

4. U.S., Saudi at bottom of Climate Class: Report

Prelims Level: Environmental Impact Assessment

Mains Level: GS-III Conservation, environmental pollution and Degradation, Environmental Impact Assessment.

Why in News?

- The U.S. and Saudi Arabia are among major polluters showing “hardly any signs” of reducing their Greenhouse Gas Production.

About CCPI:

- The **Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI)** is an instrument covering 58 countries and supposed to enhance transparency in international climate politics.
- Its aim is to encourage political and social pressure on those countries which have, up to now, failed to take ambitious actions on climate protection as well as to highlight countries with best-practice climate policies.
- The ranking results are defined by a country’s aggregated performance on 14 indicators within the four categories “**GHG Emissions**”, “**Renewable Energy**” and “**Energy Use**”, as well as on “**Climate Policy**.”
- The 2020 Climate Change Performance Index, prepared by a group of think tanks comprising the **New Climate Institute**, the **Climate Action Network** and **Germanwatch**. On the basis of standardized criteria, the index evaluates and compares the climate protection performance of 58 countries that are, together, responsible for more than 90% of global energy-related CO₂ emissions.
- 80% of the evaluation is based on objective indicators of emissions trend and emissions level.
- 20% of the index results are built upon national and international climate policy assessments by more than 200 experts from the respective countries.

Report’s Findings:

- It found the U.S. ranks last, followed by Saudi Arabia and Australia, although several countries did report falls in emissions last year, largely due to an industry-wide fade out of coal.
- While climate performance varied greatly — even within the EU, with Sweden leading the way — the report found that none of the countries surveyed were currently on a path compatible with the Paris climate goals.

- The 2015 accord saw nations agree to work towards limiting global temperature rises to “well below” two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.
- U.S. President Donald Trump says he plans to withdraw from the global plan to reduce emissions.
- China, the world’s largest single emitter, was found to have taken “medium action” due to its high investment in renewable.
- India, for the first time, ranks among the top 10 in this year’s Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) presented on Tuesday at the COP25 climate summit here.
- The current levels of per capita emissions and energy use in India, ranked 9th in the “high category”, are still comparatively low and, along with ambitious 2030 targets, result in high ratings for the green house gas emissions and energy use categories.

Approach towards Future:

- However, despite an overall high rating for its Climate Policy performance, experts point out that the Indian government has yet to develop a roadmap for the phase-out of fossil fuel subsidies that would consequently reduce the country’s high dependence on coal.
- However, the index warned that Beijing could slump to the bottom rungs if it follows through on its plan to continue building coal-fired power plants.
- The index shows signs of a global turnaround in emissions, including declining coal consumption. However, several large countries are still trying to resist this trend - above all the USA. Delegates are gathered at the COP 25 in Madrid to devise ways of putting the Paris plan in action, but key sticking points remain over emissions trading schemes and how the fight against climate change is funded.
- This science based assessment shows again that in particular the large climate polluters do hardly anything for the transformational shift we need. Nations need to implement “deep emissions reductions to curtail the run to potentially irreversible climate change”.