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Leaded Petrol Eradicated Globally: UNEP

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Why in News

Recently, the **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)** announced that the use of **leaded petrol has been eradicated from the globe.**

Petrol\Gasoline

- Gasoline, which is also called gas or petrol, is a **mixture of volatile, flammable liquid hydrocarbons derived from petroleum** and used as fuel for internal-combustion engines. It is also used as a solvent for oils and fats.
- Originally a **by-product of the petroleum industry** (kerosene being the principal product), gasoline **became the preferred automobile fuel because of its high energy of combustion and capacity to mix readily with air in a carburetor.**

Leaded vs Unleaded Petrol

- The main difference between leaded and unleaded fuel is the **additive tetraethyl lead.**
- The **combustion of leaded petrol causes the lead to be released into the air.**
 - Lead is a **heavy pollutant that does damage not only to the environment but also to the people** who are exposed to it.

Key Points

- **About:**
 - It is a milestone that will **prevent more than 1.2 million premature deaths and save world economies over USD 2.4 trillion annually.** It is a huge milestone for global health and environment.
 - UNEP warned that **fossil fuel use in general must still be drastically reduced** to stave off the frightening effects of **climate change.**

- **Era of Leaded Petrol:**
 - Until the **1970s**, **almost all the gasoline sold across the globe contained lead**.
 - When UNEP launched its campaign named **Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles (PCFV)** against leaded petrol in **2002**, many major economic powers had already stopped using the fuel, including the United States, China and India. But the situation in lower-income nations remained dire.
 - **More than 100 countries around the world were still using leaded petrol**, despite studies linking it to premature deaths, poor health and soil and air pollution. Concerns were first raised as early as 1924.
 - In July 2021, it was **eradicated from Algeria - the last country using leaded petrol**.
- **Need of Eradication:**
 - **Pollution:**
 - The **transport sector is responsible for nearly a quarter of energy-related global greenhouse gas emissions** and is set to grow to one third by 2050.
 - Adding that 1.2 billion new vehicles would hit the streets in the coming decades.
 - It includes millions of **poor-quality used vehicles** exported from Europe, the United States and Japan, to mid- and low-income countries.
 - **Global Warming:**

Recently, a report named **Climate Change 2021** by the UN's **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)** warned that Earth's average temperature would be 1.5 degrees Celsius warmer around 2030 compared to pre-industrial times.

A decade earlier than projected, the rise has raised alarm bells about the use of fossil fuels.
 - **Health:**

Leaded petrol causes **heart disease, stroke and cancer**. It also affects the development of the human brain, especially harming children.
- **Significance:**
 - The end of leaded petrol is expected to support the **realization of multiple Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)**, including good health and well-being (SDG3), clean water (SDG6), clean energy (SDG7), sustainable cities (SDG11), climate action (SDG13) and life on land (SDG15).
 - It also offers an **opportunity for restoring ecosystems**, especially in urban environments, which have been particularly degraded by this toxic pollutant.

United Nations Environment Programme

- **About:** The UNEP is a leading global environmental authority established on **5th June 1972**.

- **Functions:** It sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the sustainable development within the **United Nations** system, and serves as an authoritative advocate for global environment protection.
- **Major Reports:** Emission Gap Report, Adaptation Gap Report, Global Environment Outlook, Frontiers, Invest into Healthy Planet.
- **Major Campaigns:** Beat Pollution, UN75, World Environment Day, Wild for Life.
- **Headquarters:** Nairobi, Kenya.

Source: TH