

Nairobi flies

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In news- Recently, around 100 students of an engineering college in East Sikkim have reported skin infections after coming in contact with Nairobi flies.

About Nairobi flies-

- **Nairobi flies, also called Kenyan flies or dragon bugs,** are small, **beetle-like insects that belong to two species,**
 - Paederus eximius and
 - Paederus sabaeus.
- They are **orange and black in colour,** and **thrive in areas with high rainfall,** as has been witnessed in Sikkim in the past few weeks.
- Like most insects, the beetles are **attracted by bright light.**
- Usually, the **insects attack pests that consume crops and are beneficial for humans,** but at times they come in **contact with humans directly** and cause harm.
- **These flies do not bite,** but if disturbed while sitting on anyone's skin, **they release a potent acidic substance that causes burns.**
- This **substance is called pederin,** and **can cause irritation if it comes in contact with the skin,** leading to lesions or unusual marks or colouring on the skin.
- The skin begins to heal in a week or two, but some secondary infections can occur, especially if the victim scratches the irritated skin.
- **Major outbreaks** associated with these flies have **happened in Kenya and other parts of eastern Africa.**
- In 1998, unusually **heavy rain caused a large number of insects to come into the region.**
- Outside Africa, **outbreaks have happened in India, Japan, Israel, and Paraguay in the past.**