

## Climate Crisis across the World

### Why in news?

There have been alarming changes in climate across the countries in the world.

### What is the climate issue across the countries?

#### Europe's case

- **Drought-** The 2018 drought was described as the worst in 500 years.
- The precipitation has been far less than usual, while temperatures have soared to unprecedented levels.
- **Record heat-** Unusually high temperatures have led to increased evaporation of surface water and soil moisture.
- The Netherlands, which receives plenty of rainfall, is having one of the driest years ever, and Germany received only half its normal rain in July.
- **Waterways-** With water levels down to less than a metre in some stretches, most large ships have been rendered unusable to move cargo in an economical manner.
- **Power-** Lack of adequate water has affected the operation of nuclear power plants, which use large amounts of water as coolant.
- The result has been a shortage of electricity and an unprecedented rise in energy prices.
- **Food crisis-** And this has come on top of the massive energy and food-supply implications of the Ukraine war.

## TYPES OF DROUGHT

Drought is a rainfall-scarce period, affecting the availability of water for irrigation, drinking, etc. They are classified into three types.

**METEOROLOGICAL** drought is a prolonged dry spell in periods when rainfall is expected

**HYDROLOGICAL** drought is when scarcity of water begins to hit normal supplies in the system

**AGRICULTURAL** drought is when scarcity of water begins to affect the agricultural production

In Europe, all three kinds are being observed currently, varying in degrees in different areas.

### China's case

- **Heatwave**- China has been grappling with its worst heatwave in over 60 years, with temperatures in several regions crossing 40 degree Celsius.
- The country issued its first national drought alert of the year.
- The country issued a red alert heat warning, the highest of its four-tier warning system to at least 165 regions across the country.
- **Rainfall**- In some parts, authorities are attempting to induce rainfall through '**cloud seeding**' — a process through which rockets carry chemicals into the sky to induce rainfall in drought-affected regions.
- **Power outages**- Shanghai authorities have switched off lights at some of the city's most popular sites to conserve power.
- **Rivers drying up**- The country's longest river, Yangtze, which caters to about a third of the Chinese population, is seeing water levels drop to record lows.
- Two of the country's biggest freshwater lakes, Poyang and Dongting, have touched their lowest levels since 1951.
- **Wildfires**- Amid the ongoing heatwave, wildfires have also swept across forests and mountains in multiple districts across Chongqing.

*At present, the world is about 1.1-1.3 degrees warmer than during pre-industrial times.*

## What is the Climate & Health Bill signed by Joe Biden?

- The Inflation Reduction Act, signed by President Joe Biden will make big investments in the environment and health care, and increase taxes on some key groups.
- The Bill includes policies
  - lowering the prices of prescription drugs
  - increasing the generosity of Medicare benefits
  - encouraging the development of renewable energy
  - reducing the impact of climate change
- It will raise taxes on some corporations and bolster the ability of the Internal Revenue Service to crack down on wealthy tax evaders to lower the federal deficit.
- The current Bill also includes clean electricity incentives.
- It also pairs new climate spending with several major concessions to the fossil fuel industry.

*The Inflation Reduction Act is projected to reduce deficits by roughly \$275 billion over 10 years, while the Build Back Better plan passed by the House in November would have added about \$160 billion to deficits.*

## References

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