



World Malaria Report 2024

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Why in News?

The [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) highlighted India's remarkable progress in its [World Malaria Report 2024](#). India significantly **reduced malaria cases and related deaths** between 2017 and 2023, marking a major milestone.

- India aims to achieve **malaria-free status by 2030**, with zero indigenous cases by 2027.

Malaria

- Malaria is a life-threatening **vector-borne disease** caused by the ***Plasmodium parasites***, **transmitted through** the bites of infected **female Anopheles mosquitoes**.
 - There are 5 ***Plasmodium parasite*** species that cause malaria in humans and 2 of these species - ***P. falciparum*** and ***P. vivax*** - pose the greatest threat.
- Malaria is predominantly found in the tropical and subtropical areas of Africa, South America as well as Asia.
 - The **mosquito becomes infected after biting an infected person**. The malaria parasites then enter the bloodstream of the next person the mosquito bites. The parasites travel to the liver, mature, and then infect **red blood cells**.
- Symptoms of malaria include fever and flu-like illness, including shaking chills, headache, muscle aches, and tiredness. Notably, **malaria is both preventable and curable**.

What are the Findings of the Report?

- **Global Findings:**
 - **Disease Burden:**
 - An estimated **263 million malaria cases occurred globally in 2023**, an increase of 11 million cases from 2022.
 - Malaria mortality stood at 597,000 deaths globally, showing a decline compared to 622,000 deaths in 2020.
 - **Geographic Distribution:**
 - The **WHO African Region carried 94% of global malaria cases and 95% of malaria deaths in 2023**.
 - **Five countries**—Nigeria (26%), Democratic Republic of Congo (13%), Uganda (5%), Ethiopia (4%), and Mozambique (4%)—accounted for nearly 52% of global malaria cases.
 - **Since 2015, nine countries**, including Egypt in 2024, have been **certified malaria-free**.
 - **Intervention Uptake:**
 - The rollout of two malaria vaccines, **RTS,S and R21**, has significantly increased vaccine coverage in endemic areas.

▪ India Specific Findings:

- **Historical Transformation:** At independence, India faced **7.5 crore malaria cases annually with 800,000 deaths**, posing a critical public health challenge.
 - Persistent efforts have cut cases by over 97%, reducing them to 2 million annually, while deaths have plummeted to just 83 by 2023.
- **Latest Achievements (2017-2024):** From 2015 to 2023, Malaria cases fell from 11,69,261 to 2,27,564, and deaths dropped from 384 to 83, representing an **80% reduction**.
 - The **Annual Blood Examination Rate** increased from 9.58 (2015) to 11.62 (2023), ensuring early detection and intervention.
 - In 2024, India exited [WHO's High Burden to High Impact \(HBHI\) group](#), marking a key milestone.
 - HBHI is a country-led approach on global malaria response.
- **Reduction in Disease Burden:**
 - States in **high-burden** decreased from 10 to 2 (Mizoram & Tripura).
 - Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Meghalaya transitioned to **medium-burden**.
 - Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Madhya Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, and Dadra and Nagar Haveli moved to **low-burden**.
 - Ladakh, Lakshadweep, and Puducherry achieved **Zero status**, eligible for subnational malaria elimination verification.

What are the Government Initiatives to Curb Malaria?

- [National Framework for Malaria Elimination 2016-2030](#)
- **National Vector-Borne Disease Control Programme:** Addresses various [vector-borne diseases](#), including malaria, through prevention and control measures.
- **National Malaria Control Programme (NMCP):** Launched in 1953, to address the severe impact of malaria.
 - It focuses on three core activities: **insecticidal residual spraying (IRS) with DDT, case monitoring and surveillance**, and **patient treatment**.
- **High Burden to High Impact (HBHI) Initiative:** Initiated in four states (West Bengal, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, and Madhya Pradesh) in 2019.
 - It focuses on **malaria reduction through insecticidal net distribution**.
- **Malaria Elimination Research Alliance-India (MERA-India):** Established by the [Indian Council of Medical Research \(ICMR\)](#), collaborates with partners on malaria control research.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q. Widespread resistance of malarial parasite to drugs like chloroquine has prompted attempts to develop a malarial vaccine to combat malaria. Why is it difficult to develop an effective malaria vaccine? **(2010)**

- (a)** Malaria is caused by several species of Plasmodium
- (b)** Man does not develop immunity to malaria during natural infection
- (c)** Vaccines can be developed only against bacteria
- (d)** Man is only an intermediate host and not the definitive host

Ans: (b)

