

Delta plus variant of COVID virus

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In news

Recently, Maharashtra reported the first death due to Delta plus variant coronavirus.

What is the Delta plus variant of COVID virus?

- The new Delta plus variant has been **formed due to a mutation in the Delta or B.1.617.2 variant**, which was first identified in India.
- It is **formally known as AY.1 or B.1.617.2.1.**
- The **mutation is the result of the Delta variant acquiring the spike protein mutation K417N** to form what is scientifically known as the AY.1 variant.
- **K417N** has previously been identified in the Beta variant (first found in South Africa) and the Gamma variant (first detected in Brazil).
- These variants are characterised as being **highly infectious and may reduce the potency of vaccines.**
- It is undergoing mutations in various geographies and that these mutations are displaying **more transmissibility and potential reductions in monoclonal antibody response.**



- The concern is that because the Delta variant has a cavalcade of mutations that have allowed it to dominate in several countries, including India, another form may pose new challenges to the management of the pandemic in India.
- According to CSIR-Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology, the mutation was associated with **resistance to a newly developed monoclonal antibody treatment drug, Casirivimab and Imdevimab**, for those with moderate and severe disease but at high risk.

WHO list of variants of concern-

- It includes Alpha, Beta, Delta, and Gamma variants.
- There is little evidence so far specifically linking AY.1 to large outbreaks and significant disease transmission, and hence Delta variant has not yet appeared in the list