

Nipah virus

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In news-The Kerala health department has stepped up surveillance against Nipah virus in view of the breeding season of fruit bats, which are known to aid the spread of the disease.

Previous incidence of Nipah virus in Kerala-

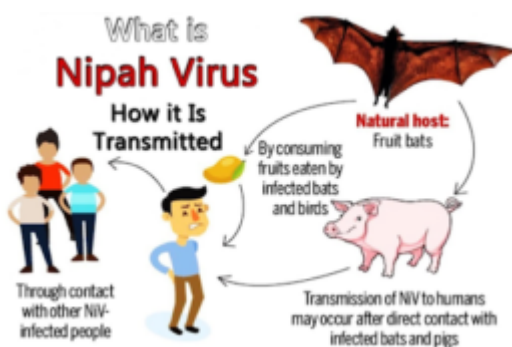
- Kerala had reported Nipah outbreak during May-June 2018, when 18 confirmed cases were reported in Kozhikode district.
- As many as 17 infected persons had died, including the index case which could not be confirmed by laboratory tests.
- In 2019, one case was reported in Ernakulam district, but there was no casualty. In September 2021, the deadly virus surfaced again in Kozhikode, killing a 12-year-old boy.
- In January 2021 The Nipah virus was detected **in Rousettus leschenaultii and Pipistrellus bats** species in Maharashtra for the first time by scientists from the Pune-based National Institute of Virology (NIV)

About Nipah virus-

- The Nipah virus is a zoonotic virus (it is transmitted from animals to humans) and **type of RNA virus in the genus Henipavirus.**
- The virus, **usually found in bats, features in the top 10 priority list of pathogens identified by the World Health Organisation,** and its transmission to humans has resulted in deadly outbreaks across the world.
- Nipah is considered dangerous as there is **no medicine or vaccine,** and the death rate is high. Its **fatality rate is estimated at 40% to 75%**
- Nipah virus can be transmitted to humans from animals

(such as bats or pigs), or contaminated foods and can also be transmitted directly from human-to-human.

- Fruit bats of the Pteropodidae family are the natural host of Nipah virus.
- **It was first found in 1998 in the Malaysian village of Kampung Sungai Nipah** (hence named after this village).
- Nipah's symptoms are similar to influenza, including fever, muscle pain and breathing problems.
- Complications can include inflammation of the brain and seizures following recovery.
- People infected with the Nipah virus are provided intensive medical care.



Rousettus leschenaultii-

- Leschenault's rousette is a species of fruit bat.
- The scientific name of the species was first published by Desmarest in 1820.
- Leschenault's rousette is brown to grey-brown in colour with lighter underparts.
- This bat species is found in a variety of habitats ranging from tropical forests to urban environments.
- It roosts in caves, old abandoned buildings and tunnels, and other such structures.

Pipistrellus bats-

- The common pipistrelle is a small pipistrelle microbat whose very large range extends across most of Europe, North Africa, South Asia, and may extend into Korea.
- The common pipistrelle is a very small species of bat.

- It has a short muzzle.
- The common pipistrelle is an edge specialist, preferring to forage along woodland edges and along isolated tree lines.
- It is insectivorous, preying on flies, caddisflies, lacewings, and mayflies.
- Mosquitoes, midges, and gnats are particularly favored prey items.