

Declaring climate emergency in India

What is the issue?

- The impact of climate change is being felt around the world irrespective of whose contribution it is.
- UN and climate experts have called for the declaration of climate emergency worldwide.

How can it be said that climate change is real?

- A few generations from now, our descendants may not see the animals and plants we now regard as commonplace.
- We are depleting 25% more natural resources than the planet can sustain right now.
- Mankind is teetering dangerously close to the precipice of extinction.
- We thought that the impact of climate change would never really be felt by us and it would take a long time, perhaps a couple of centuries.
- Now the effects of climate change are at our doorsteps.
- Cyclones such as Fani, Thane, Vardah, Ockhi, Gaja and Vayu had affected India in different times.
- **Floods** caused havoc in Assam, Himachal Pradesh and Bihar in 2019. Kerala witnessed floods for the second consecutive year.
- Meanwhile, Europe saw the **highest temperatures** ever in recorded history. In July 2019, Paris recorded its highest temperature of 42.6°C.
- All these are because of climate change.

Why is it happening?

- Humanity is paying the price for the indiscriminate use of fossil fuels.
- The increase in global temperatures **started with the industrial revolution**.
- If our current **lifestyle** continues, the global temperature will increase further and that will have catastrophic consequences.
- Industries, vehicles, burning of fossil fuels, thermal power plants and largescale rearing of cattle are emitting heat-trapping **greenhouse gases**.
- The increase in these gases is trapping the sun's heat and increasing the earth's temperature.

What could be its impacts?

- Global warming will drastically affect **agriculture** the production of rice, wheat, maize and soya will decrease significantly.
- Apart from malnutrition, climate change will give birth to newer infections and illness.
- This imbalance will, in turn, affect the economy which will lead to conflict, war and global unrest.
- Global warming is already melting the polar ice caps. If this continues, sea levels will rise and submerge coastal cities.
- These natural disasters will make millions of people climate refugees.
- The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report Averting a climate crisis will require reinvention of the global economy.
- By 2040, there could be global food shortages, inundation of coastal cities and a huge refugee crisis, it says.

What steps should be taken?

- UN and climate experts have called for the declaration of a global climate emergency.
- Countries like the **U.K.**, **Canada**, **France and Ireland** have already declared climate emergencies. So have some local bodies and NGOs.
- Unfortunately, India and the U.S. are still slow to act.
- Global warming will affect every individual in every country. It's the duty of every human and government to take steps to stop the climate crisis.
- The Indian government should declare a climate emergency immediately.
- Immediate policy changes should include,
 - 1. Reducing the usage of fossil fuels by half by 2030,
 - 2. Encouraging the use of public transport,
 - 3. Increasing forest area,
 - 4. Promoting non-conventional energy,
 - 5. Devising good water management policies,
 - 6. Implementing the plastic ban stringently,
 - 7. Banning the burning of waste,
 - 8. Promoting innovative urban planning policies
 - 9. Reducing mass rearing of cattle for human consumption.

Source: The Hindu

