Henipavirus

Why in News?

First case of deadly henipavirus found in North America.

- Henipavirus is a ***zoonotic,*** negative-sense RNA Virus.
- **Family –** Paramyxoviridae.
- **Natural Hosts –** Pteropid fruit bats (flying foxes)

Camp Hill virus, a type of henipavirus has been found in the northern short-tailed shrews, a small mammal commonly found in Canada and the US.

- **Symptoms -** Dizziness, headache, fever, and myalgias.
- Respiratory symptoms also may be present. Relapsing or late-onset encephalitis can occur months or years after acute illness.
- **Transmission -** These inhibit the cell's response to viral infection, and allow viral replication.
- These thus act as virulence factors, blocking the interferon-stimulated antiviral defense mechanisms from kicking in inside the infected cells.
- The virus causes destruction of small blood vessels in many major organs, such as the brain, liver and kidney, causing organ failure. This is associated with microinfarction, infection, and organ failure.
- **Fatality -** Fatality often occurs when the disease progresses to severe encephalitis and symptoms like confusion, abnormal reflexes, seizures, and coma occur.
- **Prevention** - By ensuring HeV vaccination of all horses in risk situations, as well as minimal human contact with fruit bats, isolation of sick animals.
- **Treatment** - Symptomatic, and ***no vaccine or antiviral drug*** has been developed so far to treat the disease.

Reference

Times of India | Henipavirus