

Bhutan Eliminates Dog-Transmitted Rabies

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | Disease

Why in News?

Bhutan is the first country in the World Health Organization South-East Asia Region to eliminate dog-transmitted rabies as a public health concern.

Elimination - The reduction of disease transmission or deaths to a specified level within a defined geographical area, with ongoing surveillance and prevention measures remaining necessary.

Eradication - The permanent reduction of a disease to zero cases globally.

- **Rabies** - It is a **viral zoonotic disease** that targets the **central nervous system**.
- It is **almost invariably fatal once clinical symptoms appear**.
- Transmission primarily occurs via the **saliva of infected animals**, most commonly through bites.
- **Dogs represent the primary source of human rabies fatalities worldwide**.

Rabies in India

- Approximately **59,000 deaths worldwide each year** are attributed to rabies.
- Roughly **one-third** of these deaths occur in India.
- In India, approximately 96% of rabies-related **mortality and morbidity is associated with dog bites**.
- Rabies is endemic throughout India, with the exception of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep.

National Rabies Control Programme (NRCP)

- **Objectives**
 - To reduce human mortality caused by rabies.
 - To achieve **zero human deaths from dog-mediated rabies by 2030 through progressive interventions**.

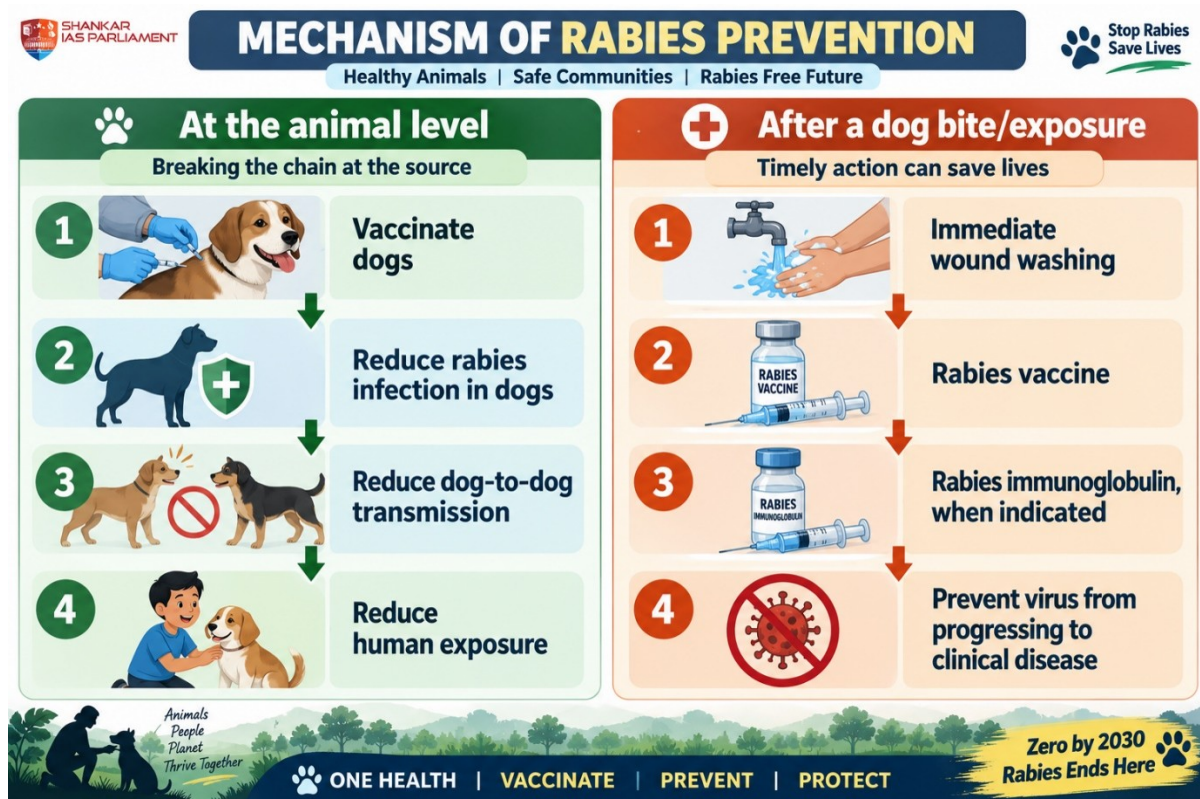
World Health Organization (WHO) validation criteria - For “Elimination as a Public Health Problem”.

- A country is required to demonstrate the following:
 - There have been no human deaths resulting from dog-mediated rabies for a **minimum of two consecutive years**.

- The capacity exists to prevent the re-emergence or further transmission of the disease.

Bhutan's Approach to Achieving Success

- **Implementation of the One Health Approach** - Integration of human health, animal health, and environmental factors,
- Bhutan integrated the following stakeholders:
 - Health workers
 - Veterinary professionals
 - Local governments
 - Community members
 - Volunteers
- **Key Interventions**
- **Mass dog vaccination** - Vaccination of dogs reduces disease transmission at its source.
- **Dog population management** - Control of the stray and free-roaming dog population.
- **Surveillance** - Rapid identification and investigation of suspected disease cases.
- **Community awareness** - Education of communities regarding disease prevention and responsible animal management.
- **Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP)** - Ensuring access to appropriate treatment following exposure.
- **Cross-sectoral Coordination** - Health and animal or livestock authorities collaborate to achieve coordinated outcomes.



Reference

[The Hindu | Bhutan Eliminates Dog-Transmitted Rabies](#)

