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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
5873	17.04.2020	17.04.2020	Karnataka	www.newindianexpress.com/English https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/karnataka/2020/apr/17/kfd-spreads-as-people-spend-time-in-forests-2131188.html
Title:	KFD spreads as people spend time in forests			
Action By CSU, IDSP -NCDC	Information communicated to SSU- Karnataka			

Another zoonotic disease like COVID-19 – the Kyasnur Forest Disease (KFD) or monkey fever -- has spread across 12 districts with 200 cases reported across Karnataka. This year, 16 children below 14 years have been affected compared to two cases last year. On Sunday, five cases were detected in Kolarka village of Siddapura taluk taking the number of cases to 41 in Uttar Kannada. If Chikkamagaluru has seen 10 cases, Shivamogga is the worst affected district with 146 cases of KFD. Last year, Karnataka had reported 400 cases of monkey fever.

Health officials say the number of cases has increased due to the lockdown as many people who have come down to Shivamogga and other Malnad districts are venturing into forests, thereby, contracting the viral hemorrhagic fever disease that is at its peak during April. Akhilesh Chipli, naturalist from Sagar, said, "With Shivamogga district reporting no COVID-19 cases, many people come from Bengaluru and Mysuru to spend the lockdown time by going into forest areas on their private vehicles --right from Sakrebailu to Agumbe.

The lockdown has proved to be very difficult for forest officials as they are not only tackling forest fires and encroachments but also rising incidents of wildlife poaching. So, it has been easy for people to evade the forest staff and enter forests." Further,

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

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viral transmission to humans has also been from cattle when they are left in the forests for grazing by farmers. Wildlife veterinarian Dr H S Prayag says, "Cattle carry infected ticks when they are left in forest for grazing and that is the link -- not that cattle transmit the virus directly. Animals like monkeys which are dead or infected have been transmitting the virus to man through ticks, the intermediate host."

There is already a red alert sounded by health authorities in the affected taluks of Tirthahalli and Sagar. Further, entry to forests for collection of forest produce and cattle grazing has been banned. Forest officials are carrying out measures to destroy tick pools on the forest floor as the virus is transmitted from monkeys to humans through the bite of infected ticks.

According to National Centre for Disease Control, Directorate General of Health Services, KFD is a re-emerging zoonotic disease. The Karnataka government has been regularly declaring 'potential exposure zones' for any monkey deaths occurring in a radius of 5km. However, experts say that unless there is a holistic, coordinated approach by involving all the stakeholders -- health, veterinary, forest and other departments, the zoonotic disease cannot be wished away in the Malnad region.

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