Malaria Elimination

Why in news?

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To curb malaria, globally, the World Health Organization (WHO) is poised to introduce **the first vaccine created to prevent malaria.** The organisation announced the vaccine on April 24, 2017, the eve of World Malaria Day.

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What do the statistics say?

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- Globally, more than 4,29,000 people died of mosquito-borne illnesses in 2015, and millions are affected by malarial infection.
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- From 2000 to 2015, a 62% reduction in malaria deaths has been noted, according to the WHO.
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- The implementation of the **urban malaria scheme (UMS)** in 1971-72 and the modified plan of operation (MPO) in 1977 had helped in improving the malaria situation considerably.
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- However, almost 22% of India's population live in high transmission areas, and 67% live in low transmission areas, shows the World Malaria Report 2014.
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- **The WHO has defined an ambitious goal to eliminate malaria by 2030.**
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- Similarly, the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare had launched the National Framework for Malaria Elimination last year.
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How important is immunization?

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- Vaccines are widely recognised globally by health experts as one of the world’s most successful and cost-effective interventions for health.
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- It is unfortunate that even with the availability of advanced and affordable vaccines, there are 19.4 million children world over who remain **under-vaccinated or unvaccinated.**
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- **India’s vaccine market remains small and under penetrated.**
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- The Government has to realise that adding new vaccines to the National Immunisation Programme results in creating immense value creation.
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Five point agenda for Immunisation:

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- Take up value-added disease surveillance initiatives to measure and assess the current burden of the disease on communities and the process of dealing with it.
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- Form an evidence-based nationwide protocol for all stakeholders for doing research on new vaccines and implement them at the ground-level should be done, because in India malaria hits the poor the most.
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- Build a motivated workforce to promote education and communication about the new vaccine is important.
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- Put up an efficient logistics and distribution network for upcoming vaccines and set up safe cold stores to protect them.
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- Define the performance and management accountability responsibilities in a clear-cut manner, and periodic monitoring and evaluation should be done in the first five years after the introduction of the new vaccine.
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What could be done?

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- Eradicating malaria and other tropical diseases in endemic countries such as

ours needs a paradigm transformation in the way the disease is to be dealt with.
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- Broadening the spectrum of universal immunisation coverage will surely play a significant role in achieving this goal with a long-lasting, tangible impact for improving health outcomes in the treatment of this disease.
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Source: Business Line

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