

India Refrains Signing COP 28 Health - Climate Declaration

Why In News

- India refrained from signing the COP28 Declaration on Climate and Health, with sources pointing out that **curbing greenhouse gas use for cooling in the health sector**, which is one of the points in the document, may not be practical or achievable within the country's healthcare infrastructure in the short term.
- The **Health Day also did not see any participation** from the Indian Health Ministry delegation even though India extended support to the ministerial hosted by the COP28 Presidency, the World Health Organisation and the UAE Ministry of Health and Prevention.



SSB



Crack
EXAMS

Declaration Calls For

- The declaration calls for climate action to achieve "**benefits for health from deep, rapid, and sustained reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, including from just transitions, lower air pollution, active mobility, and shifts to sustainable healthy diets**".

- On the occasion of the **first Health Day at the 28th UN Climate Change Conference (COP28)**, the declaration expressed grave concern about the **negative impacts of climate change on health**.



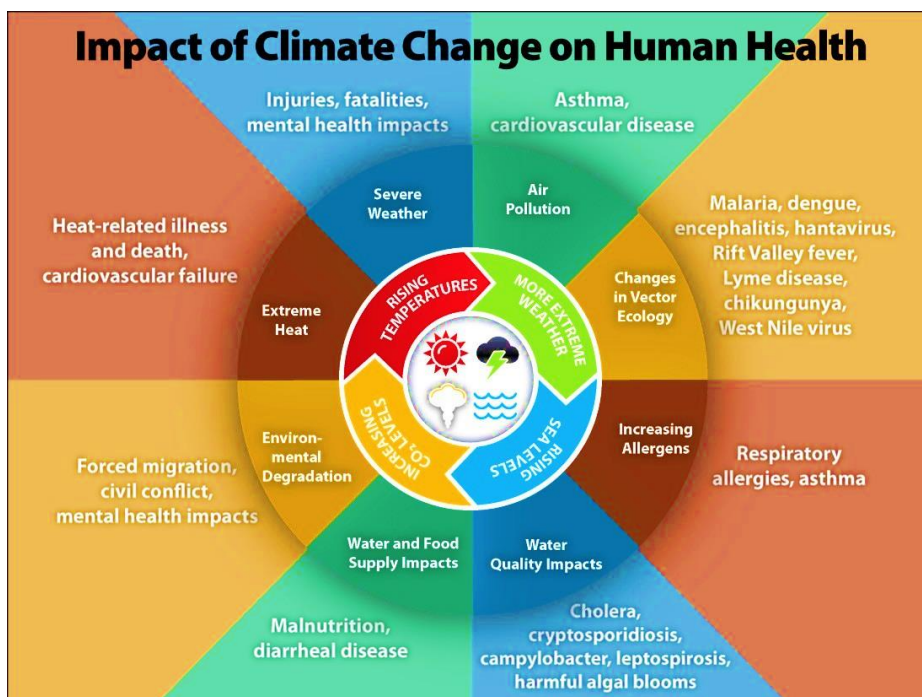
- The declaration has been **signed by 124 countries** till now with the US and India, which are among the top greenhouse gas emitters, absent from the list of signatories.
- The declaration, aimed at addressing the **critical intersection between climate change and global health**, emphasises the need for swift and substantial reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

Aim Of The Declaration

- The declaration aims at **promoting a holistic approach** to understanding and mitigating the **diverse health challenges** posed by a changing climate.
- One of the central objectives of the declaration is the commitment to **combat inequalities** within and among countries.
- It emphasised the **pursuit of policies** that accelerate the achievement of the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, particularly SDG3, which focuses on good health and well-being.
- The **comprehensive approach** seeks to **reduce poverty and hunger**, improve health and livelihoods, strengthen social protection systems, enhance food security and nutrition, and ensure access to clean energy, safe drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene for all.



- Acknowledging the **carbon footprint of health systems**, the declaration encourages steps to curb emissions and reduce waste in the health sector.
- This includes **assessing greenhouse gas emissions** of health systems, developing action plans, establishing nationally determined decarbonisation targets, and implementing procurement standards for national health systems, including supply chains.
- The objective is to promote **sustainable practices** within the health sector to contribute to broader climate goals.



Sticking Point

- However, a sticking point emerged as the draft outlined a commitment to **reducing greenhouse gases for cooling applications** within healthcare infrastructure - a measure India finds difficult to comply with.



- India, a nation grappling **with significant healthcare challenges**, including those exacerbated by climate change, expressed concerns that greenhouse gas reduction for cooling in the health sector could hinder its **ability to meet the growing demands** for medical services, particularly in remote and underserved areas, a delegate from Kenya said.



- India had put **emphasis on resilient health in its G20 declaration**. The **three health priorities of India's G20** presidency were building a resilient healthcare system, creating a platform for improving access to medical countermeasures and creating a platform for sharing digital goods between countries.



- The COP28 Declaration underscores the **importance of addressing the broad spectrum of impacts** that climate change has on health.
- This includes considerations for **mental health and psychosocial well-being**, preservation of traditional medicinal knowledge, protection of livelihoods and cultures, and dealing with climate-induced displacement and migration.

Conclusion

- Meanwhile, **Jess Beagley, Policy Lead, Global Climate and Health Alliance**, said that as one of the leading global emitters worldwide, and the home of 1 billion of the world's population, the absence of India from the list of over 120 countries endorsing the COP28 health declaration is striking.

