

# Leaded Petrol is officially eradicated- UNEP

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**In news-** Recently, UNEP announced that the use of leaded petrol has been eradicated from the globe.

## Key updates-

- The eradication of leaded petrol is a milestone that **will prevent more than 1.2 million premature deaths and save world economies over \$2.4 trillion annually.**
- **Algeria was the last country to use the fuel, exhausted its supplies** in July 2021.
- This development follows an almost **two decades long campaign by the UNEP-led global Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles (PCFV).**
- The eradication of leaded petrol marks major progress ahead of this year's International Day of Clean Air for blue skies on the 7th of September.
- **India banned leaded petrol in March 2000.**

## What is leaded petrol?

- Tetraethyl lead, abbreviated TEL, is an organolead compound.
- It is a **petro-fuel additive, first being mixed with gasoline** beginning in the 1920s as a patented octane rating booster that allowed engine compression to be raised substantially.
- This in turn caused **increased vehicle performance and fuel economy.**
- TEL had been identified chemically in the mid-19th century, but its antiknock effectiveness was discovered in 1921 by the General Motors research laboratory.
- From the 1970s many countries began phasing out and

eventually banning TEL in automotive fuel.

- However, TEL is **still used as an additive in some grades of aviation gasoline.**
- It **causes heart disease, stroke and cancer** and also **affects the development of the human brain**, especially **harming children.**
- Lead also poisons catalytic converters and is a **major cause of spark plug fouling.**
- **Early symptoms of acute exposure** to tetraethyllead can manifest as **irritation of the eyes and skin, sneezing, fever, vomiting, and a metallic taste in the mouth.**
- Chronic exposure to TEL can cause long-term negative effects such as **memory loss, delayed reflexes, neurological problems, insomnia, tremors,** psychosis, loss of attention, and an overall decrease in IQ and cognitive function.

#### **About the Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles (PCFV):**

- In 2002, the PCFV was set up at the World Summit on Sustainable Development.
- UNEP hosted the Secretariat with the **aim of eliminating leaded petrol globally** and provided support to many countries and regional initiatives.
- At the time, 117 countries world-wide were still using leaded petrol with 86 countries supported to phase out leaded petrol.
- In 2006, the first major success was achieved as Sub-Saharan Africa went unleaded.
- The last country to switch was Algeria in July 2021.