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A Shankar IAS Academy Initiative

Prelim Bits 17-05-2017

National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction

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- The multi-stakeholder NPDRR was constituted by the Government in 2013. NPDRR is **chaired by the Union Home Minister** and Minister of State in-charge of Disaster Management in the Ministry of Home Affairs is the Vice Chairperson of NPDRR.

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- The main functions of the NPDRR are:\n

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- To review the National Disaster Management Policy and progress made in the field of Disaster Management from time to time.

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- To appreciate the extent and manner in which the Disaster Management Policy has been implemented by the Central and State Governments, and other concerned agencies, and to give appropriate advice in the matter.

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- To advise on coordination between the Central and State Governments/UT Administrations, local self-governments and civil society organizations for Disaster Risk Reduction.

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- The National Platform aims to bring together the whole range of India's disaster risk community.

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- It will help in sharing of experiences, views and ideas, present findings of research and action and explore opportunities for mutual cooperation in the field of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR).

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Biosensor to control drug levels

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- Stanford scientists have developed a new biosensor that continuously monitors and delivers life-saving drugs in the body in real time, ensuring that the patient receives the correct dosage.
- The new technology has three basic components: **a real-time biosensor** meant to continuously monitor drug levels in the person's bloodstream, **a control system** to calculate the right dose and **a programmable pump** that delivers just enough medicine to maintain a desired dose.

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Immunotherapy

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- Scientists have discovered a simple and practical way to kill cancer cells by using light to steer immune cells to attack the tumours.
- Immunotherapy is different from radiation or chemotherapy. Instead of directly killing cancer cells, immunotherapy **tells the immune system to act in certain ways by stimulating T cells to attack the disease.**
- But the problem is that immunotherapy can cause the immune system to overreact or under-react.
- Recently, scientists have conducted a study to understand and develop light-sensitive molecules (**channelrhodopsin**) that could efficiently guide T cells towards tumours.

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Keezhadi excavation

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- Keezhadi in **Sivaganga district** was chosen for excavation and artefacts unearthed by the ASI pointed to an ancient civilisation that thrived on **the banks of the Vaigai.**

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- Carbon dating of charcoal found at the Keezhadi site established that the settlement there belonged to **200 BC**.
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- The excavations thus proved that urban civilisation had existed in Tamil Nadu since the Sangam age.
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- The Union Ministry of Culture has announced that the third phase of excavation will begin in this month and go on for three years.
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