

Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV)

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In news- According to WHO, Saudi Arabia reported 11 cases of MERS-CoV from January till July this year in Riyadh, Hafar Albatin and Taif.

About MERS-CoV-

- **It is a viral respiratory disease caused by a novel coronavirus.**
- MERS-CoV is the second one in the 21st century to infect humans.
- It was reported in 2012 in Saudi Arabia.
- The first coronavirus was SARS-CoV-1 that caused the SARS outbreak in 2002-2004 and was spread by civets.
- MERS-CoV is a **zoonotic virus**, which means it is a virus that is transmitted between animals and people.
- **Dromedary**, also known as the one-humped camel or Arabian camel, **is the reservoir of the MERS coronavirus.**
- The origins of the virus are not fully understood but, according to the analysis of different virus genomes, it is believed that it may have originated in bats and was transmitted to camels sometime in the distant past.
- Humans in direct or close contact with these camels get infected by this coronavirus.
- MERS-CoV is also **transmitted from human to human.**
- MERS-CoV has a high **mortality rate; nearly 35 per cent** of those infected with it have died.
- Like COVID-19, this coronavirus **also causes severe**

health complications in patients with underlying chronic medical conditions such as diabetes, renal failure, chronic lung disease and those who are immunocompromised.

- Typical MERS symptoms include fever, cough and shortness of breath and though Pneumonia is common, it may not always present.
- Some laboratory-confirmed cases of MERS-CoV infection are reported as asymptomatic, meaning that they do not have any clinical symptoms, yet they are positive for MERS-CoV infection following a laboratory test.

Dromedary/one-humped camel –

- It is a large even-toed ungulate, of the genus *Camelus*, with one hump on its back.
- It is the tallest of the three species of camel.
- The species' distinctive features include its long, curved neck, narrow chest, a single hump (compared with two on the Bactrian camel and wild Bactrian camel), and long hairs on the throat, shoulders and hump.
- The coat is generally a shade of brown.
- The hump, 20 cm tall or more, is made of fat bound together by fibrous tissue.