India Steps Up Efforts to Eliminate Hepatitis by 2030

Prelims: *Current events of national and international importance | Health*

Why in News?

Hepatitis

- Hepatitis refers to the ***inflammation of the liver*** caused primarily by viral infections, as well as toxic substances (such as alcohol and drugs) or autoimmune conditions.
- **Primary Viral Strains -** There are five main strains of the hepatitis virus: **A, B, C, D, and E**.
- **Major Threat Drivers - Hepatitis B and C** are the most common causes of severe, chronic liver conditions, leading directly to liver cirrhosis and primary liver cancer.
- **Key Policy/Programme -** National Viral Hepatitis Control Programme (NVHCP).
- India is systematically strengthening its public health response to eliminate viral hepatitis as a public health threat by 2030.
- This strategy aligns directly with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 3 (SDG 3.3).
- It aims to combat communicable diseases, including hepatitis, HIV, and malaria.

Key Implementation Pillars & Innovations

- **Free Screening & Treatment -** The government provides free screening, diagnostic testing, and antiviral medications for Hepatitis B and C nationwide.
- **Affordability via Generic Drugs-** Smart deployment of local health funds and affordable generic drugs has significantly reduced treatment costs, making large-scale public distribution feasible.
- **Decentralization to Primary Care -** Diagnostic and therapeutic services are actively moving from district hospitals down to local primary healthcare centres, bringing care closer to last-mile communities.

- **Inter-Programmatic Integration -** The initiative links hepatitis prevention with existing national health programmes (such as reproductive/child health and injection safety protocols) to maximize reach.

Reference

News on Air | India steps up efforts to eliminate hepatitis