

West Nile Virus In Kerala

Why In News

- **Kerala Health Department** has sounded an alert in the districts of Thrissur, Malappuram and Kozhikode following the detection of the **vector-borne West Nile fever**.



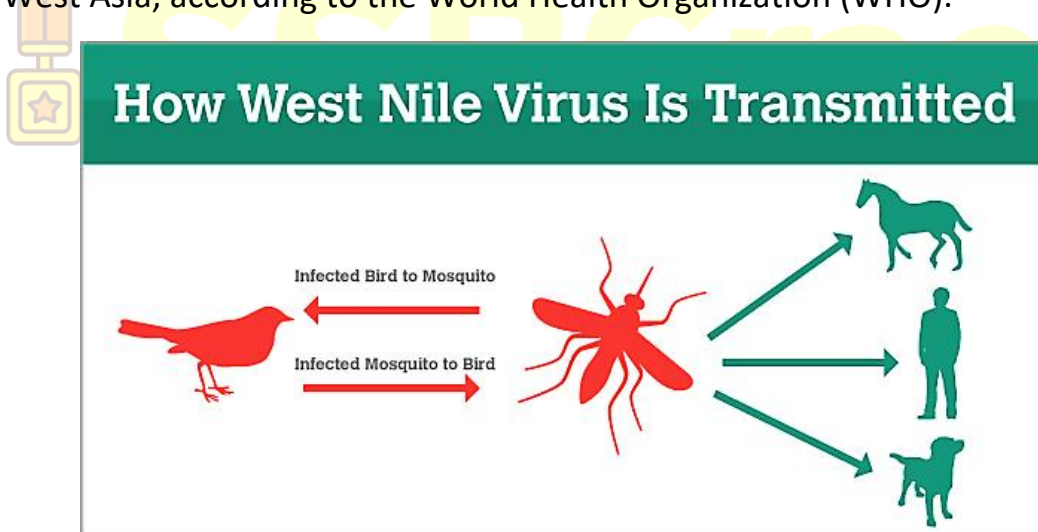
- The disease claimed a life in Thrissur and six other confirmed cases were reported in Kozhikode and Malappuram in the last two days. Samples of people, who showed symptoms of the **disease and underwent treatment**, were sent by the administration to the Pune-based National Institute of Virology as a routine exercise.

What Is West Nile Fever

- **West Nile Virus (WNV)** was detected for the first time in a woman in the West Nile district of Uganda in 1937. The fever is spread by the **Culex species of mosquitoes**.
- In India, the fever was **first detected back in 2011**. A six-year-old boy from Kerala's Malappuram had passed away due to the fever in 2019.

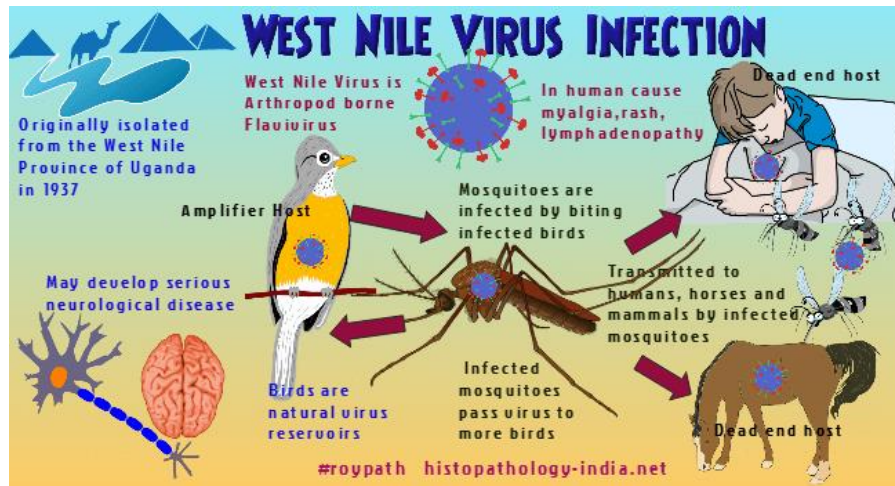


- Later, a **47-year-old man died** of the fever in Thrissur district in May 2022.
- According to the state health department, the WNV can cause a **fatal neurological disease** in humans, however, most of the persons who are infected by it may not show any symptoms. It is mainly transmitted to humans through the bites of infected mosquitoes.
- **WNV is majorly found in Africa**, Europe, the Middle East, North America and West Asia, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).



Symptoms

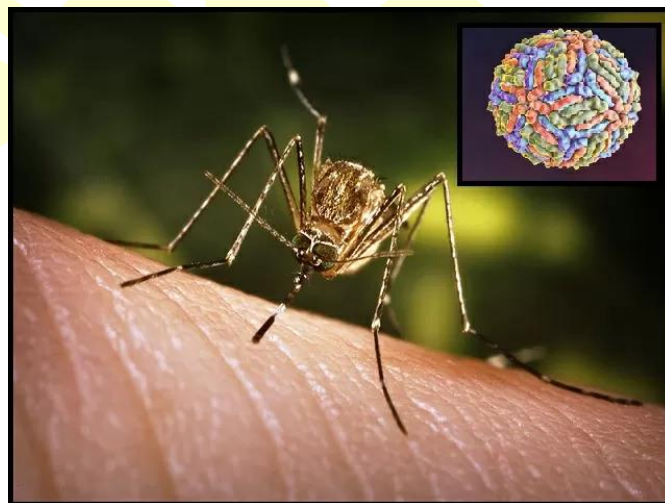
- **Around 80% of people infected** with West Nile Virus are asymptomatic and do not show any symptoms, while in several cases it can lead to West Nile fever or severe West Nile disease.
- Some of the **major symptoms** seen among patients infected with West Nile fever include fever, headache, tiredness, body aches, nausea, vomiting, skin rashes and swollen lymph glands.



- Besides this, some patients can even show severe symptoms including neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, and paralysis, the WHO stated.
- It is further estimated that one in **150 persons infected** with the West Nile virus may develop a more severe form of the disease.



SSB Crack EXAMS



- In most of the cases, the **incubation period is usually three to 14 days.**
- **Some people experience symptoms** like fever, headache, vomiting and itching and in one per cent of the cases, it can lead to brain damage resulting in unconsciousness and sometimes death, the minister's statement said.
- **But the death rate is relatively low** compared to Japanese encephalitis which shows similar symptoms and is more dangerous.
- As there is no medicine or vaccine available against West Nile virus, symptomatic treatment and prevention are key, the minister said.

- As part of the preventive measures, she suggested wearing clothing that completely covers the body, use of mosquito nets and repellants and keeping one's home and surroundings clean.