

Spike in vector-borne diseases

What is the issue?

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• Many vector-borne diseases, such as chikungunya, dengue, malaria and others, in many parts of the country onset much before the usual time this year.

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- Delhi alone has witnessed 92 confirmed cases of chikungunya and dengue, with 38 deaths, since January. \nphi
- Usually, such diseases spike during the rainy season due to conditions favourable for the proliferation of mosquitoes and other vectors. \n

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What are the reasons?

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• It is a clear indication of the health authorities' failure to take necessary preventive action.

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• The premature disease explosion is due to

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1. Poor sanitation,

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- 2. Careless construction activity, \n
- 4. Inefficient solid waste management and n
- 5. The virtual collapse of the mosquito control programme.

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• The most commonly used method to control mosquitoes, is the least effective.

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 It kills only the adults without curbing breeding, which holds the key to containing mosquito population.

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What should be done?

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• Some species of fishes are known to feed on the larvae of the diseasespreading mosquitoes.

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• These should be multiplied and introduced in water bodies where mosquitoes generally breed.

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- China is reportedly using genetically modified male mosquitoes which can kill the females by passing on a killer toxin to them during copulation. \n
- Those living in risk-prone areas should be treated with the use of anti-viral drugs such as Oseltamivir (Tamiflu) and Zanamivir. \n
- These drugs not only shorten the duration and severity of the illness but also serve as virtual vaccines. γ_n
- The alternative systems of medicines can also be looked into. \n
- The Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS) has announced the development a drug called "AYUSH PJ7" that can control dengue.

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Source: Business Standard

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