

Buffalopox

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In news- India is witnessing increased buffalopox infections in recent times.

About Buffalopox-

- Buffalopox is caused by buffalopox virus (BPXV), it is a Poxviridae for which the **natural host is buffalo.**
- It mainly infects buffalo but has been known to **infect cows and humans.**
- BPXV can be spread by sand flies and midges, and studies showed that the **virus can also infect guinea pigs and suckling mice.**
- The **zoonotic disease endemic to India,** (first case globally recorded was in India in 1934) has its root in smallpox vaccines.
- Live virus used to inoculate buffaloes to produce the smallpox vaccine in India evolved into buffalopox over time.
- The first sample of the virus was isolated in 1967 and the WHO's Joint Expert Committee on Zoonoses declared it an important zoonotic disease the same year.
- When the virus infects milk animals it causes mastitis which reduces milk yield and the working capacity of draft animals.
- In humans the virus causes lesions that are mainly confined to the hands, forehead, face, buttocks, and legs.
- Human-to-human transmission has not been reported.
- Milking of infected animals is one of the major modes of spread.
- Exposure to infected laboratory animals or from laboratory accidents, such as needlestick injuries or self-inoculation of mucous membranes can also lead to an infection.

- A vaccinia virus (VACV) case was recorded by WHO from India in September 2020 and VACV belongs to the orthopoxvirus family of which buffalopox is a close variant.
- Zika virus, dengue, Japanese encephalitis, rubella and chickenpox are other diseases classified in the same group.