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Collaboration vital to check pandemics

By M.G. Deva

I REFER to the report "Dr M: Centres to identify diseases a must" (NST, Oct 5). Former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's call for an international research centre for pandemic diseases such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) deserves urgent attention.

We do need a centralised organisation that will co-ordinate research and information-sharing on such diseases.

In a borderless world with rapid air travel, no country is safe from diseases such as SARS, bird flu, Nipah virus and Mad Cow. It is particularly dangerous now, as the routes of transmission have increased many-fold.

There should be close collaboration between medical and veterinary research scientists to study the nature and mode of spread of the disease.

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