

# China declared 'malaria free' by WHO

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## In news

Recently, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared that China is "malaria-free".

## More information

- China could achieve it by following a seven decade-long, multi-pronged health strategy that was able to entirely eliminate indigenous cases for four straight years.
- The WHO's "malaria-free" certification followed a visit in May from an independent panel to verify China's malaria-free status.
- The status requires four consecutive years of reporting no local cases.
- According to WHO, China is the first country in the Western Pacific region to be declared malaria-free in more than 30 years, following Australia in 1981, Singapore in 1982 and Brunei in 1987.

## China efforts & the 523 Project

- China's effort began in the early 1950s, a time when it was reporting millions of cases annually.
- It started with a multi-pronged approach of providing anti-malarial medicines while targeting mosquito breeding grounds and using insecticide spraying.
- A national effort called 'the 523 Project' was launched in 1967 involving more than 500 scientists from 60 institutes,
- It led to the discovery of artemisinin in the 1970s, which is "the core compound of artemisinin-based combination therapies, the most effective antimalarial

drugs available today.

- In the 1980s, China began using insecticide-treated nets widely, distributing 2.4 million nets by 1988.
- Cases began to drop, down to 117,000 in 1990.
- The number would fall to 5,000 annually by the end of the following decade.
- With assistance from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria starting in 2003, China “stepped up training, staffing, laboratory equipment, medicines and mosquito control, an effort that led to a further reduction in cases.

### **China's 1-3-7 strategy**

- WHO credited China's public health system offering free of charge diagnosis and treatment of malaria in bringing down cases to zero.
- It also credited China's “**1-3-7 strategy**” referring to a **one-day deadline to report a malaria diagnosis**, confirming a case and determining the spread by the third day, and measures taken to stop the spread by the seventh day, along with continued surveillance in high-risk areas.

### **Malaria cases: The World Malaria Report in 2020**

- As per the report, the number of malaria cases worldwide in 2019 was around 229 million, with 409,000 lives lost to the mosquito-borne disease.
- The report said the majority of cases were reported in Africa, while India and Southeast Asia recorded a significant drop.
- Cases in India fell from approximately 20 million to 6 million.

### **Other countries with Malaria free status(Most recent)**

1. El Salvador-2021
2. Argentina-2019

3. Algeria-2019
4. Uzbekistan-2018
5. Kyrgyzstan-2016
6. Sri Lanka-2016
7. Maldives-2015

## **About Malaria**

It is a disease caused by a plasmodium parasite, transmitted by the bite of infected mosquitoes. The parasites are spread to people through the bites of infected female Anopheles mosquitoes, called "malaria vectors." There are 5 parasite species that cause malaria in humans, and 2 of these species – P. falciparum and P.

## **India's National Strategic Plan for Elimination of Malaria 2017-22**

It has a vision of a malaria-free country by 2027 and elimination by 2030.

(2017-2022) has been developed based on the National Framework for Malaria Elimination (NFME) of the National Vector Borne Disease Control Programme (NVBDCP), Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW), and WHO Global Technical Strategy for Malaria Elimination (2016-2030).

## **Goal**

The goals of NSP strategy are phased elimination of malaria in India. National Framework for Malaria Elimination (NFME) in India has set 2030 as eliminating malaria and goals of NSP are in consonance with overall goals

- Eliminate malaria in Category 1 districts (API <1) by 2020 and Category 2 districts (API 1-2) by 2022,
- Reduce transmission in Category 3 districts to stabilize API at <1 by 2022.

Extra

reading:

<https://journalsofindia.com/whos-world-malaria-report-2020/>