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11th Ayurveda Day 2026 Highlights India's Push for Evidence-Based Ayurveda, Integrated Healthcare and Global Traditional Medicine Leadership

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Recent Developments:

- The **11th Ayurveda Day** was celebrated on **23 September 2026** in **Nagpur, Maharashtra**, under the theme "**Ayurveda for a Healthier Tomorrow**". The national programme emphasised evidence, research, innovation, preventive healthcare and community well-being.
- The celebrations witnessed the release of **Safety Dossiers on Gokshura and Chandrashura**, **Standard Treatment Guidelines on Skin Disorders**, the first **Ayush Services Sector Report**, and the "**From Traditional Wisdom to Global Leadership: Ayush Vision 2030**" report.
- The **CCRAS-AGNI Assessment Scale Web Portal** was also launched to support systematic assessment and translation of Ayurveda knowledge into clinical practice.
- The 2026 observance reflects the government's shift towards strengthening Ayurveda through **scientific validation, quality standards, clinical guidance, research and global standardisation**, rather than relying only on traditional textual knowledge.

Ayurveda: Foundations and Contemporary Relevance:

Core Features:

- **Ayurveda** is an ancient Indian system of medicine whose classical knowledge is associated with texts such as the **Charaka Samhita** and **Sushruta Samhita**.
- The term Ayurveda combines **Ayu**, meaning life, and **Veda**, meaning knowledge, and its broad objective is traditionally understood as maintaining the health of healthy individuals and managing disease in the diseased.
- Ayurveda conceptualises health through the balance of **doshas, agni, dhatus and malas**, along with harmony between the body, mind and wider dimensions of well-being.
- Its therapeutic knowledge includes the use of **medicinal plants, animal-derived substances and minerals**, requiring modern systems of safety assessment, quality control and standardisation for wider healthcare integration.

Ayurveda Day:

- **Ayurveda Day is observed annually on 23 September**, following the Ministry of Ayush's decision in 2025 to establish a fixed annual date instead of linking the observance to Dhanteras.
- The fixed date provides a **uniform global calendar identity** and facilitates wider participation in Ayurveda-related awareness, research and public-health activities.
- The 2026 theme, "**Ayurveda for a Healthier Tomorrow**," connects India's traditional medical knowledge with future-oriented healthcare, preventive health and scientific innovation.

Building Healthcare Infrastructure for Ayurveda Integration:

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Budgetary and Institutional Support:

- The **Union Budget 2026–27** allocated **₹4,408.93 crore** to the **Ministry of Ayush**, with major allocations for autonomous bodies, central-sector schemes and the **National Ayush Mission**.
- The Budget proposed **three new All India Institutes of Ayurveda**, upgradation of Ayush pharmacies and Drug Testing Laboratories, and strengthening of the **WHO Global Traditional Medicine Centre at Jamnagar**.
- These measures seek to expand **higher education, clinical services, research capacity, quality assurance and international cooperation** in traditional medicine.

National Ayush Mission and Ayushman Arogya Mandirs:

- The **National Ayush Mission** supports States and Union Territories in strengthening Ayush infrastructure, establishing and upgrading institutions, developing integrated hospitals and operationalising **Ayushman Arogya Mandirs**.
- As reported by States and Union Territories in July 2026, **12,500 Ayushman Arogya Mandirs** had been approved for operationalisation by upgrading **10,941 Ayush dispensaries** and **1,559 sub-health centres**, with all reported as functional.
- Ayush facilities are also being **co-located with Primary Health Centres, Community Health Centres and District Hospitals**, allowing patients access to different systems of medicine within public healthcare facilities.

Integration with Modern Healthcare:

- An **Ayush Vertical under the Directorate General of Health Services** has been established through cooperation between the Ministry of Ayush and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to support planning, monitoring and integration of Ayush into public health programmes and healthcare services.
- The Ayush Vertical is also developing **evidence-informed Standard Treatment Guidelines** to facilitate clinical integration.
- Such integration requires clear clinical protocols, qualified practitioners, pharmacovigilance, referral mechanisms and evidence-based assessment of interventions.

Development of Ayurveda Education and Research Infrastructure:

Expansion of Educational Capacity:

- The **National Ayush Mission** supports the establishment and upgradation of undergraduate and postgraduate Ayush institutions, including pharmacy and paramedical programmes.
- The Union Budget 2026–27 proposed **three new All India Institutes of Ayurveda** to strengthen **education, clinical services and research**.
- Expansion of institutions is intended to address the demand for trained professionals while strengthening the connection between **education, clinical practice and research**.

Research and Evidence Generation:

- The **AYURGYAN Scheme**, launched by the Ministry of Ayush in **2021–22**, provides financial assistance for research and development in Ayurveda and other Ayush systems.
- Of **₹17.79 crore** allocated across 34 research projects, **₹9.38 crore was allocated to 17 Ayurveda projects** focusing on areas including safety, efficacy and validation.
- The **Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences** serves as an autonomous research body under the Ministry of Ayush and supports clinical, pharmacological, literary and other research activities in Ayurveda.

- The **Studentship Programme for Ayurveda Research Ken** encourages undergraduate Ayurveda students to undertake short-term research projects, thereby developing an early research culture within Ayurveda education.
- Safety dossiers for medicinal plants are being developed through systematic assessment of **traditional references, pharmacological evidence, toxicological data and available clinical literature**, strengthening the evidence base for Ayurvedic interventions.

Regulation, Quality Control and Standardisation:

Regulatory Framework for Ayurvedic Medicines:

- Ayurvedic medicines are regulated under the **Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940** and **Drugs Rules, 1945**, which contain specific regulatory provisions for Ayush drugs.
- Manufacturers must comply with prescribed licensing requirements, provide evidence relating to safety and effectiveness, follow **Good Manufacturing Practices** and meet applicable pharmacopoeial quality standards.
- Drug inspectors collect samples from manufacturing units and retail outlets for testing, and action can be taken against products that fail prescribed quality standards.
- The **Pharmacopoeia Commission for Indian Medicine and Homoeopathy** establishes formulary and pharmacopoeial standards for Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani and Homoeopathy medicines and functions as the Central Drugs Laboratory for Indian Medicine and Homoeopathy.

Digital and Food-Product Regulation:

- The **e-Aushadhi portal** supports paperless processing and tracking of licensing applications for Ayush drug manufacturing, improving regulatory efficiency.
- **Ayurveda Aahara** standards developed by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India in collaboration with the Ministry of Ayush provide a regulatory framework for specified traditional Ayurvedic food products.
- The 2026 Budget's proposal to upgrade **Ayush pharmacies and Drug Testing Laboratories** seeks to improve quality control, standardisation and availability of skilled manpower.

Internationalisation of Ayurveda and Traditional Medicine:

WHO and Global Standardisation:

- The **WHO Global Traditional Medicine Centre** is located in **Jamnagar, Gujarat**, and functions as a global knowledge hub focused on evidence, research, innovation, sustainability and equitable integration of traditional medicine.
- WHO adopted the **Global Traditional Medicine Strategy 2025–2034** in 2025, emphasising evidence generation, safety and quality regulation, appropriate integration into health systems and qualified practitioners.
- The traditional medicine component of **ICD-11** provides a framework for standardised recording and reporting of traditional medicine conditions. WHO states that an additional module covering diagnostic systems related to **Ayurveda, Siddha and Unani** is under development.
- India is also working with WHO on the **International Classification of Health Interventions** and national intervention codes for Ayurveda, Siddha and Unani, which can improve standardised documentation and international comparability.

International Cooperation:

- India has developed bilateral and institutional partnerships to promote **Ayush education, research, academic exchanges, regulatory cooperation and traditional medicine diplomacy**.

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- The expansion of international cooperation supports the global visibility of Ayurveda while creating a need for internationally comparable evidence, safety standards and practitioner qualifications.
- Ayurveda can also contribute to **medical value travel** through specialised Ayush healthcare and wellness services, supported by dedicated Ayush visa categories.

Digital Health, Innovation and Knowledge Dissemination:

Technology Integration:

- Digital platforms can improve access to Ayurveda through **telemedicine, electronic health records, research databases and standardised clinical documentation**.
- Integration of Ayurveda-related diagnostic and intervention data into international health classifications can facilitate research, health-system monitoring and potentially insurance and reimbursement processes.
- Artificial intelligence-based translation tools can improve access to Ayurveda research and educational material across Indian languages, supporting wider dissemination of technical knowledge.

Medicinal Plants and Sustainability:

- Ayurveda's dependence on medicinal plants creates a direct link between healthcare policy and **biodiversity conservation, sustainable harvesting, cultivation and value-chain development**.
- Strengthening medicinal-plant supply chains can provide farmers with livelihood opportunities while improving the availability of standardised raw materials for Ayurvedic medicines.
- Sustainable sourcing is essential because growing commercial demand can create pressure on medicinal-plant biodiversity and traditional knowledge resources.

Key Challenges in Ayurveda Integration:

Evidence and Clinical Validation:

- A major challenge is generating **high-quality clinical evidence** through appropriate study designs, reproducible methodologies and transparent reporting.
- Traditional textual evidence and contemporary scientific evidence serve different purposes; responsible integration therefore requires systematic validation rather than assuming efficacy solely from historical use.
- Research should cover **safety, efficacy, dosage, interactions, contraindications and long-term outcomes**.

Quality and Regulatory Challenges:

- Variations in raw materials, manufacturing practices, formulation quality and clinical practice can affect the consistency of Ayurvedic products and services.
- Effective regulation requires stronger **quality testing, pharmacovigilance, standardisation, traceability and enforcement** across the supply chain.

Healthcare-System Integration:

- Ayurveda's integration with modern medicine requires clearly defined **clinical roles, referral systems, practitioner competencies, treatment protocols and patient-safety mechanisms**.
- Evidence-based integration should complement, rather than blur, the distinct diagnostic and therapeutic frameworks of different medical systems.

Way Forward:

Evidence-Based Ayurveda:

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- India should strengthen **multidisciplinary clinical research, pharmacological studies, safety assessment, standardisation and real-world evidence generation.**
- Research institutions should prioritise conditions with significant public-health burdens, particularly **non-communicable diseases, ageing-related conditions and preventive healthcare.**

Global Leadership:

- India can use the **WHO Global Traditional Medicine Centre**, international classifications and bilateral partnerships to promote globally comparable standards for Ayurveda.
- Globalisation of Ayurveda should combine **civilisational knowledge with scientific validation, regulatory credibility, intellectual-property protection and biodiversity conservation.**

Public Health Integration:

- Ayush services can strengthen preventive and promotive healthcare when integrated through appropriate protocols, trained personnel and robust referral mechanisms.
- The long-term objective should be a **people-centred, evidence-informed and safe healthcare ecosystem** in which Ayurveda's validated contributions can be assessed objectively.

Value Addition for UPSC:

Key Concepts:

- **Ayurveda:** Traditional Indian system of medicine based on classical knowledge concerning health, disease prevention and therapeutic management.
- **Evidence-Based Healthcare:** Healthcare decision-making based on the best available scientific evidence, clinical expertise and patient-related considerations.
- **Pharmacopoeia:** An official collection specifying standards relating to the identity, purity, strength and quality of medicines.
- **Pharmacovigilance:** Detection, assessment, understanding and prevention of adverse effects or other medicine-related problems.
- **Medical Value Travel:** International movement of patients to another country to obtain healthcare or wellness-related services.
- **Traditional Medicine Diplomacy:** Use of traditional medical knowledge, institutions and cooperation mechanisms as instruments of international engagement.

UPSC Linkages:

- **GS-II:** Government policies, public health, healthcare delivery, international organisations, India's soft power and international cooperation.
- **GS-III:** Biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, biodiversity conservation, medicinal plants, intellectual property, digital health and research and development.
- **GS-IV:** Ethical issues in evidence-based healthcare, informed consent, patient safety, scientific temper and responsible use of traditional knowledge.
- **Essay:** Balancing traditional knowledge with modern scientific validation; preventive healthcare and holistic well-being.
- **Prelims:** 11th Ayurveda Day 2026, theme, Ministry of Ayush, National Ayush Mission, Ayushman Arogya Mandirs, CCRAS, Pharmacopoeia Commission, WHO Global Traditional Medicine Centre, ICD-11 and Global Traditional Medicine Strategy 2025–2034.