

UPSC CURRENT AFFAIRS NOTES

15-08-2023

WHO and the Ministry of Ayush to host the first-ever Global Summit on Traditional Medicine

The highly anticipated event is set to take place on 17th-18th August at Gandhinagar, Gujarat



The Global Summit will place India at the forefront of advancing Traditional Medicines: MoS Ayush

A first-of-its-kind global summit on Traditional Medicine, organised by the World Health Organization (WHO) and co-hosted by the Ministry of Ayush, is set to take place on August 17-18, 2023, at Gandhinagar, Gujarat. The summit will take into account the vast experience and expertise of the country and this highly anticipated event will serve as a platform for experts and practitioners to delve into the latest scientific advancements and evidence-based knowledge in the sector, with the ultimate goal of ensuring health and well-being for all.

“By blending traditional practices with contemporary practices aided by visionary policies and digital initiatives, India has demonstrated a path for achieving universal health coverage (UHC) through traditional medicine systems.”

Another added milestone will be the exhibition of Traditional systems of medicine from across the globe and the Ministry of Ayush. This exhibition serves as a comprehensive display of Traditional Medicine worldwide and will showcase the interconnectedness of Traditional Medicine with the natural



environment in the form of 'Kalpavriksha', along with scientific and technological advancements spearheaded by various regional centres of WHO and the Ministry of Ayush.

In a detailed presentation, the Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Ayush, Shri Rahul Sharma, laid down the salient features of the event and the exhibition by WHO regional Centres and the Ayush exhibition zone, which has the theme, 'Ayush for Planetary Health & Wellbeing'. This exhibition will display WHO regional centres' prowess apart from highlighting Ayush's efficacy and rich biodiversity of medicinal plants. Some very interesting experiential and interactive kiosks will also be there.

The ministry will also be organising yoga and meditation sessions at the Convention Centre. There also will be yoga and meditation sessions at hotel venues, as well as short Yoga breaks at Mahatma Mandir Convention Centre between sessions.

In 2022, WHO, with the support of the Government of India, established the Global Centre for Traditional Medicine. Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, laid the foundation stone of WHO-GCTM last year in the presence of the Director-General, WHO, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

The centre is a collaborative project of the Ministry of Ayush of India and the World Health Organization (WHO) and is the first and only global outpost for traditional medicine across the globe. The WHO GCTM will provide leadership on all global health matters related to traditional medicine as well as extend support to member countries in shaping various policies related to traditional medicine research, practices and public health. In a significant move, this year's highly anticipated event in the form of the WHO Global Summit on Traditional Medicine is taking place.

NIPCCD organizes State Level Master's Training (SLMT) Programme on 'Poshan Bhi Padhai Bhi' in Mohali

National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD) under Ministry of Women and Child Development organized a Two Day State Level Master's Training (SLMT) Programme on 'Poshan Bhi Padhai Bhi' for the State of Punjab on 7-8 August, 2023 at NIPCCD Regional Centre, Mohali. 29 Participants attended the Programme.

Special invitees of Independence Day Celebration, 2023 visit Historical Places in national capital

On the occasion of 77th Independence Day, the nation will witness the celebrations from the Red Fort in New Delhi in the presence of Special Guests from across India. These guests are especially invited to the capital to witness the hoisting of the National flag by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and listen to his address to the nation.



Ministry of Rural Development, Govt. of India, is pleased to announce that 50 participants of Amrit Sarovar along with their spouses from 18 States and 1 UT have been invited as Special Guests to witness the Independence Day Ceremony, 2023 at Red Fort Delhi on August 15, 2023. This is a unique initiative to honour and recognize the contribution of the rural community to the nation's water conservation.

100 Jal Jeevan Mission 'Special Guests' from 25 States to Witness the 77th Independence Day Ceremony at the Historic Red Fort

The Independence Day celebrations at Red Fort, New Delhi this year will witness the presence of around 1,800 'Special Invitees' from across the country, representing various walks of life. The 'Special Invitees' will witness the iconic hoisting of the National Flag by Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, and also listen to his address to the Nation from the ramparts of the historic Red Fort.

Among these 1800 'Special Guests' is a Jal Jeevan Mission delegation of 100 'Special Guests' from 25 States across the nation who will be participating in the 77th Independence Day Ceremony.

The select group includes individuals who have displayed outstanding dedication and commitment towards implementation of the 'life changing' mission and have been invited by the Department of Drinking Water & Sanitation, Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of India.



Marg, New Delhi provided insights into the life and contributions of visionary leaders who have shaped the nation's destiny.

'A-HELP' Programme and Infertility Camp for Livestock under Inclusive Development at Narmada, Gujarat launched by Shri Parshottam Rupala

Program mark a significant stride towards empowering women, enhancing livestock productivity, and advancing the socio-economic landscape of the region: Shri Rupala

Under the auspices of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, the Union Minister for Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Shri Parshottam Rupala has unveiled the 'A-HELP'

(Accredited Agent for Health and Extension of Livestock Production) programme along with an Infertility Camp, today in the State of Gujarat.



Union Minister Shri Purshottam Rupala highlighted the pivotal role played by livestock and women in the comprehensive development of the livestock sector, particularly in Gujarat. 'A-HELP' programme and the Infertility Camp can mark a significant stride towards empowering women, enhancing livestock productivity, and advancing the socio-economic landscape of the region.

The 'A-HELP' programme aims to empower women by engaging them as trained agents who contribute significantly to disease control, artificial insemination under the Rashtriya Gokul Mission (RGM), animal tagging, and livestock insurance.

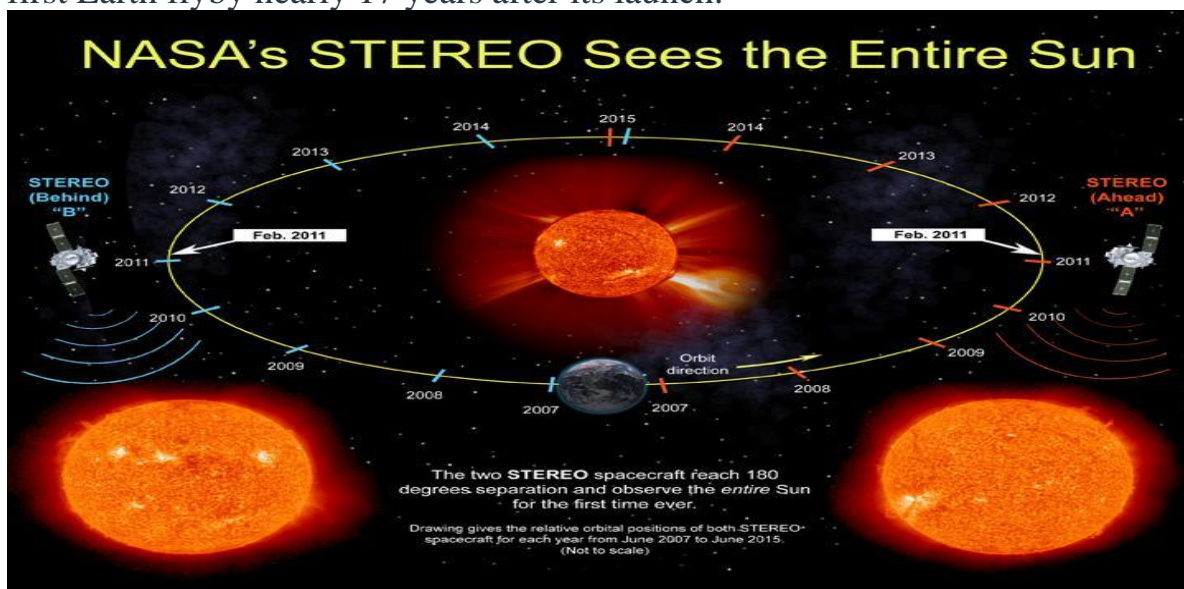
Collaborations with experts from Indian Immunological Ltd. further enhance the initiative's efficacy by ensuring the provision of essential nutritional supplements, mineral mixtures, dewormers, and medicines. This holistic approach seeks to empower the farming community, offering them both knowledge and tangible resources to foster the well-being and prosperity of the nation's invaluable livestock.

All India Wholesale Price Index for July 2023 stands at (-) 1.36% over July, 2022.

- Decline due to fall in prices of mineral oils, basic metals, chemical & chemical products, textiles and food products
- Index Numbers of Wholesale Price in India for the Month of July, 2023 (Base Year: 2011-12)
- The annual rate of inflation based on all India Wholesale Price Index (WPI) number is (-) 1.36% (Provisional) for the month of July, 2023 (over July, 2022) against (-) 4.12% recorded in June, 2023.
- Decline in the rate of inflation in July, 2023 is primarily contributed by fall in prices of mineral oils, basic metals, chemical & chemical products, textiles and food products.

STEREO spacecraft

Nasa's Solar Terrestrial Relations Observatory (STEREO-A) spacecraft made its first Earth flyby nearly 17 years after its launch.



About STEREO spacecraft:

The pair of STEREO (Solar Terrestrial Relations Observatory) spacecraft were launched on October 25, 2006, from Florida's Cape Canaveral Air Force Station. The two spacecraft were situated in Sun's orbit, STEREO-A ("Ahead") and STEREO-B ("Behind").

The dual-spacecraft mission accomplished its major goal by delivering the first-ever stereoscopic view of our star.

On February 6, 2011, another significant milestone was achieved as both STEREO-A and -B reached a remarkable 180-degree separation in their orbits, which gave us the full sphere image of the Sun.

Significance of STEREO-A

It will synthesize its views with those from Nasa's and the European Space Agency's Solar and Heliospheric Observatory (SOHO) and Nasa's Solar Dynamics Observatory (SDO).

Its distance from Earth changes throughout the flyby, it will optimize its stereo vision for different-sized solar features at different times, akin to adjusting the focus on a several million-mile-wide telescope.

It will allow scientists to understand how a coronal mass ejection's (CME) magnetic field evolves on its way to Earth.

Bubonic Plague/Black Death

Recently, A group of scholars from different disciplines have attempted to solve this much-debated mystery for origin of Black Death.



In a study published in the journal Science researchers have claimed that the disease originated in modern day northern Kyrgyzstan around 1338-1339 – nearly 7-8 years before it ravaged large parts of the world.

What was the Black Death?

The term Black Death refers to the bubonic plague that spread across Western Asia, Northern Africa, Middle East and Europe in 1346-53.

Most scholars agree that the Black Death was caused by bacterium *Yersinia pestis* and was spread by fleas that were carried by rodent hosts.



The microorganism *Y. pestis* spread to human populations, who at some point transmitted it to others either through the vector of a human flea or directly through the respiratory system.

Naming

It is commonly believed that the term Black Death gets its name from the black marks that appeared on some of the plague victims' bodies.

However, historians argued that this term, which only emerged centuries later, had less to do with the disease's clinical symptoms, and more to do with how European writers from the 19th century onwards understood the epidemic.

In the 14th century, the epidemic was referred to as the 'great pestilence' or 'great death', due to the demographic havoc that it caused.

Symptoms

The onset of symptoms was followed by intense fever and vomiting of blood. After the initial infection, most victims died within 2-7 days.

Urea as a Fertiliser: How to make it more efficient and why that's needed

Recently, the PM of India officially launched 'Urea Gold' fertiliser - basically urea fortified with sulphur, developed by the state-owned Rashtriya Chemicals and Fertilizers Ltd (RCF).

Urea is a chemical nitrogen fertiliser, white in colour, which artificially provides nitrogen, a major nutrient required by plants.

Consumption of Fertilisers in India

Two Main Concerns Over Rising Urea Consumption

Government Efforts to Reduce Urea Consumption in India

What is Urea Gold?



Main Hurdle in the Fortification of Urea and Way Ahead

Consumption of Fertilisers in India:

Like humans, crops need nutrients - primary (N, P, K), secondary (S, calcium, magnesium) and micro (iron, zinc, copper, manganese, boron, molybdenum) - for plant growth and grain yield.

Fertilisers are essentially food for crops, which provides essential nutrients to the crops.

High doses of these fertilisers produced more grains and led to the success of the Green Revolution in the 1960s.

However, crop yield response to fertiliser use has more than halved over time. For example, 1 kg of NPK nutrients yielded 12.1 kg of cereal grains in India during the 1960s, 5 kg during the 2010s.

The underlying reason has been the disproportionate application of N by farmers.



Two Main Concerns Over Rising Urea Consumption:

India's nearly 36-mt annual consumption of urea is today next only to China's 51 mt, with the latter's production largely coal-based.

Out of this 36-mt sold last fiscal, imports accounted for 7.6 mt. Even with regard to domestically-manufactured urea, the feedstock used (natural gas) is mostly imported.

The second concern is nitrogen use efficiency (NUE). Barely 35% of the N applied through urea in India is actually utilised by crops to produce harvested yields.

Declining NUE, from an estimated 48% in the early 1960s, has resulted in farmers applying more and more fertiliser for the same yield.

Government Efforts to Reduce Urea Consumption in India:

The introduction of the nutrient-based subsidy (NBS) regime in 2010.

Under NBS, the government fixed a per-kg subsidy (unlike the earlier product-specific subsidy regime) for each fertiliser nutrient: Nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), potash (K) and sulphur (S).

It aims to promote balanced fertilisation by discouraging farmers from applying too much urea (46% N), di-ammonium phosphate (DAP - 46% P plus 18% N) and muriate of potash (MOP - 60% K).

In 2015, the Centre made it mandatory to coat all indigenously manufactured and imported urea with neem oil.

Consumption did dip in the initial two years, but that trend reversed from 2018-19.

This was followed by replacing 50-kg bags with 45-kg ones in 2018, and the launch of liquid 'Nano Urea' by the Indian Farmers' Fertiliser Cooperative (IFFCO) in 2021.

Liquid nano urea is essentially urea in the form of a nanoparticle aimed at reducing the unbalanced and indiscriminate use of conventional urea, increasing crop productivity, and reducing soil, water, and air pollution.

None of the above government measures for checking illegal diversion for non-agricultural use, increasing nitrogen use efficiency have failed in reducing urea consumption.



What is Urea Gold?

Normal urea contains 46% of a single plant nutrient: Nitrogen or N. Urea Gold has 37% N plus 17% sulphur (S).

It aims at two things. The first is to deliver S along with N.

Indian soils are deficient in S, which oilseeds and pulses - the country is significantly import-dependent in both - particularly require.

The second is to improve the NUE of urea. Coating of S over urea ensures a more gradual release of N.

By prolonging the urea action, the plants stay greener for a longer time - reducing the frequency of application and use of Urea, say, only two bags (against three), for an acre of paddy or wheat.

RCF is yet to commercially introduce Urea Gold or reveal any pricing details.

Main Hurdle in the Fortification of Urea and Way Ahead:

That has to do with pricing. For example, the MRP of Urea Gold is expected to be fixed at Rs 400-500 per 40-kg bag (against around Rs 254 for a 45-kg bag of ordinary neem-coated urea).

The government can probably set free the MRPs for all coated fertilisers.

Since the regular urea or DAP will continue to be sold at heavily subsidised rates, companies cannot charge too much of a premium on their fortified fertiliser products.

The coating should be carried out at the factory itself, which will guarantee even more uniform distribution of micronutrients and save the farmer the hassles of mixing.