide but 80 times more potent in warming the earth.
- Methane accounts for about 20% of the heating effects by all of the greenhouse gases combined.
- The UN says that 25% of the global warming is because of methane.
- **Sources of methane** include natural sources (40% of global methane emissions) and human sources (60% of global methane emissions).
    - Natural sources - Emissions from wetlands and oceans, cows' digestive systems, and from the digestive processes of termites.
    - Human sources - Oil and natural gas systems (largest contributors to human sources), landfills, agricultural activities, coal mining, wastewater treatment, and certain industrial processes.
- **Uses** - Methane is flammable, and is used as a fuel worldwide. It is a principal component of natural gas.

Revival of All-India Judicial Service Proposal

The Centre has revived the proposed All India Judicial Service (AIJS) to centrally recruit judges on the lines of civil services.

- At present, various high courts and State service commissions hold exams to recruit judicial officers.
- The proposal for an AIJS was first suggested in the early 1960s.
- While the proposal was revived a few times, it could not be implemented due to opposition from some high courts and states.
- The proposed judicial service will be similar to the IAS and the IPS.
- This service will incentivise aspirants becoming a lower court judge and hence ameliorate the administration and delivery of justice.
- This will supply a competent and efficient pool of judicial officers, as the process of intake of judges will solely be focused on their **competence**.
- It will also address the issue of **social inclusion** by enabling suitable representation to marginalised and deprived sections of society.
- **Procedure** - The provision of AIJS was included in Article 312 of the Constitution through the 42nd amendment in 1976.
- But it would still require a bill to decide on its broad contours.
- If the bill is passed, the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) could hold a standardised entrance test to recruit judges for lower courts.

Reports have noted that the judge-to-population ratio in India is about 19 judges per 10 lakh population even though the Law Commission had recommended that it should be at least 50 per 10 lakh people.

Need for Social Inclusion

- As per the Law Ministry, Other Backward Classes (OBC) accounted for only 12% of the judges in the lower judiciary in 12 states.
    - That is far below the estimated share of OBCs in the Indian population, which is more than 40%. The decennial Census in India does not compile caste numbers.
- Dalits and tribals made up less than 14% and about 12%, respectively, of the judges in the lower judiciary.
    - Per Census 2011, Dalits and tribals accounted for more than 16% and little under 9% of the population respectively.

Reasons behind the Struggle to Reduce Coal Dependency

- Earth needs people to stopping the burning of coal (the biggest source of greenhouse gases) to avoid the most tragic impacts of climate change.
- While stopping the burning of coal may be possible for some developed nations, it is not so simple for developing countries.
    - Developing countries argue for the ‘carbon space’ for them to grow as developed nations have, by burning cheap fuels like coal.
- Coal is the world’s **biggest source of fuel** for electric power and so many people depend on it for their very lives.
- In India, there are roughly 3,00,000 people working directly with government-owned coal mines. There are nearly 4 million people in India whose livelihoods are directly or indirectly linked to coal.
- India’s coal belt is dotted by **industries** that need the fuel, like steel and brick making.
- **Indian Railways**, India’s largest employers, earns half their revenue by transporting coal, allowing it to subsidise passenger travel.

- **Consequences** will be felt both globally and locally.
- According to the IPCC report, unless the world drastically cuts greenhouse gas emissions, it will suffer even more extreme heat waves, erratic rainfall and destructive storms in coming years.
- A 2021 Indian government study found that Jharkhand state - the state with the nation's largest coal reserves - is the most vulnerable state to climate change.
- So, India and other countries with coal-dependent regions have to diversify their economies and retrain workers to protect their livelihoods.

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