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Bolstering Paris: on the Katowice consensus

Context:-

- Recent meeting of The UN Framework Climate Conference (24th COP) in Katowice, Poland, has moved ahead with the implementation of the Paris Agreement through a rule book to avert dangerous climate change.
- Adoption of rule book will enhance transparency framework to monitor, verify and report actions taken in systematic and standardised mater which would facilitate the implementation of Paris deal, however, several countries and NGOs feels that the deal reached in Katowice, though welcome, was not enough.

Other Highlights of COP24 and Rulebook:-

- The rulebook now specifies what actions can be included in the action plan, how and when to submit them.
 - which gases to measure
 - what methodologies and standards to apply while measuring them
 - the kinds of information to be included in their submissions

- The rulebook says that support shall be provided to developing country for the **implementation of nationally determined contributions (NDCs)** by countries and Parties shall provide the information **necessary for clarity, transparency and understanding as applicable to their NDCs.**
- On **“climate finance”** and **its accounting**, the rulebook says what kinds of financial flows - loans, concessions, grants - can be classified as climate finance. And It specifies how they should be accounted for and the kind of information about them needed to be submitted.

Challenges:-

- **Challenge to Reduction of Climate Emission-** Recently, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), in **“The 1.5 Degree Report”**, issued a stark warning on man-made emissions. It said that to cap the rise in global average temperature **over pre-industrial levels at 1.5°C, a 45% reduction in emissions over 2010 levels must be made by 2030.**
 - This is a challenge for all big economies, including India, which is among the top five emitters of carbon dioxide.
- **No Consensus to accept IPCC report suggestion-** This report was not suitably acknowledged as an evidence-based cause for alarm by the U.S., Saudi Arabia and Russia, however. These countries wanted the report “noted” but not “welcomed”

- **Questions on the Equity Concept-** At Katowice, Indian negotiators put forth legitimate concerns on the likely **social impact of the new rules** that will operationalise the Paris Agreement in 2020.
 - As, at an estimated 1.2 tonnes of CO₂ per capita, India emits far below the global average of 4.2 tonnes. Yet, cumulative emissions determine the impact on climate, and India's emissions grew at an estimated 6.3% in 2018.
- **Issue of Unused Carbon Credit-** In Katowice, countries (Brazil, China, India etc) called for considering as valid their unused carbon credits in the new market mechanism that was being created
 - Because, in the last few years, several countries walked out of the Kyoto Protocol, and no country was feeling compelled to meet its 2020 emission reduction targets as there is virtually no demand for carbon credits.
 - As a result, developing countries like China, India and Brazil have accumulated huge amounts of unused carbon credits.
 - But the developed countries strongly opposed this, questioning the authenticity of the unused carbon credits.

Indian Initiatives and What More Needs to be Done:-

- India highlights the need for action on several fronts: scaling up solar and wind power in line with the

- goal of reaching 175 GW of renewable energy by 2022, steadily reducing reliance on coal, shifting substantially to electric mobility and adopting green industrial processes.
- Taxing luxury emissions and using the dividend to give the poor energy access has to be the policy target, building on international green climate funding linkages.
- As a party to the global climate compact, India has to systematically assess its emissions and measure mitigation actions for reporting to the UNFCCC at stock-taking meetings.
- This is an opportunity to bring major sectors such as energy production, building, agriculture and transport on board, and make changes to regulations that favour environment-friendly alternatives.
- Learning from the Others- China has taken the lead in advancing electric mobility, while individual States and cities are ahead of national governments, as in the U.S., in reducing their carbon footprint.
- A clean-up in India will help meet emissions commitments and remove the blanket of air pollution that is suffocating entire cities.

Way Ahead:-

- The prospect of increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events and sea level rise in a warming world affecting small island states allows little room for complacency.
- The task now is to achieve a paradigm shift that will slow down the addition of new sources of carbon emissions.

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