Tracking the World's Climate Action Plan

Why in news?

Leaders from countries will gather in the Egyptian city of Sharm El-Sheikh for the 27th round of the Conference of Parties (COP27) to deliberate on a global response to the increasing threat of climate change.

What is COP?

- The Conference of Parties (COP) is the apex decision-making body of the United Nations Climate Change Framework Convention (UNFCCC).
- The UNFCCC was formed in 1994 to stabilize greenhouse gas emissions and to protect the earth from the threat of climate change.
- The participants at COPs are signatories to the UNFCCC and have been meeting every year since 1995.
- At present, the UNFCCC has 198 members.
- The first conference (COP1) was held in 1995 in Berlin.

What's on the agenda at the upcoming COP27?

- COP27 will seek to strengthen a global response and deliberate if wealthy nations emitting carbon dioxide should compensate for the loss to developing countries with a lower carbon footprint.
- The summit seeks to accelerate global climate action through emissions reduction, scaled-up adaptation efforts and enhanced flows of appropriate finance.
- The four priority areas are
    - Mitigation
    - Adaptation
    - Finance
    - Collaboration
- COP27 will be about moving from negotiations and planning to the implementation of promises and pledges made.

How has the world been doing on climate change since the Glasgow meet?

- Extreme weather events and scientific reports are a stark reminder of the devastating impact of human pressure on the climate and the inefficiency of existing plans.

Findings 0f Emissions Gap Report 2022

- The report has warned that glob efforts remain insufficient to limit global temperature rise to 1.5°C, as per the Paris Agreement.

- Even if the countries meet their pledges, we are on track for around 2.5°C of warming.
- The report adds that emissions compared to 2010 levels need to fall 45% by 2030 to meet the Paris deal's goal.

Findings of IPCC Report

- The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) assessment report stated that climate change had produced irreversible losses to natural ecosystems.
- As per the report, 3-14% of all species on earth face a very high risk of extinction at even 1.5°C.
- It adds that limiting warming to around 1.5°C requires global greenhouse gas emissions to peak before 2025 and be reduced by 43% by 2030.

Findings of the World Resources Institute

- It suggests that the world needs to curb emissions 6 times faster by 2030 than the current trajectory to meet the 1.5°C target.
- Of the 40 indicators examined, none is on track to reach the 2030 target.

Where does India stand?

- India is the **third-largest greenhouse gas emitter** in the world.
- The Climate Action Tracker, an independent analysis that tracks government climate action, classifies India's action as "highly insufficient".
- India had previously come under intense criticism over its stand to "phase down" coal power instead of "phasing it out", at COP26.

What is the need of the hour?

- Emissions from food systems as a result of consumption and production patterns, as well as of livestock needs a special focus.
- In a first, **New Zealand** recently planned to tax agricultural emissions, including those from livestock burps and waste, to transition to a low emissions future.

References

1. The Hindu | Is the world's climate action plan on track?
2. The Indian Express | Emissions Gap Report 2022
3. Down to Earth | Conference of Parties

Quick facts

Emissions from agriculture industry

- **Livestock** - Emissions from livestock mainly include carbon dioxide (from urea), nitrous oxide (from livestock dung and urine), and methane (from belching) among others.
- NASA claims that the process of cow belching (burping) releases more methane into the environment due to enteric fermentation.
- **Paddy** – Paddy cultivation in wetlands prevents oxygen from penetrating the soil and creates suitable conditions for methane-emitting bacteria thus accounting for 8% of human-linked emissions.
- Nitrous oxide and methane absorb more energy than CO2 but stay in the atmosphere for a shorter duration.
- Over a 20-year-period, it has 80 times more GWP than carbon dioxide.
- According to the IPCC, the Global Warming Potential (GWP) of gases is a metric that helps measure the radiative effect (the ability to absorb energy) of each unit of gas over a specific period of time such as 100 years, relative to the radiative effect of carbon dioxide.
- An IPCC research showed methane is responsible for at least a quarter of today's global warming.
- The UNEP and Climate and Clean Air Coalition 2021 assessment found that cutting human or farming-related methane emissions by 45% this decade is key in the global battle against climate change.

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