France confirms the world's first human case of Shamonda virus – patient in Lyon died

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News

France's health and agriculture ministries confirmed on 22 Oct 2026 the first human case of Shamonda virus, until now considered to affect only livestock. A severely immunocompromised patient at the Hospices Civils de Lyon died in early October; brain complications were 'very likely linked' to the infection. The person was probably infected by a Culicoides biting midge in eastern France. Authorities said no risk to the general public has been identified; France has notified WHO and ECDC.

Key facts

Confirmed	22 Oct 2026 – French health & agriculture ministries; Lyon (Hospices Civils de Lyon)
Patient	Severely immunocompromised; died in early October
Vector	Culicoides biting midges
Classification	Genus Orthobunyavirus, Simbu serogroup – related to Schmallenberg virus
In cattle	Fever, lethargy, diarrhoea, milk drop; abortion and birth defects in calves
Spread	First found in Nigeria, mid-1960s; Africa, Japan; first in Western Europe in summer 2026 (France, Germany, Switzerland etc.)

Background

- Zoonoses: diseases passing from animals to humans – rabies, Nipah, bird flu, Kyasanur Forest Disease (monkey fever), leptospirosis. Most emerging infections are of animal origin.
- One Health: the approach that human, animal and environmental health are interlinked. A livestock virus reaching a human shows why animal and human disease surveillance must be joined up.
- Science: Shamonda and Schmallenberg (found in Germany in 2011) are both RNA viruses of genus Orthobunyavirus (family Peribunyaviridae), Simbu serogroup. The same Culicoides midges spread bluetongue. Experts link warming temperatures to the northward spread of these midges.
- India: the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC, Delhi) tracks outbreaks through the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP). France – Western Europe, capital Paris; Lyon lies where the Rhône and Saône rivers meet.

Tamil Nadu link: Tamil Nadu was the first State in India to enact a Public Health Act (1939); its Directorate of Public Health and Preventive Medicine was formed in 1923. Studies at sheep farms in Tamil Nadu have recorded Culicoides imicola and other bluetongue-spreading midge species.

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