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## **1. Annual UN report recognises the threats posed by nitrogen pollution**

- What are highlights of the Frontiers Report 2019?**
- How Nitrogen turned into pollutant from nutrient and how it is affecting health and environment?**
- How does Nitrogen pollution impact the environment?**

**GS paper 3 (Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment)**

**In this video, you can find detailed answers for all the above questions.**

**The above article has been retrieved from:**

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Sangomla|. ( 2019, March , 8). Annual UN report recognises the threats posed by nitrogen pollution. PIB. Retrieved from <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/pollution/annual-un-report-recognises-the-threats-posed-by-nitrogen-pollution-63469>

### **What is the context about?**

The annual Frontiers Report 2019 published by the United Nations (UN), has included a chapter on nitrogen pollution in its latest edition. The report was released by the United Nations Environmental Assembly (UNEA) in Nairobi.

### **Highlights of the Frontiers Report 2019:**

- ✓ Pollution caused by the reactive forms of nitrogen is now being recognised as a grave environmental concern on a global level.
- ✓ It highlights that growing demand on the livestock, agriculture, transport, industry and energy sector has led to a sharp growth of the levels of reactive nitrogen — ammonia, nitrate, nitric oxide (NO), nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O) — in our ecosystems.
- ✓ The report claims that the total annual cost of nitrogen pollution to eco system and healthcare services in the world is around \$340 billion.

### **How Nitrogen turned into pollutant from nutrient and how it is affecting health and environment?**

- Nitrogen is an inert gas that's necessary for life. But we're changing it into forms that are harmful, overloading the environment with it, and throwing the natural nitrogen cycle out of whack.
- Nitrogen compounds running off farmland have led to water pollution problems around the world, while nitrogen emissions from industry, agriculture and vehicles make a big contribution to air pollution.
- Over 80% of the nitrogen in soil is not utilised by humans. While over four-fifths of the nitrogen is used to feed livestock, only about six per cent reaches humans in case of non-vegetarian diet, as compared to the 20% that reaches the plate of a vegetarian.

- Nitrogen becomes a pollutant when it escapes into the environment and reacts with other organic compounds.

### **How does Nitrogen pollution impact the environment?**

Nitrogen pollution has a significant impact on the environment:

- It creates of harmful algal blooms and dead zones in our waterways and oceans; the algae produce toxins which are harmful to human and aquatic organisms (and indirectly affects fisheries and biodiversity in coastal areas).
- Contamination of drinking water. 10 million people in Europe are potentially exposed to drinking water with nitrate concentrations above recommended levels. This can have an adverse effect on human health.
- Food Security: Excessive nitrogen fertiliser application contributes to soil nutrient depletion. As the world needs to feed an ever growing population loss of arable land is major global problem.
- The release of Nitrous Oxide is essentially a greenhouse gas which is harmful to the environment.