

Zika Virus case reported in Kerala

July 10, 2021

In news

Around 14 Zika Virus cases have been reported in Kerala recently.

About Zika Virus

- Zika virus disease is caused by a virus transmitted primarily by Aedes mosquitoes, which bite during the day.
- The mosquito-borne flavivirus **was first identified in Uganda in 1947 in monkeys.**
- It was later **identified in humans in 1952 in Uganda** and the United Republic of Tanzania.
- Outbreaks of Zika virus have been recorded in Africa, the Americas, Asia, and the Pacific.
- **Symptoms:** The majority of people infected with Zika virus do not develop symptoms. Symptoms are generally mild including fever, rash, conjunctivitis, muscle and joint pain, malaise, and headache, and usually last for 2–7 days.
- **Transmission:** Pregnant women can potentially transmit the virus to her foetus resulting in brain damage in the child. It can also be sexually transmitted.
- **Medicine:** There is no treatment available for Zika virus infection or its associated diseases. Vaccine trials are underway for Zika Virus.
- **Fatality:** Deaths are extremely rare.
- Zika virus infection is also a trigger of Guillain-Barré syndrome, neuropathy and myelitis, particularly in adults and older children.
- A major outbreak in Brazil in 2015 revealed that it can

lead to severe birth defects when pregnant women are infected.

- India saw the first cases of Zika virus in May 2017 in Gujarat.

Zika virus among pregnant women

- Zika virus is also associated with other complications during pregnancy, including preterm birth and miscarriage.
- The virus can be transmitted from a pregnant woman to her fetus.
- It results in microcephaly (smaller than normal head size) and other congenital malformations in the infant, collectively referred to as congenital Zika syndrome.

Prevention

- According to WHO, Protection against mosquito bites during the day and early evening is a key measure to prevent Zika virus infection.
- Special attention should be given to prevention of mosquito bites among pregnant women, women of reproductive age, and young children.
- Personal protection measures include wearing clothing, using physical barriers such as window screens and closed doors and windows, and applying insect repellent to skin.
- Aedes mosquitoes breed in small collections of water. It is important to eliminate these mosquito breeding sites.