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- ❖ **NAM Summit**
- ❖ **Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojna**
- ❖ **Bal Gangadhar Tilak**
- ❖ **Violence Against Dalits**
- ❖ **Foreign Banks in India**
- ❖ **Gaon Sabha**



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Third Concept aims at providing a platform where a meaningful exchange of ideas can take place among the people of the Third World. The attempt will be to communicate, debate and disseminate information, ideas and alternatives for the resolution of the common problems facing humankind. We welcome contributions from academics, journalists and even from those who may never have published anything before. The only requirement is a concern for and desire to understand and take the issue of our time. Contributions may be descriptive, analytical or theoretical. They may be in the form of original articles, reactions to previous contributions, or even a comment on a prevailing situation. All contributions, neatly typed in double space, may be addressed to:

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Paris Agreement!

The signing of the historic agreement on climate change on 22 April at Paris is being hailed as a milestone, with a record 175 countries along with European Union, including India, having signed it. The agreement will come into force once 55 countries representing at least 55 per cent of global emissions formally join it, a process initially expected to take until 2020.

Nevertheless, in the wake of a host of announcements at the signing event, some observers now think it could happen later this year. China, the world's top carbon emitter, announced it would "finalise domestic procedures" to ratify the agreement before the G20 summit in September this year. Similar intentions to ratify the agreement this year have been reiterated by the United States, Canada Mexico and Australia. The Paris Agreement is touted as a major breakthrough in U.N. climate negotiations, which for years were slowed by disputes between rich and poor countries over who should do what. Signatory-countries are expected to set their own targets for reducing emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases under this agreement. The targets are not legally binding, but countries must update them every five years.

Interestingly, the emphasis of the debate on climate change shifted after the climate summit in Paris in December 2015 from whether scientific evidence is strong enough to warrant making aggressive cuts in greenhouse gas emissions, to how this should be achieved without hurting economic growth in developing countries such as India. The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) accepts differentiated responsibility for developing nations, which are not responsible for the accumulated stock of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, as opposed to rich countries that historically had the benefit of the unfettered use of fossil fuels. According to some experts, what makes carbon emissions particularly problematic, however, is that polluting local flows have a global effect over relatively short periods, and far-flung countries, such as small island nations, suffer the impact.

India's estimate of its share of global greenhouse gas emissions submitted to the UN for the Paris treaty is 4.10 per cent, but it faces a double jeopardy: of having to emit large volumes of carbon dioxide to achieve growth, while preparing to adapt to the destructive effects of intense weather events, such as droughts and floods, linked to climate change. In the aftermath of the Paris agreement, India is confronted with the challenge of implementing its pledge to sharply cut emissions intensity of GDP by 2020. A small reduction was achieved between 2005 and 2010, and the effort now should be to maintain the trend. Energy, transport and infrastructure are key areas where sound national policies are needed.

Undoubtedly, the doubling of the cess on coal in the Budget, and the general policy to keep fuel prices high using taxation are welcome moves; nonetheless, these must be translated into funding for green alternatives. It should be possible to unlock middle class investments in renewable energy. State governments should encourage this sector by providing subsidies. New buildings should also be required to conform to energy efficiency codes in all States. Funding for green energy initiatives should come from the rich countries, which are required to raise at least \$100 billion a year, once the Paris Agreement is ratified. The pact requires them to provide even higher levels of assistance. The success of the climate compact will ultimately depend on whether rich countries, including the U.S., fund innovation and open-source their green technologies to developing nations.

Protagonists of Paris pact claim that the treaty will do a lot more. While disagreeing with this claim, critics point out that governments do little now and then embark on incredibly ambitious and climate change reduction policies after 2030. Failure of the Kyoto Protocol — the only global treaty to cut carbon — is famously cited in this regard. It also stated that in view of the UN's own reckoning that Paris treaty will only achieve less than 1 per cent of the emission cuts needed to meet target temperatures, it means that ninety-nine per cent of the problem is left for tomorrow's leaders to deal with.

Only a pragmatic approach can help in transforming this once-in-history opportunity to create a new, shared, inspiring and sustainable world.

— BK