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Media alert from the Media Scanning & Verification Cell, IDSP-NCDC.

Alert ID	Publication Date	Reporting Date	Place Name	News Source/Publication Language
6179	23.06.2021	23.06.2021	Maharashtra	The Times of India English Newspaper 23 <sup>rd</sup> June, 2021/page No. 10
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Nipah virus found in two bat species in Maharashtra by NIV team</b>			
Action By CSU, IDSP -NCDC	Information communicated to SSU- Maharashtra			

The deadly Nipah virus has been found in two species of bats in Maharashtra for the first time by scientists from the Pune-based National Institute of Virology (NIV).

The Nipah-carrying bats were found in a cave in Mahabaleshwar in Satara in March 2020. Dr Pragya Yadav, the study's lead investigator, told TOI that none of the bat species in Maharashtra had previously shown exposure to Nipah.

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.

The NIV findings were published recently in the peer-reviewed and indexed 'Journal of Infection and Public Health'. The article states that India has witnessed four Nipah outbreaks (see box) so far.

Nipah is considered dangerous as there is no medicine or vaccine, and the death rate is high. While the case fatality rate in Covid is between 1% and 2% in most Indian states, CFR in Nipah infections ranges between 65% and 100%.

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**Disclaimer:- This is a media alert subject to verification.**

**Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP), National Centre for Disease Control,  
Ministry Of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India**

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एक कदम स्वच्छता की ओर

In recent years, bats have been found to harbour other risky viruses such as Ebola and Marburg that have caused outbreaks. The Covid pandemic, too, is believed to be linked to bats.

The NIV team looked at Pteropus medius, Rousettus leschenaultii and Pipistrellus pipistrellus bats that are common in India. It trapped 65 leschenaultii and 15 pipistrellus bats and collected blood, throat and rectal swabs in the Mahabaleshwar cave from the anaesthetised bats. Detailed lab work showed anti-NiV antibodies in 33 leschenaultii and 1 Pipistrellus bat sample.

"In investigations during the last decade, NiV (Nipah) activity could not be detected in leschenaultia bats, despite processing several hundred bats, including bats from the same location," said the research paper. So, leschenaultii bats were found to harbour Nipah for the first time in India.

"The roost which was sampled was age-old and the virus might have been circulating at low levels and not detected during earlier studies," said Yadav. Alternatively, she said, the virus could have been newly introduced from medius to leschenaultii bats. The team isn't worried about the pipistrellus bats. "Their role in virus spillover to humans appears remote as they are insectivorous," said Yadav. As they shared the same habitat as the leschenaultii bats, they tested positive.

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