

17– 12 – 2024

News: Disease X

- A December 2024 outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), causing over 400 deaths, raises concerns about Disease X.

Disease X

- Disease X is a **hypothetical term by WHO in 2018 for an unknown pathogen capable of triggering a global pandemic, highlighting the need for preparedness against emerging diseases.**
- **Origins:** Emerged after the 2014–2016 West African Ebola epidemics.
- **Sources:** Can originate from viruses, bacteria, parasites, fungi, or prions. Over 300 emerging diseases since 1940, 70% zoonotic.
- **Risk Factors:** High biodiversity regions, weak healthcare (e.g., Congo Basin), global connectivity, zoonotic spillovers, deforestation, agriculture, antimicrobial resistance, bioterrorism, lab accidents, and climate change complicate predictions.

Mitigation

- Strengthened surveillance, healthcare systems, and platforms like CEPI are vital for rapid detection and response.

- Global cooperation, equitable access to resources, and frameworks like WHO's pathogen list, Pandemic Treaty, and Nagoya Protocol are essential for preparedness.