



Measles

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The **World Health Organization (WHO)**, has declared **Sri Lanka**, a **measles-free** country.

- Sri Lanka is the **fifth country** in the **WHO southeast Asia region** to eliminate **measles**.
 - The elimination of a disease means that there have been zero new cases of the disease in the last three years.
 - The country reported its last case of measles in May 2016.
 - The other countries in the region which have eliminated measles in their geographical area are **Bhutan, Maldives, DPR Korea** and **Timor-Leste**.
- Sri Lanka has also become the **fourth country** in the region, after Bhutan, Maldives and Timor-Leste, **to eliminate measles and control rubella**, a flagship priority programme of WHO in the region, ahead of the 2020 regional target.
 - Rubella control is achieved when a country reduces the number of rubella cases by 95% as compared to cases in the year 2008.
- Sri Lanka's achievement has come at a time when globally measles cases are increasing.
- According to the latest Global Measles and Rubella Update, **India** had 56,399 confirmed measles cases and 1,066 confirmed rubella cases in the year 2018, thus quite far from eliminating the diseases in its boundary.

Rubella and Measles

- **Rubella** is a **contagious**, generally mild **viral infection** that occurs most often in **children** and **young adults**.
- **Measles** is a highly **contagious viral disease** and is a cause of death among **young children** globally.
- Though the diseases 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.