Three new additions to the vaccination basket

Why in news?

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- The basket of vaccines in India’s Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP) was static for many years — until the entry of the Pentavalent vaccine [Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis, Hepatitis B, and Haemophilus B (HIB)], and Japanese Encephalitis vaccines.
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- There have been regular additions to the basket since. Two new vaccines — **Measles-Rubella (MR) and Pneumococcal Conjugate** — are lined up for launch in January and February respectively, and a **third, Rotavirus Vaccine,** will become part of the UIP in 5 states — from February.
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What is rubella, and why is vaccination for it important?

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- More commonly known as German Measles, **Congenital Rubella Syndrome, or CRS,** is believed to affect about 25,000 children born in India every year.
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- Symptoms can include cataracts and deafness, and the disease can also affect the heart and the brain.
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- 10-30% of adolescent females and 12-30% of women in the reproductive age-group are susceptible to rubella infection in India.
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In which states will the MR vaccine be introduced?

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- After its formal launch on January 17, the vaccine will be introduced in **Goa,**

Karnataka, Lakshadweep, Puducherry and Tamil Nadu around February 3-4.
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- The Health Ministry will run a campaign among children aged 9 months to 15 years before making the vaccine a part of routine immunisation. Two shots will be given — one between the ages of 9-12 months, the other at age one-and-a- half.
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- The monovalent measles vaccine is already part of the UIP basket of 10 vaccines; it will be discontinued once MR is introduced.
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What is Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV)?

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- PCV is a **mix of several bacteria of the pneumococci family,** which are known to cause pneumonia — hence 'conjugate' in the name. Pneumonia caused by the pneumococcus bacteria is supposed to be the most common.
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- Pneumonia and diarrhoea have long been responsible for the most child deaths in India — approximate estimates say **pneumonia is responsible for about 20% of under-5 child mortality in India,** of which half are of pneumococcal origin.
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- In 2008, the WHO's Child Health Epidemiology Reference Group reported that 5 countries in which 44% of the world's children aged less than 5 years live (India, China, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia and Nigeria) contribute more than half of all new pneumonia cases annually.
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- It estimated around 43 million pneumonia cases (23% of the global total) and an incidence of 0.37 episodes per child-year for clinical pneumonia in India.
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Which states will PCV be introduced?

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- In Himachal Pradesh and parts of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar from March 17. Three doses will be administered at one-and-a-half months, three-and-a-half months and 9 months.

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- The annual incidence of severe pneumococcal pneumonia in India was estimated to be **4.8 episodes per 1,000 children younger than 5 years.**
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- The top five contributors to India's pneumococcal pneumonia burden in terms of number of cases and deaths were Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Jharkhand.
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Where will the rotavirus vaccine be introduced?

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- **Rotavirus infections are the most common cause of diarrhoea in children.** The rotavirus vaccine first became a part of UIP in April 2016.
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- An estimated 1 lakh children die every year of the disease.
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- The vaccine is currently being administered in HP, Haryana, Odisha and AP. From February, it will be a part of UIP also in Assam, Tripura, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.
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