

11 Asian nations declared polio-free

30th March, 2014



The World Health Organization (WHO) has announced for the first time that South-East Asia is now free from polio. The

WHO certified 11 countries as being clear of the disease. The WHO website said: "This is the fourth of six WHO regions to be certified, marking an important step towards global eradication of polio – a highly infectious virus that attacks the nervous system and can cause total paralysis in a matter of hours. With this step, 80 per cent of the world's population now lives in certified polio-free regions." One of the newly-certified countries is India, which as recently as 2009, was home to almost 50 per cent of the world's polio cases. India hasn't seen a single polio case for the last three years.

Polio is currently an incurable disease. It leads to paralysis of the limbs and can kill anyone who contracts it. Dr Poonam Khetrpal Singh, regional director for the WHO, said: "This is a momentous victory for the millions of health workers who have worked with governments, non-governmental organizations, civil society and international partners to eradicate polio from the region." She added: "It is a sign of what we can bequeath our children when we work together." Dr Singh also cautioned against becoming complacent in the fight against the disease. She said: "Until polio is globally eradicated, all countries are at risk and the region's polio-free status remains fragile."

Sources: WHO / Time / The Times of India

Writing

Curing all diseases will lead to overpopulation. Is this true? Is it good or bad?

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

the first time / certified / an important step / infectious / virus / population / cases / incurable / disease / regional / victory / partners / complacent / at risk / fragile

True / False

- UNESCO has announced Asia is free from polio. T / F
- A total of 11 countries have been given the all-clear regarding polio. T / F
- Polio is a disease that attacks the body's nervous system. T / F
- Nearly half of all global cases of polio in 2009 were in India. T / F
- Polio is actually a curable disease. T / F
- A WHO doctor said the eradication was a victory for a few researchers. T / F
- The doctor warned against future complacency with polio. T / F
- The doctor said Asia's status as polio-free was extremely strong. T / F

Synonym Match

- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| 1. announced | a. occurrence |
| 2. regions | b. elimination |
| 3. eradication | c. leave |
| 4. infectious | d. significant |
| 5. case | e. warned |
| 6. incurable | f. made public |
| 7. momentous | g. delicate |
| 8. bequeath | h. catching |
| 9. cautioned | i. areas |
| 10. fragile | j. untreatable |

Discussion – Student A

- Should the WHO get a special prize for this achievement?
- What diseases would you give money to fight (and why)?
- What difficulties do you think health workers had in Asia?
- Could countries cure more diseases if they didn't spend so much money on weapons?
- How is it possible to completely eradicate a virus?
- Do you worry about infectious diseases?
- What infectious disease is the biggest threat to humans?
- What questions would you like to ask the head of the WHO?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. announced for | a. an incurable disease |
| 2. certified 11 countries as being | b. regions to be certified |
| 3. This is the fourth of six WHO | c. our children |
| 4. a highly | d. victory |
| 5. India hasn't seen a | e. clear of the disease |
| 6. Polio is currently | f. remains fragile |
| 7. a momentous | g. infectious virus |
| 8. eradicate polio | h. single polio case |
| 9. what we can bequeath | i. from the region |
| 10. the region's polio-free status | j. the first time |

Discussion – Student B

- How good is this news?
- Why has it taken so long to eradicate polio in this region?
- What do you know about polio?
- What is the nervous system?
- How can countries prevent the spread of infectious diseases?
- What diseases are common in your country?
- What would it be like to work for the WHO?
- What's the biggest illness you've ever had?

Spelling

- nnencdauo for the first time
- The WHO iicfrtdee 11 countries as being clear
- an important step towards global natraidoeci of polio
- a highly uesncitfio virus
- attacks the orneuuv system
- cause total lsrpaiksa in a matter of hours
- Polio is currently an caileubrn disease
- This is a mmsunoteo victory
- viicl society
- what we can etbahuge our children
- cautioned against becoming nplacctmeo
- the region's polio-free status remains iareflg

Answers – Synonym Match

1. f	2. i	3. b	4. h	5. a
6. j	7. d	8. c	9. e	10. g

Role Play

Role A – Clean water

You think clean water is the best way of avoiding disease. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are problematic about their things. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): education, vaccines or genetic engineering.

Role B – Education

You think education is the best way of avoiding disease. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are problematic about their things. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): clean water, vaccines or genetic engineering.

Role C – Vaccines

You think vaccines are the best way of avoiding disease. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are problematic about their things. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): education, clean water or genetic engineering.

Role D – Genetic engineering

You think genetic engineering is the best way of avoiding disease. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are problematic about their things. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): education, vaccines or clean water.

Speaking – Disease

Rank these with your partner. Put the best ways to eradicate diseases at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| • medicines | • ban international travel |
| • clean water | • research and development |
| • education | • vaccines |
| • raise living standards | • genetic engineering |

Answers – True False

a	F	b	T	c	T	d	T	e	F	f	F	g	T	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.