



Black Death

Why in News?

In a study published in the journal Science, researchers have claimed that the disease (black death) **originated** in modern day **northern Kyrgyzstan around 1338-1339** – nearly 7-8 years before it ravaged large parts of the world.

What was the Black Death?

- The term Black Death refers to the **bubonic plague** that spread across **Western Asia, Northern Africa, Middle East and Europe in 1346-53**.
- Most scholars agree that the Black Death, which killed millions, was **caused by bacterium Yersinia pestis** and was **spread by fleas** that were carried by rodent hosts.
- The microorganism Y. pestis spread to human populations, who at some point transmitted it to others either through the vector of a human flea or directly through the respiratory system.
- Contemporaries who wrote about the epidemic, often **described the buboes (hard, inflamed lymph nodes)** as the distinguishing clinical feature.
- In the 14th century, the epidemic was referred to as the **'great pestilence' or 'great death'**, due to the demographic havoc that it caused.
- Due to a lack of comprehensive historical data from that time, it is difficult to know the exact death toll.

[Source: IE](#)

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