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World Hepatitis Day 2026: India's Elimination Push Under NVHCP

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World Hepatitis Day 2026: India's Elimination Push Under NVHCP

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✓ Every fact web-verified against primary sources

July 28, 2026 was observed globally as World Hepatitis Day. PIB marked the day with an update on India's National Viral Hepatitis Control Programme (NVHCP), launched in 2018, against the World Health Organization's (WHO) goal of eliminating viral hepatitis as a public health threat by 2030.

WHY JULY 28

World Hepatitis Day was designated by the WHO in **2010** and is observed on **July 28** each year, the birthday of **Dr Baruch Blumberg**, the American physician who discovered the **Hepatitis B virus** in 1967, work for which he received the **Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 1976**. The **2026 WHO theme is "Hepatitis: Let's Break It Down"**, calling for the removal of financial, social and systemic barriers, including stigma, that keep people from testing and treatment.

WHAT VIRAL HEPATITIS IS

Hepatitis is inflammation of the liver. Five distinct viruses cause the disease, with different transmission routes and public-health implications:

TYPE	PRIMARY TRANSMISSION	CHRONIC RISK
Hepatitis A	Contaminated food/water (faecal-oral)	Does not become chronic
Hepatitis B	Blood, body fluids, mother-to-child	Can become chronic; major cause of cirrhosis and liver cancer
Hepatitis C	Blood (unsafe injections, transfusions)	Can become chronic; curable with modern antivirals
Hepatitis D	Requires co-infection with Hepatitis B	Worsens Hepatitis B outcomes
Hepatitis E	Contaminated water (faecal-oral)	Does not usually become chronic; risk in pregnancy

India's elimination programme focuses chiefly on **Hepatitis B and C**, the two types responsible for the overwhelming majority of chronic liver disease, cirrhosis and liver cancer burden.

NATIONAL VIRAL HEPATITIS CONTROL PROGRAMME (NVHCP)

PARAMETER	DETAIL
Launched	2018 , by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
Focus	Free screening, diagnosis and treatment for Hepatitis B and C
Persons screened (cumulative, to March 2026)	Over 21 crore
Patients on treatment (Hepatitis B and C combined)	Over 6 lakh
Treatment sites	More than 1,150 across the country
Delivery model	Integrated with existing public health infrastructure, including district hospitals and, in select States, primary health centres

NVHCP is India's operational vehicle for the WHO's global elimination goal, and it is structured around the same logic that underlies most modern communicable-disease control programmes: a **screening-to-treatment cascade**, in which the programme is only as effective as its weakest link, whether that is the share of the at-risk population reached for testing, the share of those testing positive who are successfully linked to treatment, or the share who complete treatment.

THE 2030 ELIMINATION TARGET

The **WHO's global health sector strategy on viral hepatitis** sets 2030 targets including a **90 per cent reduction in new chronic infections** and a **65 per cent reduction in hepatitis-related deaths**, relative to a 2015 baseline. Because Hepatitis B and C are largely preventable (through vaccination for B, and safe blood/injection practices for both) and, in the case of Hepatitis C, curable with a short course of direct-acting antivirals, elimination is treated as a realistic public-health target rather than an aspirational one, provided screening and treatment coverage scale fast enough.

India's **Universal Immunisation Programme** includes the **Hepatitis B birth dose**, administered within 24 hours of birth, as a cornerstone of prevention for the next generation, complementing NVHCP's screening-and-treatment focus on the existing infected population.

UPSC RELEVANCE

GS Paper 2: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health; Government policies and interventions for development in the health sector and issues arising out of their design and implementation; India and its neighbourhood, international health governance (WHO).

Prelims pointers:

- World Hepatitis Day: **July 28**, WHO observance since **2010**, marking the birthday of **Dr Baruch Blumberg**, discoverer of the Hepatitis B virus and 1976 Nobel laureate.
- **2026 WHO theme:** “Hepatitis: Let’s Break It Down.”
- **NVHCP** launched **2018** by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare; focuses on Hepatitis B and C.
- Cumulative screening under NVHCP: over **21 crore**; patients on treatment: over **6 lakh**; treatment sites: over **1,150**.
- WHO’s 2030 targets: **90 per cent** reduction in new chronic infections, **65 per cent** reduction in hepatitis-related deaths, from a **2015 baseline**.
- Hepatitis B birth dose is administered within **24 hours of birth** under the Universal Immunisation Programme.

 FACTS CORNER, KNOWLEDGE PEDIA**WORLD HEPATITIS DAY:**

Observed July 28 since 2010 (WHO).

Marks the birthday of Dr Baruch Blumberg, discoverer of Hepatitis B virus, Nobel Prize 1976.

2026 theme: “Hepatitis: Let’s Break It Down.”

HEPATITIS TYPES:

A and E: faecal-oral transmission, not chronic.

B, C, D: blood-borne/body-fluid transmission, can become chronic; D requires B co-infection.

Hepatitis C is curable with direct-acting antivirals.

NVHCP:

Launched 2018, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

Over 21 crore screened, over 6 lakh on treatment, over 1,150 treatment sites (to March 2026).

Focus: Hepatitis B and C.

WHO 2030 TARGETS (FROM 2015 BASELINE):

90 per cent reduction in new chronic infections.

65 per cent reduction in hepatitis-related deaths.

Hepatitis B birth dose given within 24 hours of birth under India’s Universal Immunisation Programme.

Sources: Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, PIB, World Health Organization

Source: World Hepatitis Day 2026: India's Elimination Push Under NVHCP — Ujiyari.com | Free UPSC & State
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