U.S. and Climate Change

What is the issue?

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- Kerala and Tamilnadu are facing the worst drought in the recent times.
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- Concurrently, there are several droughts in many other parts of the world, including Bolivia and several regions of Sub-Saharan Africa.
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- Several recent extreme events such as wildfires, droughts, severe heat waves and cyclones in other places.
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- They have a clear signature of a changing climate, but in many cases these are aggravated by other institutional failures.
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What is U.S' stand?

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- U.S. is still the world's second largest annual emitter of GHGs.
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- It has generated more than a quarter of the total anthropogenic GHGs in the atmosphere since 1850.
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- But the present U.S. government does not believe that anthropogenic greenhouse gases (GHGs) are responsible for climate change.
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- U.S. has not technically withdrawn from the Paris Agreement from but Trump's recent decisions are reversals of of former U.S. President Obama's policies to reduce and limit pollution and GHGs.
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What are the effects of Trump's actions?

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- Mr. Trump’s orders directed federal agencies to cancel or amend policies that might interfere with domestic energy production.
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- He also slashed research budgets for climate change.
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- They send a clear signal that the U.S. is no longer interested in curbing GHGs to stabilise the climate and neither is it keen to meet its Paris commitments.
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- It also demonstrates that allowing countries to write their own Nationally Determined Contributions continues to be a problem.
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- This might also be replicated in continued implementation of the agreement by successive governments within each country.
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What should be done?

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- But this may not be a big step back if other countries persist with their efforts and if renewables continue to get more affordable as they have recently.
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- This move also provides elbow room for renewable energy businesses elsewhere to pick up the slack in interest within the U.S.
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- Global agreements are often tenuous and need support and pressure from other actors within and across countries who function at many levels.
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- Climate change requires vigilance and participation by both state and non-state actors.
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Source: The Hindu

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