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India Revokes Ban on Export of Hydroxychloroquine

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Why in News

Recently, India revoked its earlier ban on the export of malaria drug hydroxychloroquine (HCQ), which is being used to treat **Covid-19**.

Key Points

- **U.S. Pressure:** The ban on HCQ was revoked by India after U.S. President said that India could invite **“retaliation”** if it withheld supplies of HCQ.
Earlier, the government of India placed HCQ on a restricted items list, and later put a **blanket ban on any export of the drug**.
- **India’s Stand:** Revocation has been done in view of the **humanitarian aspects** of the pandemic.
- **Neighbouring Countries:** India has decided **to licence paracetamol and HCQ** in appropriate quantities to all its neighbouring countries who are dependent on its capabilities.
It will also supply these essential drugs to some nations that have been particularly badly affected by the pandemic.
- **Pre-existing Orders:** The government **will fulfill the pre-existing orders, mainly to the U.S., Brazil and European countries**, as they have made advance payments on their orders.
- **Domestic Demand:** The orders will be fulfilled depending on the stock position and domestic demand for the drug, which would be continuously monitored.
The government said that currently it has sufficient stock of the HCQ drug.

Hydroxy-chloroquine

- Hydroxy-chloroquine is an **oral drug used in the treatment of malaria** and some **autoimmune diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis**.
 - **Malaria** is a disease caused by **mosquito bite of female Anopheles and spreads through parasites**.
 - **Autoimmune diseases** are in which the **body's immune system attacks healthy cells**.
 - **Rheumatoid arthritis** is a **chronic inflammatory disorder** affecting many joints, including those in the hands and feet.
- Hydroxy-chloroquine against COVID-19:
 - Recent studies show that the **HCQ drug alone or in combination with azithromycin** appears to reduce the virus quickly.
 - Further, the study suggests that **prophylaxis** (treatment given to prevent disease) with hydroxy-chloroquine at approved doses could prevent SARS-CoV-2 infection.
 - Although the drug has some side effects, it is linked to instances of cardiac arrhythmia and liver damage. Wide use may handicap the people's ability to fight the disease.

Source: TH