Bluetongue Disease

Why in News?

The presence of multiple Culicoides species responsible for the larger number of bluetongue virus transmission in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

The Indian Culicoides fauna now includes 93 valid species, many of which are recognised as confirmed or potential vectors of important pathogens of animal health.

- Bluetongue is a **_viral disease_** that affects ruminants like sheep, cattle, and goats.
- **Symptoms -** Fever, Swelling of the face, lips, tongue, nose, jaw, and eyelids, Excessive salivation, Congestion and nasal discharge, Ulcers in the mouth and nose, Lameness, Respiratory problems, Hemorrhages in the skin and other tissues.
- **Transmission -** The disease is spread by the bite of a Culicoides midge.
- The midge takes blood from an infected animal and spreads the disease to other animals when it bites them again.
- It is **_not contagious_** between animals.
- **Affected animals -** Sheep are usually the most affected.
- Cattle and goats can carry the virus for a period of time and transmit it to other animals.
- Other ruminants like deer, camels, llamas, giraffes, bison, buffalo, wildebeest, and antelope can also be affected.
- **Geographic distribution -** Bluetongue is found in tropical and subtropical regions, between 53°N and 35°S.
- It is been found in Africa, the Americas, Australia, the Middle East, and some countries of southern Asia and Oceania.
- **Vaccination –** Vaccination is used as the most effective and practical measure to minimize losses related to the disease.
- European Medical Agency has recently recommended the approval of the vaccines *Bluevac-3 and Syvazul BTV 3* to protect sheep against bluetongue disease.
- **Treatment -** There is no specific treatment for animals with bluetongue apart from rest, provision of soft food, and good husbandry.
- Bluetongue is listed by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) as a *notifiable disease.*

References

1. [The Hindu | Blood-sucking flies in Andaman & Nicobar Islands](#)
2. [EMA | Vaccine Approval](#)