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News: Primary amebic meningoencephalitis

- Recently, a teenager in Kerala was declared dead after affecting Primary Amebic Meningoencephalitis.
- Prior to this, five PAM cases had been reported in the State. The disease, usually fatal, was first detected in Alappuzha municipality in 2016.

Primary amebic meningoencephalitis (PAM)

- Primary amebic meningoencephalitis is caused by *Naegleria fowleri* or “brain-eating amoeba”.
- *Naegleria* is an amoeba, a single-celled organism, and only one of its species - *Naegleria fowleri*, can infect humans.
- It was first discovered in Australia (1965) and is commonly found in warm freshwater bodies (hot springs, rivers and lakes).
- It enters the human body through the nose and then travels up to the brain.
- Primary Amebic Meningoencephalitis destroys brain tissues and causes swelling of the brain.

- Most *Naegleria fowleri* infections reported around the world have been linked to bathing and swimming in waterbodies.
- It has a very high mortality rate. Currently, no vaccine is available, but PAM can be treated with proper drug combinations.
- Usually, the disease does not spread from one person to another.