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India Helps Maldives Tackle Measles

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Why in News

India has helped the Maldives in tackling measles outbreak by providing over 30,000 doses of **Measles and Rubella (MR) vaccine**.

- The outbreak comes less than three years after the **World Health Organisation (WHO)** declared the Maldives **measles-free** in 2017.
- The Maldives presented a **certificate of appreciation** to the Government of India for the “**gesture of goodwill and solidarity**”.

Key Points

- It is an important step towards strengthening **India-Maldives relations**.
- Both the countries signed a Memorandum of **Understanding (MoU) on Health cooperation** in **June 2019**.

The MoU draws a roadmap for cooperation in capacity building and training of doctors and medical professionals, disease surveillance, training of mental health professionals, setting up of digital health capacities in the Maldives.
- India is also helping the Maldives in building a **100-bed Cancer Hospital in Hulhumale** as part of its **\$800 million Line of Credit**.
- Both India and the Maldives are the members of the WHO’s **Regional Committee for South-East Asia**.

Measles

- It is a **highly contagious viral disease** and is a cause of death among young children globally.
- It can cause serious complications, including **blindness, encephalitis, severe diarrhoea, ear infection and pneumonia**.

Rubella

- It is also called **German Measles**.
- Rubella is a **contagious**, generally mild viral infection that occurs most often in children and young adults.
- Rubella infection in **pregnant women may cause fetal death or congenital defects** known as **Congenital Rubella Syndrome (CRS)**. CRS causes irreversible birth defects.

Measles and Rubella Vaccine

- Measles and Rubella are **caused by different viruses** but share more or less the **same symptoms, including the red rashes**.
- The **Measles & Rubella Initiative**, a global program, aims at eliminating both these diseases.
- The **vaccine for the diseases** are provided in the form of **Measles-Rubella (MR)**, **Measles-Mumps-Rubella (MMR)**, or **Measles-Mumps-Rubella-Varicella (MMRV)** combination.

Source: TH