Zika Outbreak in India

Why in news?

In India first large outbreak of Zika virus is reported in Jaipur with 80 victims.

What is Zika?

- Zika is a viral infection, spread by mosquitoes, the vector is the Aedes aegypti mosquito, which also spreads dengue and chikungunya.
- Additionally, infected people can transmit Zika sexually.
- Most people infected with the virus do not develop symptoms, the symptoms are similar to those of flu, including fever body ache, headache etc.
- According to WHO these symptoms can be treated with common pain and fever medicines, rest and plenty of water.
- Additional symptoms can include the occasional rash like in dengue, while some patients also have conjunctivitis.
- The incubation period (the time from exposure to symptoms) of Zika virus disease is estimated to be 3-14 days.
- Precautions are generally the same as for other dengue use mosquito nets and repellents apart from taking steps to prevent sexual transmission.
How dangerous is Zika?

- Fears around Zika primarily involve microcephaly, especially when pregnant women are infected.
- Microcephaly is a condition in which babies are born with small and underdeveloped brains.
- Generally, the virus is not considered dangerous to anyone other than pregnant women.
- Some countries that have had a Zika outbreak, including Brazil, reported a steep increase in Guillain-Barré syndrome — a neurological disorder that could lead to paralysis and death, according to WHO.
- In 2017, following a study on Brazil’s confirmed cases, the US National Institutes of Health study estimated the fatality rate at 8.3%.

What is the incidence of Zika in India?

- In 2017, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare-Government of India (MoHFW) reported three laboratory-confirmed cases of Zika virus disease in Bapunagar area, Ahmedabad District, Gujarat State, India.
Recently 80 cases reported since September 23 have been concentrated in parts of Jaipur.

What measures are taken to address the recent outbreak?

- Rajasthan government has deployed 330 and checked 4.34 lakh people and over 2.04 lakh breeding sites, of which over 74,000 were found to have mosquito larvae.
- Apart from this the state government is doing house-to-house surveys, and noting the number of pregnant women in each house in affected areas.
- The Rajasthan Health Department has advised people in the affected areas to stay indoors.

Source: Indian Express