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## Need for balance

**T**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 threatening consequences of climate change. The new pact that seeks to fight, mitigate and adapt to the problems caused by global warming is expected to be ready in Copenhagen in 2009 and substitute the Kyoto Protocol after 2012. The Kyoto Protocol remains controversial till date due to stiff US opposition on the ground that if the protocol is implemented, it will seriously affect the US economy.



**Climate change talks pose a difficult challenge.**

Notwithstanding the acrimonious legacy, the Bangkok meeting was tasked with setting the agenda for charting out concrete 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 critical 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 interpreted it as a backdoor effort to force them on a commitment 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 economic success has to continue and it can only commit that its emission would not cross the emissions of industrialised nations. However, major developing countries cannot completely shrug off their responsibility, 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 India, along with other developing countries, will have to find the difficult balance between its right to prosperity and commitment to a safe environment.