

# 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-**

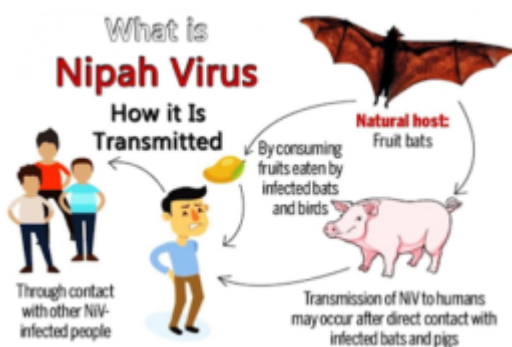
- Kerala had reported Nipah outbreak during May-June 2018, when 18 confirmed cases were reported in Kozhikode district.
- As many as 17 infected persons had died, including the index case which could not be confirmed by laboratory tests.
- In 2019, one case was reported in Ernakulam district, but there 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.