



KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY
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14-year-old Kerala boy dies of Nipah infection

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Why in news?

The Nipah virus claimed the life of a 14-year-old boy from Malappuram district of Kerala on Sunday. The resurgence of the infection, which often spreads from fruit bats to humans and other animals, has prompted the State government to impose containment measures in at least two panchayats in the district.

What is Nipah Virus?

About:

It is a **zoonotic virus** (it is transmitted from animals to humans).

The organism that causes Nipah Virus encephalitis is an **RNA or Ribonucleic acid virus** of the family **Paramyxoviridae**, genus **Henipavirus**, and is closely related to **Hendra virus**.

Hendra virus (HeV) infection is a rare emerging zoonosis that causes severe and often fatal diseases in both infected horses and humans.

It first broke out in **Malaysia and Singapore in 1998 and 1999**.

The disease is named after a **village in Malaysia, Sungai Nipah**, where it was first detected.

Viruses are non-cellular entities with genetic material enclosed in a protein coat called capsid. The viral genome is usually either RNA or DNA. Outside the host, viruses remain inert. But once inside host cells, they utilise the cell machinery to make copies of themselves, often destroying the host cell.

DNA Viruses: Adenovirus, Herpesvirus, Hepadnavirus

RNA Viruses: Picornavirus, Orthomyxovirus, Rhabdovirus

It first appeared in **domestic pigs** and has been found among several species of domestic animals including dogs, cats, goats, horses and sheep

Transmission:

The disease spreads through **fruit bats** or 'flying foxes,' of the genus **Pteropus**, who are natural reservoir hosts of the Nipah and Hendra viruses.

The **virus is present in bat urine** and potentially, bat faeces, saliva, and birthing fluids.

Symptoms:

The human infection presents as an **encephalitic syndrome** marked by fever, headache, drowsiness, disorientation, mental confusion, coma, and potentially death.

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Prevention:

Currently, there are **no vaccines for both humans and animals**. Intensive supportive care is given to humans infected by the Nipah virus.