



World Malaria Day 2021

Why in News

The report, titled '**Zeroing in on malaria elimination**', was released by the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) ahead of **World Malaria Day 2021**.

- World Malaria Day is observed on **25th April every year**. The 2021 theme is "Reaching the Zero Malaria target".
- The WHO has also identified 25 countries with the potential to eradicate malaria by 2025 under its '**E-2025 Initiative**'.

Key Points

▪ Malaria:

◦ About:

- **Malaria** is a life threatening **mosquito borne blood disease caused by plasmodium parasites**. It is **predominantly found in the tropical and subtropical areas** of Africa, South America as well as Asia.
- The parasites **spread through the bites of infected female Anopheles mosquitoes**.
 - After entering the human body, parasites initially multiply within the liver cells and then **attack the Red Blood Cells (RBCs)** resulting in their rupture.
 - There are **5 parasite species** that cause malaria in humans, and 2 of these species - **Plasmodium falciparum and Plasmodium vivax** - pose the greatest threat.
 - **Symptoms** of malaria include **fever** and **flu-like** illness, including shaking **chills, headache**, muscle aches, and tiredness.
 - It is **preventable as well as curable**.

◦ Malaria Vaccine:

- Known by its lab initials as **RTS,S** but branded as Mosquirix, the vaccine has passed lengthy scientific trials that found it to be safe and **reducing the risk of malaria by nearly 40%**, the best ever recorded.
- It was developed by GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) company and **approved by the European Medicines Agency in 2015**.
- The RTS,S vaccine **trains the immune system to attack the malaria parasite** (Plasmodium (P.) falciparum, the most deadly species of the malaria parasite).

▪ E-2025 Initiative:

- In **2017**, WHO launched the **E-2020 initiative** to support a group of countries to achieve zero indigenous cases of malaria by 2020.
 - Some **21 countries across five regions** were identified as having the potential to

reach the milestone of eliminating malaria.

- The report '**Zeroing in on malaria elimination**' brings out the progress made through the E-2020 initiative of WHO.
- Building on the successes of the E-2020, **WHO has identified a new group of 25 countries** that have the potential to stamp out malaria within a 5-year timeline.
- The E-2025 countries **will receive technical and on-the-ground support by WHO** and its partners. In return, they are expected to audit their elimination programmes annually, participate in elimination forums, conduct surveillance assessments, and share malaria case data periodically.
- The **new countries were selected based on four criteria:**
 - The establishment of a government-endorsed elimination plan;
 - Meeting the threshold of malaria case reductions in recent years;
 - Having the capacity of malaria surveillance and a designated governmental agency responsible for malaria elimination; and
 - Being selected by the WHO Malaria Elimination Oversight Committee.

▪ **India's Scenario:**

- **Malaria Burden:** The [World Malaria Report \(WMR\) 2020](#) released by WHO, which gives the estimated cases for malaria across the world, indicates that India has made considerable progress in reducing its malaria burden.
 - India is the only high endemic country which has reported a decline of 17.6% in 2019 as compared to 2018.
- **Initiatives Taken:**
 - In 2017, India launched its 5-year **National Strategic Plan for Malaria Elimination** that shifted focus from Malaria control to elimination and provided a roadmap to end malaria in 571 districts out of India's 678 districts by 2022.
 - Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has recently established '**Malaria Elimination Research Alliance-India (MERA-India)**' which is a conglomeration of partners working on malaria control.

[Source: DTE](#)

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