

NEWS TODAY

WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION (WHO) REPORT HIGHLIGHTS SIGNIFICANT IMPACT OF 'HAR GHAR JAL' PROGRAM ON PUBLIC HEALTH AND ECONOMIC SAVINGS

• The 'Har Ghar Jal' report focuses on **diarrheal diseases** as they contribute significantly to the **overall disease burden related to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) issues**.

• **Highlights of the report:**

Observation	Impact of the program
In 2019, unsafe drinking water, along with inadequate sanitation and hygiene, contributed to 1.4 million deaths and 74 million Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) globally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will avert nearly 400,000 deaths caused by diarrheal diseases in India. • Avoid 14 million DALYs (Disability Adjusted Life Years) from diarrhoea. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ DALYs are the sum of the years of life lost due to premature mortality and the years lived with a disability due to prevalent cases of the disease.
In 2018, women in India spent an average of 45.5 minutes daily collecting water to meet household needs (majorly in rural areas).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Save close to \$101 billion and 66.6 million hours every day (in the time spent for collecting water by women).
Government's investment in Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) has a significant multiplier effect on health.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investing in water and sanitation results in benefits, including economic, environmental, quality of life, and health. • Safe water addresses both communicable and non-communicable diseases.

• **About 'Har Ghar Jal' programme (2019)**

➢ **Implemented by:** Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) under the **Ministry of Jal Shakti**.

➢ **Aim:** Provide **every rural household** with **affordable and regular access to an adequate supply of safe drinking water through taps**.

➢ **Progress:** Increase in rural tap water connections from 16.64% in 2019 to 62.84% in a span of 41 months.

GOVERNMENT NOTIFIES VITAL MEASURES TO STRENGTHEN URBAN CO-OPERATIVE BANKS (UCB)

• In order to provide an impetus to the prudential framework for the resolution of stressed assets and to harmonise instructions across all regulated entities (REs), **RBI has notified measures like**

➢ **New Branches:** UCBs can open **new branches up to 10%** (maximum 5 branches) of the number of branches in the previous financial year **without prior approval of RBI**.

➢ **One-Time Settlement:** Through board-approved policies provide a process for **technical write-off** as well as settlement with borrowers, similar to commercial banks.

➢ **Priority Sector Lending (PSL) targets:** Timeline to achieve PSL targets by two years i.e. up to March 31, 2026.

▪ **Deadline of March 31, 2023 to achieve PSL target of 60% has now also been extended to March 31, 2024.**

Designating a Nodal Officer in RBI: For closer coordination and focused interaction

• UCB's (also known as Primary Cooperative Banks) are **cooperative societies** registered under provisions of the **respective State Cooperative Societies Act** or Multi-state Cooperative Societies Act, 2002.

➢ In 2020, the government amended the **Banking Regulation Act 1949** to give more powers to the RBI for regulating the UCBs.

NEED OF THESE INITIATIVES

• **Deprived of entering into many services** at par with commercial Banks.

• **Unable to expand their Branch network** in the same or adjacent districts or entire state.

• **Poor coordination with the RBI.**

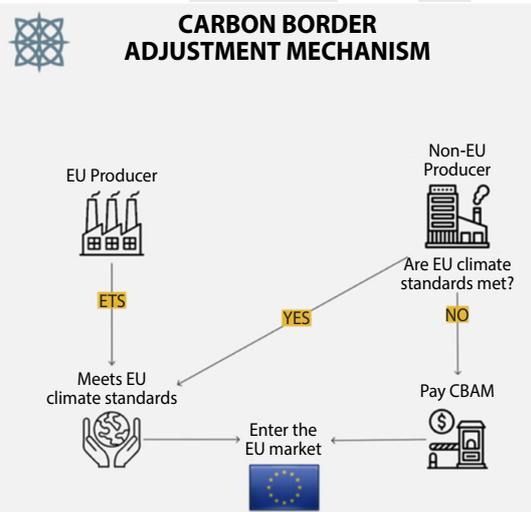
NATIONAL DRUG PRICING REGULATOR (NPPA) FIXES RETAIL PRICES OF 23 DRUG FORMULATIONS

- NPPA has fixed retail prices of 23 formulations, including the medications to treat diabetes and high blood pressure.
 - It has also **revised the ceiling price of 15 scheduled formulations under Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 2013 (NLEM 2022).**
- **Drug Price Control in India:**
 - **The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** draws up a **National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM) 2022** for price control.
 - These **essential medicines automatically come under the Drug (Prices Control) Order (DPCO), 2013.**
 - **The National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA)**, which is an independent body in the **Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilisers, enforces these price controls.**
 - Also, **monitor the availability of drugs, identify shortages; collect/ maintain data on production, exports and imports, market share** of individual companies, etc.
 - **Other legislations:** Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940; Pharmacy Act, 1948; Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisement) Act, 1954; Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985.
- **Mechanism of price controls:**
 - A **market-based pricing mechanism** where the **ceiling price is the simple average price of all brands.**
 - The **ceiling prices** of scheduled medicines will be **allowed an annual increase as per the Wholesale Price Index.**

EUROPEAN UNION (EU) FORMALLY NOTIFIED THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CARBON BORDER ADJUSTMENT MECHANISM (CBAM) AT THE WTO

• About CBAM

- A tool to put a **fair price on the carbon emitted** during the production of **carbon intensive goods** that are **entering the EU.** (See Image)
 - Also, to **encourage cleaner industrial production in non-EU countries.**
- **Primary objective is to avert 'carbon leakage':** Manufacturers move carbon-intensive production to countries outside the region with less stringent climate policies.
- It is a **part of the EU's broader European Green Deal:** to achieve **55% reduction in carbon emissions compared to 1990 levels by 2030** and become a **climate neutral continent by 2050.**
- India is likely to challenge the **EU's proposed carbon tax** at the WTO, citing concerns like
 - Against the UN principle of **Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC).**
 - India have opposed CBAM calling it **'discriminatory'** as it will ramp up prices of their goods in Europe and shrink demand.
 - Affect exports of **meat, leather hide, wood furniture, paper and coffee.**
- Under a carbon tax, the **government sets a price that emitters must pay for each ton of greenhouse gas emissions they emit.**
 - **Finland first to levy carbon tax.**



CACP RECOMMENDS CENTRE TO BRING UREA UNDER NUTRIENT-BASED SUBSIDY (NBS) REGIME TO CHECK OVERUSE

- Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) **also recommended a cap on number of subsidised bags of fertilizers per farmer to reduce government's subsidy burden.**
 - Recommendations are **part of non-price policy recommendations for the kharif crops 2023-2024 season.**
- Government is making available **fertilisers to farmers at subsidized prices** through fertilizer manufacturers/importers.
 - **While urea is provided at a statutorily notified maximum retail price (MRP), for phosphatic and potassic (P&K) fertiliser there is a NBS scheme.**
- **About NBS**
 - **Introduced in 2010**, in continuation of **erstwhile Concession Scheme (1992).**
 - **Applicable for Di Ammonium Phosphate (DAP), Mono Ammonium Phosphate (MAP), Triple super Phosphate (TSP), Muriate of Potash (MOP), Single Super Phosphate (SSP), ammonium Sulphate etc.**
 - **Primary nutrients, namely Nitrogen 'N', Phosphate 'P' and Potash 'K' and nutrient Sulphur 'S' contained in fertilizers mentioned above are eligible for NBS.**
 - **Any variant of the fertilizers mentioned above with secondary and micronutrients (except 'S') attract a separate subsidy.**
 - **Per nutrient subsidy is decided annually by Department of Fertilizers** based on the recommendations of the Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC).
 - Subsidy is **released directly to fertilizer companies.**

IN A FIRST, NASA'S PARKER SOLAR PROBE 'TOUCHES' THE SUN TO DISCOVER ABOUT SOURCE OF SOLAR WINDS

● Finding of the probe regarding solar winds

- Faster flows of solar winds come **from sudden whip-cracking bursts of energy released during the rapid realignment of magnetic fields.**
- Probe revealed that coronal holes — darker, cooler regions that open in the sun's outer atmosphere — are **shaped like "showerheads" made up of mostly evenly spaced funnels** of material.

● Significance of the finding:

- **understand how the sun releases energy and drives geomagnetic storms,** which are a threat to communication networks.
- **better prediction of solar storms.**

● Solar wind is a continuous outflow of plasma, which contains charged particles like protons and electrons.

- It also includes **part of the solar magnetic field and extends well beyond the corona,** interacting with planets and the interstellar medium.

● ISRO is also planning to launch the Aditya-L1 mission this year.

- It is the first Indian space mission **to observe the Sun and the solar corona.**
- It shall be placed in **a halo orbit around the Lagrange point 1 (L1) of the Sun-Earth system,** which is about 1.5 million km from the Earth.

REASON FOR STUDYING SUN

- **To better understand how its ever-changing conditions** can influence Earth, other worlds, and even space itself.
- Studying sun informs research **about other stars throughout the universe.**
- Understanding **solar mechanism** like particle acceleration, fusion reaction in interior, etc.

ALSO IN NEWS



African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and Southern African Customs Union (SACU)

- Ministry of Commerce and Industry expressed that **India is open to free trade agreement (FTA) negotiations bilaterally or individually** with African countries or Africa as a whole.
- India is engaged with two important groups of Africa i.e. AfCFTA and Southern African Customs Union (SACU).
 - AfCFTA agreement was signed in **2018** between **55 African nations,** to create the largest free trade area in the world.
 - SACU is a **customs union** among five countries of Southern Africa: Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Namibia and South Africa.



RuPay Card

- RBI has allowed banks to issue **RuPay Prepaid Forex cards for use at ATMs, PoS (point-of-sale) machines and online merchants overseas.**
 - Further, **RuPay Debit, Credit, and Prepaid Cards will be enabled for issuance in foreign jurisdictions,** which can be used internationally, including in India.
- These measures will expand the **reach and acceptance of RuPay cards globally.**
- RuPay is the **first-of-its-kind** global Card payment network of India, launched by **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)** in 2012.
 - It aims to replace **international payment networks** such as Visa etc.



Namdapha Tiger Reserve

- **About Namdapha Tiger reserve**
 - **Location:** Changlang district of Arunachal Pradesh.
 - **Namdapha is also the name of a river** which originates from Daphabum and meets Noa-Dehing river.
 - **It flows right across in a North-South direction of the National Park.**
 - **Flora:**
 - One of the **rarest and endangered orchids,** the Blue Vanda.
 - Medicinal plant **Mishimi Teeta (Copti teeta).**
 - **Fauna:**
 - **Only park in the World to have the four Feline species of big cat:** Tiger (Panthera Tigris), Leopard (Panthera Pardus), Snow Leopard (Panthera Uncia) Clouded Leopard (Neofelis Nebulosa).
 - Assamese macaque, pig-tailed macaque, stump-tailed macaque, etc.

 SAGAR SAMRIDDI	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways (MoPSW) launched 'SAGAR SAMRIDDI'<ul style="list-style-type: none">➢ It is an online dredging monitoring system.➢ Presently, Cochin Port and Mumbai Port have adopted the system.● Aim: It will enable better productivity, better contract management and also effective reuse of dredged material with waste to wealth concept.● Capabilities of 'Sagar Samriddhi' include: Real time dredging progress report; Daily and monthly progress Visualisation; Easy location track data with snapshot of loading, etc.● About Dredging: Dredging is the act of removing silt and other material from the bottom of bodies of water.
 Delhi Declaration on Cyber Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● It is a draft a series of commitments to "responsible state behaviour in cyberspace" for G20 member countries outlined by National Cybersecurity Coordinator of India.● Its provisions have been drawn from existing non-binding norms that they have already signed onto under United Nations auspices.● Under it (if adopted), G20 countries would commit to "not damage critical infrastructure or other essential systems; commit to cooperate, mitigate and investigate cyber incidents, etc.● Note: In 2022, United Nations Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee adopted the Delhi Declaration to deal with Terrorism.
 Millisecond Pulsars (MSP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Indian Astronomers have discovered two new Millisecond Pulsars (MSP) conducted by the Giant Metrewave Radio Telescope (GMRT).● About MSPs:<ul style="list-style-type: none">➢ MSPs are dense, tiny neutron stars, which are formed when a massive star (for example, the Sun) collapses.➢ Named pulsars because they emit pulses of radiation at regular intervals.<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Millisecond pulsars emit radiations every few milliseconds.➢ Chances of detection of gravitational waves are higher when there is a significant population of MSPs in a region.
 Marine Noise Pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) released a report to address a major threat to marine species: noise pollution.● The report focuses on three major sources of noise pollution: shipping, seismic airgun surveys (used in oil and gas exploration) pile driving (used for offshore wind farms and other marine infrastructure).● Solution offered to reduce noise pollution:<ul style="list-style-type: none">➢ Alterations in ship design and propeller technology, and improving operating conditions;➢ Marine Vibroseis, a technology designed to produce controlled, lower-frequency seismic signals, etc.
 Gilgit Manuscripts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The birch bark and clay coated Gilgit manuscripts are the oldest surviving manuscripts in India.● There were written between the 5" -6" centuries CE.● These manuscripts include both canonical and non-canonical Buddhist works that throw light on the evolution of other languages like Sanskrit, Chinese, etc.● The manuscripts contain sutras from the Buddhist canon, Samadhirajasutra and the Saddharmapundarikasutra (the Lotus Sutra).● They were first discovered at the ruins of an ancient stupa-like structure at Naupur village in Gilgit, Kashmir in 1931.
 Places In news	<p>Rwanda (Capital- Kigali)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Political boundaries<ul style="list-style-type: none">➢ It is bounded to the north by Uganda, to the east by Tanzania, to the south by Burundi, and to the west by the Democratic Republic of the Congo.➢ Lying south of the Equator ineast-central Africa, is often referred as 'land of a thousand hills'.● Geographics features<ul style="list-style-type: none">➢ Major rivers: Akagera, Akanyaru, Base, Rubyiro, Ruhwa,Rusizi,➢ Major Lakes: Kivu, Ruhondo, and Mugesera➢ Highest peak: Mount Karisimbi 