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China's Renewed Support for Paris Agreement

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Why in News

Recently, China has renewed its support for the **Paris Agreement** at the **United Nations** (UN) **General Assembly**, while calling for a 'green focus' as the world recovers from the **Covid-19** crisis.

Key Points

- China is the **world's biggest polluter** and **accounts for a quarter of the planet's greenhouse gas** (GHG) emissions.
- It now aims to reach **carbon-dioxide emissions peak before 2030** and **achieve carbon neutrality before 2060**.
 - The 2060 objective is **still a decade later than the date set by other small states as well as European powers** but it has been appreciated by experts as a significant step to inject momentum into the Paris accord.
- In addition to its embrace of global emissions-busting deals, China already feeds **nearly 15% of its energy demands with non-fossil fuels** and its **installation of renewable energy stands at 30% of the world total**.
- However, global experts have highlighted that there are **massive investments continuing within China and overseas in coal and other fossil fuels**.
 - China currently has **135 gigawatts of coal-power capacity either permitted or under construction**, according to **Global Energy Monitor**, a San Francisco-based environmental group.
 - This equates to about **half the total coal-power capacity in the USA** which is the **second-largest polluter after China**.

- **Against the USA:**
 - China **highlighted USA's demand for plastics and export of waste and criticised it for "obstructing" the global fight** against emissions.
Earlier, the **USA had pulled out of the Paris agreement**, calling it unfair and **blamed China for the stalled momentum** on tackling global emissions.
 - This move has opened a **new divergence in US-China relations which are already troubled** over issues like **trade**, technology, defence and human rights.

Paris Agreement

- Paris Agreement (also known as the **Conference of Parties 21** or **COP 21**) is a landmark environmental accord that was **adopted in 2015 to address climate change and its negative impacts**.
It replaced the **Kyoto Protocol** which was an earlier agreement to deal with climate change.
- **Aims:** To reduce global GHG emissions in an effort to **limit the global temperature increase in this century to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels**, while pursuing means to **limit the increase to 1.5°C by 2100**.
- **It includes:**
 - **Addressing the financial losses vulnerable countries face** from climate impacts such as extreme weather.
 - **Raising money to help developing countries** adapt to climate change and transition to clean energy.
 - This part of the deal has been made **non-legally binding on developed countries**.
- Before the conference started, **more than 180 countries had submitted pledges to cut their carbon emissions (Intended Nationally Determined Contributions or INDCs)**.
 - The INDCs were **recognised under the agreement, but are not legally binding**.
 - **India also reaffirmed its INDCs commitments** to meeting the goals under the Agreement in order to **combat the climate change**.

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