



# Health dept raises doubts over efficacy of KFD vaccine

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Bengaluru:** After witnessing 12 deaths and 212 positive cases due to Kyasanuru Forest Disease, also called monkey fever, in Karnataka in the last three months, the health department has raised concerns over the efficacy of vaccination.

Health minister Shivanand Patil said on Wednesday said some of the vaccinated individuals too were found to have been infected.

The KFD vaccine is produced by the Institute of Animal Health and Veterinary Biologicals, Bengaluru.

The health department has formed a committee headed by former bureaucrat Madan Gopal to come up with a comprehensive report on KFD outbreak. The government is also mulling setting

“Of the 14 deaths in the state, 12 were caused by monkey fever. Results are awaited in the case of two other deaths. At least two cases of vaccinated people getting infected have been reported. They were also on booster dose. We need to examine all aspects pertaining to KFD

**Shivanand Patil** | HEALTH MINISTER



up a research lab and a testing unit along with an improved vaccination production unit in Sagar or Shivamogga to handle outbreaks effectively. Currently, samples are being sent to National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune, and Manipal for testing.

“Of the 14 deaths, 12 were caused by KFD. Results are awaited in the case of two other deaths. At least two cases of vaccinated people getting infected have been reported. They were also on booster doses. We need to examine all

aspects pertaining to KFD. Shiravante, Araladodu and Avinahalli village panchayats of Sagar taluk have been affected during this outbreak. Earlier, there were no cases reported in Araladodu and the first one was in 2018,” Patil said.

“Karnataka is producing vaccines for KFD and that’s transported to Goa, Maharashtra and Kerala. We need to understand the pathogenesis or the manner of development of the disease,” said Dr Shivakumar V, a retired med-

ical officer and member of the committee working on tackling KFD.

Madan Gopal said joint efforts by the health, forest and animal husbandry departments can help tackle the infection effectively. The committee is likely to submit its report shortly.

“Currently, the vaccine needs to be taken every year and there is a lack of awareness, resistance among many villagers in the affected areas who frequent the forests. We need to work on a vaccine that boosts the immunity for five years, a vaccine that can be taken once in five years,” said Madan Gopal.

The health minister said the government wants more work to be done on understanding what makes the virus virulent suddenly.



# Leptospirosis scare grips Shivamogga

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Shivamogga:** Parts of Shivamogga district are still grappling with the problem of Kyasanur Forest Disease (KFD), and the district administration is still scrambling to ensure adequate supply of vaccination, but the officials now have a new problem on their hands – leptospirosis, a bacterial disease.

The district health department data indicates that as many as 23 people from Theerthahalli, Hosanagara and Sagar taluks have tested positive for the disease, which is terribly hard to ascertain, since its symptoms are easily confused

with several other disorders. While high fever, chills and severe headache are among the symptoms, leptospirosis can last for many months if not treated early. However, the district health department has asked the residents not to worry since the disease is not fatal, and can be treated locally.

Shivamogga district surveillance officer Dr BS Shankarappa said that leptospirosis was a fairly common disease in the Malnad region, particularly among those who worked on agricultural fields. "It is not a fatal disease. It does not lead to severe complications in one's health," said Dr Shankarappa..