

KALA AZAR : SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

NEWS: India's Push for WHO Certification in Eliminating Kala-azar

WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

India is on the verge of achieving a significant milestone by seeking certification from the World Health Organization (WHO) for eliminating Kala-azar as a public health problem. The country has maintained the required criteria for elimination—less than one case per 10,000 people for two consecutive years.

Kala Azar (Visceral Leishmaniasis) - Key Points:

- Kala Azar (Visceral Leishmaniasis) is the second deadliest parasitic disease after malaria in India.
- **Cause:** It is caused by the protozoan parasite *Leishmania donovani*, transmitted through the • bite of an infected female sandfly.
- Symptoms: Irregular fever, weight loss, enlargement of the spleen and liver, and anemia.
- Geographical Prevalence: Most cases occur in Brazil, East Africa, and India. •
- **Fatality:** If untreated, it can be fatal in 95% of cases.
- Forms of Leishmaniasis:
 - **Visceral Leishmaniasis (VL)**: Fatal if untreated, affects internal organs.
 - Cutaneous Leishmaniasis (CL): Causes skin ulcers, can lead to scarring and disability.
 - Mucocutaneous Leishmaniasis: Destroys mucous membranes of the nose, mouth, and throat.

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Information for internally displaced persons and refugees



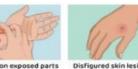
Vector-borne disease transmitted through the bites of infected female phlebotomine sandflies, which feed on blood to produce eggs.

















Rash usually on Face,

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after recovery

Spleen and liver enlargement



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- **Post Kala-azar Dermal Leishmaniasis (PKDL):** Causes scaly patches and nodules up to 2 years after infection.
- **HIV Co-infection:** People with HIV are more prone to full-blown disease, relapse, and high mortality.
- **Treatment:** Treated through an IV drip of medication.

India's Progress Toward Elimination:

- To eliminate Kala-azar, India must maintain a rate of fewer than 1 case per 10,000 people for one more year.
- National Health Policy (2002): Initially aimed for elimination by 2010, revised to 2020.
- WHO Target: Global Kala-azar elimination target extended to 2030.
- Vulnerable Regions: Highest cases are from Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, and parts of Uttar Pradesh.
- **Bihar accounts for 70%** of India's cases due to poor sanitation and suitable climate for sandfly breeding.

Source : https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/health/kala-azar-cases-under-control-for-twoyears-india-gears-to-apply-for-eliminationcertificate/article68772300.ece#:~:text=India%20could%20be%20at%20the,for%20two%20co nsecutive%20years%20now.

