Meeting India’s immunisation goals

Why in news?

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According to the 2016 midterm review of GVAP, India continues to have the highest number of unvaccinated children worldwide.

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What is GVAP?

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- The GVAP (Global Vaccine Action Plan) launched in 2012 by WHO.
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- It isa formidable step towards providing equitable access to vaccines for people living in low-income countries.
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- Under GVAP, 194 countries came together to commit better healthcare for the world and with a promise for a disease-free future.
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What is the status of global immunisation coverage?

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- Recently WHO estimated that 20 million infants worldwide still do not receive the most basic vaccines under GVAP.
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- Essential immunisation coverage rates in low-income countries have increased by a paltry 1 per cent since 2010.
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- A whopping 68 countries, including India, fell short of the 90 per cent basic immunisation target coverage.
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- This has hampered the overall progress of GVAP.
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What is India’s response to vaccination crisis?

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- India introduced immunisation programme Mission Indradhanush in 2014, to improve the 65% immunisation rate achieved in its Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP) since 1985.
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- Further, new vaccines were added to the UIP in realising India’s obligations to GVAP 2020.
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- Government identified 201 high-focus districts across 28 States that have the highest number of partially-immunised and unimmunised children and channelled resources to address the gap.
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- India recently launched one of the world’s largest vaccination campaigns against measles, a major childhood disease, and congenital rubella, which is responsible for irreversible birth defects.
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- The campaign will vaccinate more than 35 million children in the age group of 9 months to 15 years with the MR (measles and rubella) vaccine.
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What measures are needed to achieve vaccination targets?

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- Sustainable resources and timely execution of well-crafted strategies are required to achieve immunisation targets.
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- Stakeholder cooperation will be paramount in making India fully immunised.
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- Building awareness about the value of vaccines is crucial step towards delivering ‘Health for all’.
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- Community-based information provided by trusted sources can help address issues confronting vaccine hesitancy at large.
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- In order to achieve 100 per cent immunisation rate in the country, optimal usage of technologies for vaccine delivery is required.
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- Use of eVIN technology (electronic vaccine intelligence network) that digitises vaccine stocks through smartphone apps must be encouraged.
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- Reducing wastage and enhancing vaccine to stimulate the best immune response particularly in small children are needed.
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- Immunisation programmes must have robust training, management and knowledge-sharing structures for programme implementation to be effective.
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Source: Business Line

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