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he recent high-level climate change meeting
in Bangkok was the first significant step since
last year's historic Bali Summit in which 187 countries agreed on a two-year process to thrash out a new international arrangement to tackle threaten-ing consequences of climate change. The new pact that seeks to fight, mitigate and adapt to the prob-lems caused by global warming
is expected to be ready in
Copenhagen in 2009 and substi-
tute the Kyoto Protocol after
2012. The Kyoto Protocol re-
mains controversial till date
due to stiff US opposition on
the ground that if the protocol
is implemented, it will serious-
ly affect the US economy.
Notwithstanding the acri-
monious legacy, the Bangkok
meeting was tasked with setting
the agenda for charting out con-
crete plans to halt increase in carbon emissions by 2015 and significantly cut down emissions by 2050. The three main issues on the table are long-term plans to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions, to explore the possibility of emission cut not only from 28 industrialised nations but also large developing countries and to prevent future damages caused by climate change. The agenda also includes the criti-cal issue of supplying green technology and funds to the developing nations so that they can mitigate the perils of climate change. The Bangkok meeting kickstarts the process to negotiate one of the most complex international agreements in a very limited time. But despite high ecological stakes, the agenda setting meet was an intensely-fought event. Japan's over-emphasis on sector-specific mechanisms for curbing the emission worried developing countries like India, China, Brazil and Mexico as they inter-preted it as a backdoor effort to force them on a com-mitment on emission reduction.

Understandably, this was not agreeable to the economies in transition, which have just begun to test their economic success. Any compromise might be detrimental to their prosperity. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has made it clear that India's eco-nomic success has to continue and it can only com-mit that its emission would not cross the emissions of industrialised nations. However, major develop-ing countries cannot completely shrug off their re-sponsibility, though the attempts of industrialised nations to pressure them into unfair agreements will have to be resisted. This will be the major challenge in the negotiations over the next 18 months and In-dia, along with other developing countries, will have to find the difficult balance between its right to pros-perity and commitment to a safe environment.

Need for balance

Climate change
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