

Global Roadmap to Tackle Cholera

Why in news?

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A New Global Roadmap to eradicate cholera has been developed by the Global Task Force on Cholera Control (GTFCC).

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What is Cholera?

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- It is a bacterial disease causing severe diarrhoea and dehydration, usually spread in water.

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- Key symptoms are diarrhoea and dehydration, rarely shock and seizures may occur in severe cases.

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- It can be fatal if not treated right away.

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- The treatment includes rehydration fluids and antibiotics.

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- World's high-income countries have been cholera-free for nearly 150 years.

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- Despite this progress at least 47 countries still remain under the cholera threat.

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What is the Roadmap of GTFCC about?

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- With the goal of reducing cholera deaths by 90 per cent and eliminating the disease in at least 20 countries by 2030, the new Global Roadmap developed by the Global Task Force on Cholera Control (GTFCC) is a

renewed approach to tackle the epidemic.

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- It is an endeavour to get affected countries commit to an effective mechanism by supporting them through technical expertise, financial resources and operational structures by encouraging partnerships at local and global levels.

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- The roadmap comprises three strategic initiatives such as

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1. Focus on containing cholera outbreaks.

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2. Quick detection through surveillance and enhanced laboratory capabilities.

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3. Immediate and effective response systems.

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- In addition, a multi-sectoral intervention will focus on “hotspots” (geographies with a high incidence of cholera) to implement control measures such as water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) and oral cholera vaccines (OCVs).

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- The GTFCC will also facilitate efficient coordination between countries to provide necessary technical support and resource mobilisation.

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What are the challenges in eradicating cholera?

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- **Scarcity of Resources** -Commonly-available interventions which can prevent and control cholera have largely been ineffective, driven mainly by the scarcity of basic resources.

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- With rapid population growth, urbanisation, climate change and the growing scarcity of resources, the risk of cholera is expected to continue increasing.

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- **Socio-Economic Challenges** -Geographical patterns of cholera outbreaks have shown that economically weaker countries are disproportionately affected.

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- More than two billion people in vulnerable countries still access drinking water from contaminated sources, and over 2.4 billion people lack access to basic sanitation facilities.

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- Vulnerable countries still struggle to meet their basic WASH targets, with over 80 per cent of them reporting insufficient availability of financial resources.

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- Areas affected by adverse events and calamities conflict, war and famines are at a significantly higher risk.

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- With an estimated \$2 billion in global healthcare costs and lost productivity every year, cholera carries a significant economic burden.

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What measures needs to be taken?

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- Providing access to safe drinking water, improving basic sanitation facilities, access to basic medical care are mandatory requirements for a healthy nation.

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- Implementing mass immunisation programmes is a vital component to accelerate the process of making the countries cholera-free.

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- With a renewed strategy, the global roadmap aims to implement a series of initiatives to address the cholera epidemic, this needs to be implemented by the cholera affected countries.

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Source: Business Line

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Quick Fact

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GTFCC

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- WHO revitalized the Global Task Force for Cholera Control (GTFCC) to strengthen WHO's work in eradicating cholera.
- GTFCC has collaboration and coordination among relevant WHO departments and other relevant stakeholders.
- The purpose of the GTFCC is to support increased implementation of evidence-based strategies to control cholera.
- The GTFCC shall not be responsible for developing any technical norms or standards.

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