

CURRENT AFFAIRS

WEEKLY

WEEK: 1
OCTOBER
2021

MAINS

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GS-II GETTING GOVT. AID NOT A FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT: SC

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GEOGRAPHY ■ CYCLONE GULAB

POLITY & GOVERNANCE ■ GETTING GOVERNMENT AID NOT A FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT: SC

■ INDIA'S CAG BECOMES EXTERNAL AUDITOR OF INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY

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■ DARK ENERGY

■ NASA SUCCESSFULLY LAUNCHES LANDSAT 9

■ AKASH PRIME SURFACE TO AIR MISSILE

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— Disclaimer —

The current affairs articles are segregated from prelims and mains perspective, such separation is maintained in terms of structure of articles. Mains articles have more focus on analysis and prelims articles have more focus on facts.

However, this doesn't mean that Mains articles don't cover facts and PT articles can't have analysis. You are suggested to read all of them for all stages of examination.

CURRENT AFFAIRS ANALYST

WEEK- 1 (OCTOBER, 2021)

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ONLINE & OFFLINE

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for UNDER GRADUATES

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NEERAJ KUMAR**23** OCTOBER 1B, 2nd Floor, Pusa Road Karol Bagh, New Delhi-110005, (Adjacent to Karol Bagh Metro Gate No. 8)Visit: www.iasscore.in **8448496262**

SECTION: A

(MAINS)

CURRENT AFFAIRS

THE ATLANTIC NIÑO'S ROLE IN INDIA'S ERRATIC MONSOON

CONTEXT:

Once again the deficiency in the monsoon prediction has made life difficult for the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD). Farmers from Madhya Pradesh has threatened to take IMD to court for doing an inaccurate forecast of monsoon.

◎ BACKGROUND:

- Lately, India has been observing a deficit in monsoon rainfall.
- The monsoon this year began on June 3rd, which was more or less on time if one considers the past data and the predictions made by IMD for this year.
- But there is a rainfall deficit of up to 30 per cent in Gujrat, Kerala, Jammu and Kashmir, Odisha and the northeast.
- The story is similar for the rest of India, which has been 20 per cent less from being normal.

◎ ANALYSIS:

- Numerous factors influence the monsoon rainfall in India. For example, the **El Niño** and the **La Niña** (these are the extreme phase of **El Niño-Southern Oscillation-ENSO**) are a few of the factors that impact or influence the Indian monsoon. **Arctic warming** and **Atlantic Niño** are two other such phenomenon that affects the monsoon in India.
- Let's delve into the latter two, i.e., **Arctic warming** and **Atlantic Niño**.

Arctic warming:

- The Arctic can influence late-season rainfall and the same has been seen in September, where we have experienced slightly above normal rain across India. There is a possibility that summer sea ice in the Kara Sea region of the Arctic may be resulting in the events of extreme rainfalls in Central India.
- Over the last 30 years, the rate of Arctic warming has been doubled. This phenomenon is known as **Arctic Phenomenon**. But according to the studies, the effect of Arctic warming is not accountable for the deficit that we are experiencing, rather it can be credited for causing slightly above normal rain across India.

Atlantic Niño:

- The warming or cooling of the Atlantic Ocean which is also known as Atlantic Zonal Mode

or Atlantic Niño influences the Kelvin waves in the atmosphere. These waves are nothing but eastward-moving disturbances in the troposphere. Every year from June to August, the warming of the eastern equatorial Atlantic region is observed. But this phenomenon hardly makes the headlines unlike its elder brother, the El Niño.

- In 2014, a study by Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) had tried to establish its impact on the Indian monsoon. The study had shown that there is a sharp decline in the number of low-pressure systems due to **Atlantic Niño**, leading to deficit monsoon.
- Despite the Atlantic and Indian Oceans are not directly connected in the tropics via the ocean, the Atlantic Niño affects the monsoon by producing **atmospheric waves**, which propagate into the Indian Ocean.
- These waves are eastward-moving disturbances in the troposphere. These disturbances then start moving towards the tropical Indian Ocean and either increase or decrease the atmospheric temperature. It results in establishing a temperature gradient between the Indian Ocean and subcontinent and thereby affecting the monsoon.

The above-mentioned **atmospheric waves** affect air temperatures over the Indian Ocean and influence the land-ocean thermal contrast as well as any low-pressure system. It is known to us that there is an inverse relationship between the Indian summer monsoon rainfall and the changes occurring in the Equatorial Atlantic Ocean. **To sum up, if there is a cold phase in the Atlantic, it can bring more rainfall to India and vice versa.**

- **Low-pressure systems or LPSs** originate in the northern Bay of Bengal and are more in number during the active period of the monsoon. A significantly lower number of low-pressure systems has been observed this year, which contribute up to 60 per cent of the seasonal total rainfall over the core monsoon zone.

How did scientists find this?

- It is interesting to know that, about 50 per cent of the droughts that India had faced in the past century have occurred in the years when El Niño was absent. This raises questions about the efficacy of prediction models that primarily rely on El Niño. There is a possibility that it may have been driven by atmospheric disturbances from the North Atlantic region.
- The climatologists have analysed the changes in the sea surface temperature, wind patterns over the Atlantic Ocean and compared them with the Indian monsoon patterns for the past 106 years. Extensive studies have been made to study the relationship between the Atlantic Ocean and the Indian monsoon from 1903- 2010. They divided the years into three equal parts and looked at the emerging trend. The impact has been significantly greater between 1975 and 2010 than earlier.
- Till 1975, **ENSO** used to be considered as the dominant factor affecting the Indian monsoon. It was only after the 1970s, that we had started seeing an increasing influence from the Atlantic Ocean.

El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO) refers to the changes in the pattern of winds and sea surface temperatures over the tropical eastern Pacific Ocean. These changes have been known to influence the climate the tropical countries.

Why this is important?

- Atlantic Niño is an important factor that has a lot to do with monsoon prediction models and forecasters must pay attention to these Atlantic atmospheric variability patterns.
- Often the Atlantic Niños occur during non-El Niño years and this offers an opportunity for IMD to work on their forecast skills in order to make an accurate prediction of the Atlantic Niño.
- The occurrence of Atlantic Niño can be predicted up to three months in advance.
- It is a well-known fact, that there has been a certain relation between El Niño and the Indian monsoon. But there have been many occasions when the El Niño predictions have failed. 1997 is a classic El Niño year but the monsoon was normal. It is important for the India Meteorological Department (IMD) to bring the changes in the Atlantic Ocean into consideration, to increase their prediction accuracy.

● CONCLUSION:

We know that forecasts in a dynamic system with so many variables will never be 100 per cent accurate. But it can be expected that the next version of the forecast system will be able to encapsulate this additional predictability factor-like Atlantic Niño's for a better monsoon forecast. The climatologists are aware of the challenges involving monsoon predictions, and they are working to improve the monsoon forecasting models.

GETTING GOVT. AID NOT A FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT: SC

CONTEXT:

Supreme Court (SC) in its judgement ruled that government aid to an institution is a matter of policy and it is not a fundamental right.

◎ ABOUT

- The judgment came in an appeal filed by Uttar Pradesh against a decision of the Allahabad High Court to declare a provision of the Intermediate Education Act of 1921 unconstitutional.
- The right to an institution, whether owned by a majority or a small community, to receive government assistance is not a fundamental right. Both parties are required to adhere to the terms and conditions of assistance.
- The SC has clarified that if the government made a policy call to withdraw aid, an institution cannot question the decision as a "matter of right".
- Government assistance is a policy decision. It depends on a variety of factors including the interests of the institution itself and the ability of the government to understand this function.
- Lack of funding and lack of funding are factors that are considered appropriate in making any decision while providing assistance, including both the decision to provide assistance and the method of disbursement.
- The bench also said that the decision taken as a policy was considered in the best interests of the public, and that once it was taken, it could not be challenged, unless, in the event of extreme violence, the Constitutional Court was expected to open its hands.

Basis of judgement on withdrawal of aid

- The social grant comes with conditions.
- The institution is free to choose to accept conditional grants or to go its own way.
- If an institution does not want to accept and comply with the conditions accompanying such aid, it is well open to it to decline the grant and move in its own way. On the contrary, an institution can never be allowed to say that the grant of aid should be on its own terms.

Additional Information

- **Article 30** of the Constitution of India (dealing with rights of minorities to establish and administer educational institutions) is subject to its own restrictions being reasonable.
- **Article 30 (1)** All minorities, whether based on religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.
- **Article 30(1A)** deals with the fixation of the amount for acquisition of property of any educational institution established by minority groups.
- **Article 30(2)** states that the government should not discriminate against any educational institution on the ground that it is under the management of a minority, whether based on religion or language, while giving aid.

AYUSHMAN BHARAT DIGITAL MISSION (ABDM)

CONTEXT:

Recently PM Narendra Modi made a nationwide launch of the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission with the introduction of Health ID, which is going to revolutionize the way health services are being provided in our country.

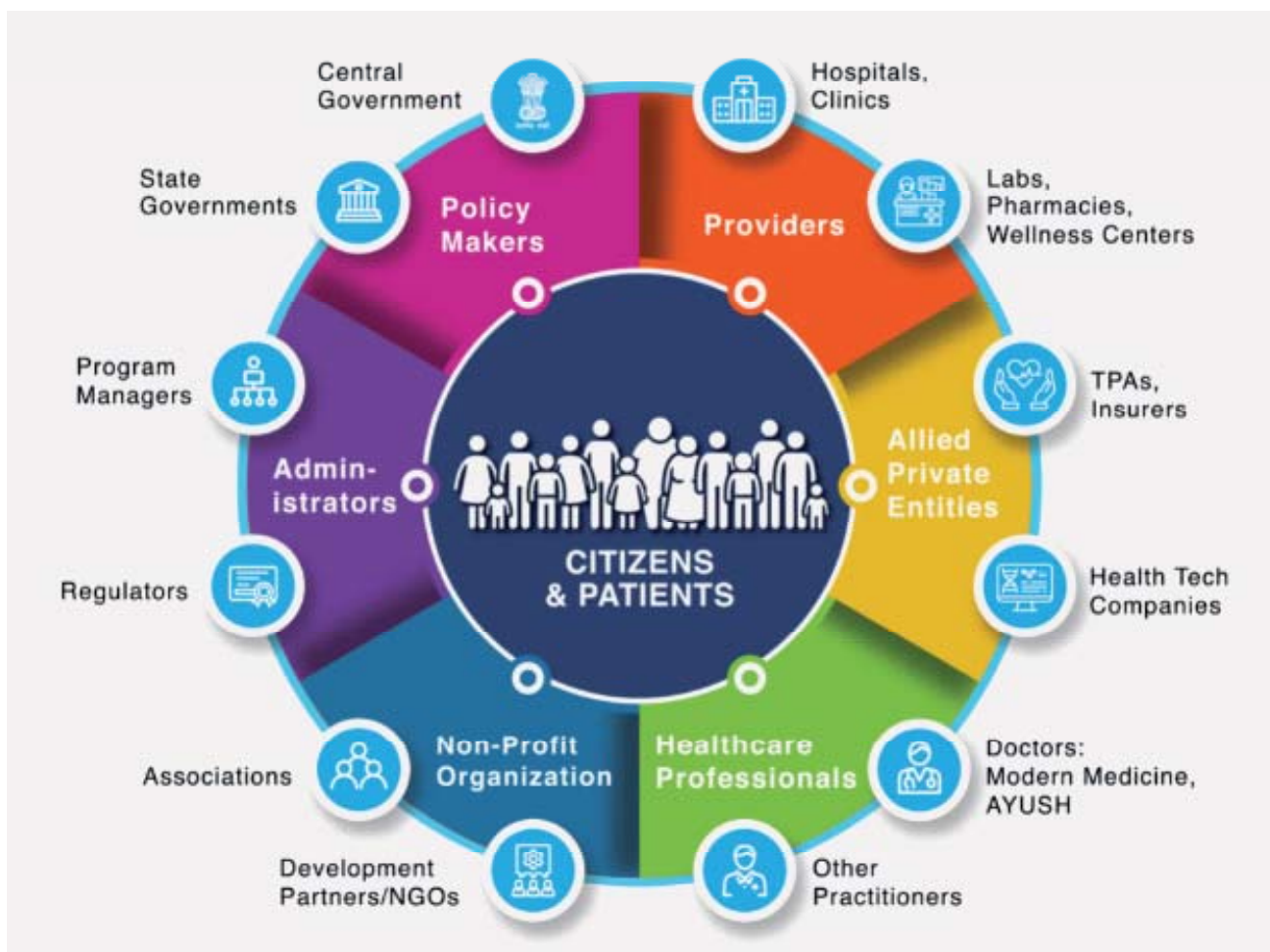
◎ BACKGROUND:

- It is an extension of the Nation Digital Health Mission (NDHM), which was launched from the rampart of Red Fort on August 15th 2020.
- Presently it is been functional in six Union Territories and is in its pilot phase.
- It has the potential to change the functioning of healthcare facilities.
- This Mission is aimed at creating interoperability within the digital health ecosystem, this will do the same role the Unified Payments Interface did in revolutionizing digital payments in India.

◎ ANALYSIS:

What is Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM)?

- It is aimed at developing a structural framework necessary to support the integrated digital health infrastructure of the country. This will help the government to bridge the gap among the various stakeholders of the healthcare ecosystem through digital means.
- India Enterprise Architecture Framework (IndEA)** shall be adopted for developing the ABDM.
- The **National Health Authority (NHA)** under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare is the implementing agency for ABDM.



ABDM Ecosystem

- Under the mission, every citizen shall be provided with a digital health ID in a digitally protected environment. This digital Health ID shall be a repository of all health-related information.
- It will enable the access and exchange of health records of citizens with their consent.

Building Blocks of the ABDM:

- Health ID:** The Health ID will be used to uniquely identify persons, validate them, and organising their medical records (with the informed consent of the patient) across multiple systems and stakeholders.
- Healthcare Professionals Registry (HPR):** It is a repository of all healthcare professionals involved in the delivery of healthcare services across both modern and traditional systems of medicine. Healthcare Professionals Registry will enable healthcare professionals to get connected to India's digital health ecosystem and the certain outcome of it shall be, ensure the ease of doing business for doctors/hospitals and healthcare service providers.

There currently exists no nationally recognized source of data on **Healthcare Professionals** in India that is trusted, digitally enabled and widely adopted by healthcare ecosystem stakeholders. The **Healthcare Professionals Registry (HPR)**. CAQH (Council for Affordable Quality Healthcare) in the USA and General Medical Council (GMC) in the UK are examples where such a repository system is functional.

- Healthcare Facilities Registries (HFR):** It is a repository of health facilities of the country across **different systems of medicine**. It will provide extensive coverage by including both public and private health facilities including hospitals, clinics, diagnostic laboratories and imaging centres, pharmacies, etc.
- Personal Health Records (PHR):** A PHR is an electronic record of health-related information on an individual that adheres to the nationally recognized interoperability standards and that can be drawn from multiple sources while being managed, shared, and controlled by the individual.

The salient features of the Health Records (PHR):

- Creation of Health ID
- Discovery of Health Information
- Linking of health records/ with a given Health ID
- View Health Records
- Management of consents

Management of Health Records in ABDM:

- Use of the Aadhaar is voluntary. One can also use one's mobile number for registration instead of Aadhaar.
- The records shall be stored with healthcare information providers as per their "retention policies", and are "shared" over the ABDM network in encrypted formats only after the beneficiary express consent.
- The user can either permanently delete or temporarily deactivate her health ID.

How will this help citizens?

- The new system will ensure the safety of the medical records of the patients as the records will be stored in encrypted digital formats.
- It can also remove the unnecessary repetition of tests and procedures and bring standardisation in the healthcare facilities.
- The digital ecosystem will enable the host to provide facilities like remote or online consultation, diagnosis and delivery of medicines. This will be a boon to patients residing in small and rural areas, where they have limited access to healthcare facilities.
- With the data in hand, the government can motivate people towards a healthy lifestyle, which also mean that people will have to pay a lower for amount towards their health insurance premiums.

What are the concerns?

- Risk to Adoption:** As it is going to follow the centralized data governance model, the States or other bodies that have robust data sets and digital systems may not be willing to release control of the same, which might lead to resistance. As **health is a state subject** and we have a federal structure, it could bring possible legal hurdles which need to be addressed beforehand.
- Operational Challenges:** Mechanisms, committees and processes may have to be built to manage such a vast dataset. This may require significant investments in technology, human resources, communication efforts and process design. We have to increase the number of PHC and the number of skilled staff to cater for all Indians.
- Data Privacy:** The data privacy processes will need to be carried out with utmost care. Implementation of stringent data protection measures will be crucial to preserving personal information. Though the government is saying that no medical practitioner will be able to access a citizen's health data without his consent, the clouds of concern remain there.

- **Digital divide:** Though India has 118 active mobile users but to make the scheme function to its full potential, it is important to have seamless pan-India internet coverage. In addition, digital illiteracy is still prevalent in rural India and among the tribal population.

◎ **CONCLUSION:**

The outcomes of the mission will be far wider than what is being perceived today. It can be related to

a neural system where the entire ecosystem where the signals will get connected. By establishing an integrated digital health ecosystem, NDHM is going to achieve the goals of National Health Policy 2017 and the Sustainable development goals (SDG) related to health. NDHM will be adding a new chapter in the Indian digital healthcare ecosystem, enabling more effective delivery of healthcare services and moving towards health to all. It is going to provide efficient, accessible, inclusive, affordable, timely and safe disbursement of healthcare services.

PM RELEASES FIRST NON-GM HERBICIDE-TOLERANT RICE VARIETIES

CONTEXT:

To counter the twin challenges of climate change and malnutrition, PM Narendra Modi launched 35 new indigenously-developed crop varieties developed by ICAR. The one that is making it into the news is the country's first-ever non-GM (genetically modified) herbicide-tolerant rice varieties.

◎ BACKGROUND:

- It is alarming to know that, about 45 percent of total irrigation water in India is used for rice cultivation.
- And rampant use of herbicides and pesticides is not only causing the problem to our health but is also negatively affecting our exports.
- This needs to be addressed and the country's first-ever non-GM herbicide-tolerant rice varieties can provide a sustainable solution.
- These are not only disease-resistant but drought and **herbicide-tolerant too**.

◎ ANALYSIS:

About New Varieties of Rice:

- It is the country's first-ever non-GM (genetically modified) herbicide-tolerant rice varieties (**Pusa Basmati 1979** and **Pusa Basmati 1985**) that have been developed by the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI).
- These varieties have been developed by crossing over **Pusa 1121** & **Pusa 1509** with **Robin** (It is a drought-tolerant, heat-tolerant and deep-rooted variety derived from **Nagina 22**.)
- Instead of going GM techniques, ICMR has developed it through mutation breeding. This ensures that no foreign genes are in the new varieties.
- Both the newly developed varieties contain a **mutated acetolactate synthase (ALS) gene**, which enables farmers to spray **Imazethapyr**, which is a cheaper and broad-spectrum herbicide, to control weeds.

Mechanism of its herbicide-tolerance:

- Imazethapyr is used by the farmers to remove broadleaf, grassy and sedge weeds. But it cannot be used on normal rice varieties as it is the incapability to distinguish between weeds and crops, and it might kill the paddy crop itself.
- But the newly developed variety has **mutated acetolactate synthase (ALS) gene**, the herbicide,

in this case, do not bind with the enzyme that this mutated gene produces which inhibits the production of amino acids and hence saves the paddy crop, as the plant continues to grow and only the weed gets killed. This mechanism is known as **herbicidetolerance through mutation breeding**.

- There is no foreign gene involved in the whole process. The plant can now "tolerate" the application of herbicide and selective action of herbicide can be made possible.

Efficient use of water and reduction in labour:

- As the newly developed varieties can be directly seeded, it can save the labour and water input to a great extent as compared to conventional transplanting varieties.
- This is made possible because, in the new varieties, the application of herbicides like Imazethapyr is possible, which eradicate a wide range of weeds.
- In conventional transplanting varieties, the direct application of herbicides is not possible as it cannot distinguish between the rice plants and the weeds. This is one of the primary reasons why paddy seeds are first grown as young plants before planting in the fields.
- Standing water in the nursery provides a natural barrier towards eliminating weeds. But this process is both water and labour intensive as the young seedling is supposed to be maintained in standing water up to a depth of 5 cm for about 25-35 days.
- IARI has stated that the new varieties are herbicide-tolerant and the chemical application will only target weeds, thereby allowing farmers to sow paddy directly just like any other crop.

Direct Seeding Techniques (DSR) requires 30 per cent less water for cultivation, saves up to Rs 3,000 per acre in transplantation in labour charges and about 10 to 15 days in cultivation as it doesn't need to prepare a nursery.

Why this is better than GM herbicide-resistant rice?

- Herbicide-resistant (GM) varieties of rice do have the potential to improve the efficiency of weed management but it also comes with risks.
- There is a risk of potential transfer of genes from Herbicide-resistant varieties to their wild relative. This can result in hybrid varieties of its wild and weedy relative.
- The chance of such occurrences is higher in India because the flowering times of cultivated rice and its wild relatives overlap.
- Such a gene can result in loss of native biodiversity and impact crop invasiveness.
- Herbicide-resistant (GM) varieties of rice may contribute to the problems of crop volunteers and the evolution of herbicide resistance.
- It gives us a cheaper option, as Imazethapyr (herbicide) can be used as a pesticide which is cheaper than **Pendimethalin and Bispyribac-sodium**.
- Not only Imazethapyr has a wider range of weed control, but it is also much safer because the **mutated ALS gene** in the two newly developed varieties is not present in humans or animals.

- **Pre-emergent herbicides:** These are chemicals applied before germination. It can also be applied immediately after sowing using ordinary seed drills. E.g.: pendimethalin.
- **Post-emergent herbicides:** these chemicals are sprayed 20-25 days after the sowing of the seeds. E.g.: Bispyribac-sodium, Fenoxaprop-p-ethyl, etc.

Some Facts about Rice:

- It is mainly a tropical crop and a hot and humid climate is most suitable.

- It requires an average temperature of 20°C to 35°C and annual rainfall of 150 cm.
- Rice is a Kharif crop in India that is sown during the southwest monsoon. The sowing time of rice is June-July and it is harvested in the months of November-December.
- It requires well-drained fertile loamy and clayey loamy soil. Ganga-Sutlej plains and the black soil region of the Deccan are the most suited types for its cultivation.
- Sustainable methods of Rice Cultivation:
- **Fish- Rice farming method:** In this method, the fish are reared in the flooded rice field. This not only reduces the methane emission from the rice field but also provides an alternate source of income to the farmer.
- **System of Rice Intensification method:** In this method, the seedling is planted singly at wider spacing and intermittent irrigation is deployed which adequately keeps the soil moist but not inundated. This method works by reducing the competition among plants and improving the oxygen supply. But it is a labour-intensive method.

◎ CONCLUSION:

We need to opt for both traditional farming and new agricultural practices based on technological advancements. It is time that we fine-tune the balance between the 'back to basic' and 'march to future' approaches. ICAR has played a pioneering role during Green Revolution and has been continuously contributing to Indian agriculture through its research and technology development. The development of crops which are climate-resilient, fortified and uses less water, is important not only for the progress of agriculture but also to address the twin challenge of climate change and malnutrition.

RETHINKING ETHICS

CONTEXT:

The Covid-19 epidemic has become a historical event. It has entered the global imagination as an act of crisis with lack of a literary imagination and absence of an ethical presence.

◎ ABOUT

- The silence of ethics has been deafening, both in policy and in science.
- The epidemic speaks the language of cost-benefit without articulating a sense of suffering.
- Science spoke in the spirit of exponential loss but had no sense of suffering, of care, of compassion. Ethics was the main casualty of the Covid crisis.

How do we retrieve a sense of ethics?

- During the national movement, character-building was linked to nation-building. Goodness was individualized in terms of personal roles and all were ethical narratives.
- One must add institutional and cosmic ethics to it.
- The battle of good and evil needs a different kind of goodness, a goodness based on an innovative and experimental ethics.

In search of new ethics

- Citing two brilliant examples

1. From the book of Suzanne Simard's Finding the Mother Tree

- ▶ Simard shows that the forest is a mode of thought, of communication, of symbiosis, of trusteeship. A tree is no longer timber and paper.
- ▶ It is a way of life. A gift to the living. It is an act of generosity. A dead tree transfers its nutrients to neighbouring trees before it dies.
- ▶ Trees warn one another about beetle invasions. A tree, literally, is a system of trusteeship and reciprocity.
- ▶ There is no such thing as a tree that is a statement of illiteracy and individuality.
- ▶ A tree is a commons.

Explanation: Simard shows that the idea of productivity, which we treat in hallowed terms, is instrumental, short-sighted. A tree is an act of cooperation. A science which sees trees as a lesser order of being is illiterate. Ecology has to be a part of ethics and science. We have to relate to nature in a different way. What is true for the tree is true for the earth. We need an earth ethics which

tribes produced in sophisticated myths. We need an ethics of nature that mimics its generosity, its reciprocity, its celebration of difference. We need to immortalize the ethics of a tree as part of our constitutional ethics. We need myths and cosmologies, which are more life-giving than rights in a contractual sense. Ethically a tree, like any form of life, is a sacrament.

2. Ethics of memory: story occurred in a little town called Chirala, a weaving town close to Hyderabad

- ▶ It was host to an international seminar between historians of science and weavers. On the first day, the seminar followed the predictable distancing but on the third day everyone sat on the floor.
- ▶ The workers also brought their looms to explain. This created a dialog city that was different from the usual hierarchy of seminars. In this gift of conversation, one of the activists told the historian that you have stolen both our livelihood and our theory.
- ▶ He said that we have to reclaim our theories of knowledge to reclaim the forms of life we are losing.
- ▶ The taken-for-grantedness of obsolescence has to be challenged by a new ethics of memory and cognitive justice. We need to create a new ethics of diversity to challenge the linearity, the monoculture that obsolescence is anchored on. We need a new experimental ethics.

Learning: It is only civil society that can create this new dialogic ethics, an ethics that looks at different sciences, theologies, languages, to create life-giving sensibility. Gandhi had a sensibility about it. He talked of accounting (money), accountability (honesty), responsibility, trusteeship and sacrifice. Ethics has to embrace all and go beyond cost-benefit within this world. We go beyond the language of monoculture efficiency and show that an ethics of diversity is far more progressive than the Darwinian idea of the survival of the fittest. This search for a life-giving ethics has to be anarchic, different at different levels of life. One needs to alter the desiccated norms of professional ethics. The feminist reading of the body and nature should educate scientific ethics. It needs to be more than a collector of table manners.

What can be done?

- The university must create a new realm of cognitive ethics, new debates — about violence, suffering and the consequences of knowledge.
- One needs the marginal, the housewife, the victim, the minority, to talk about their apprehensions as well as their stories.
- We need a perspective which is both aesthetic and ethical. For example, every school could be

responsible for saving a lost language or a dying craft.

◎ CONCLUSION

Literature has to create a new language, a poetics of ethics, to challenge the idioms of progress. Thus ethics, in this sense, becomes both resistance and innovation, adding to the life-giving diversity of democracy.

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SECTION: B

(PRELIMS)

CURRENT AFFAIRS

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PM MODI BRINGS 157 ARTEFACTS

© **CONTEXT:** United States presented 157 antiquities and artefacts during Prime Minister's visit to New York for the 76th United Nations General Assembly

What is in the list?

- The list of 157 artefacts includes a diverse set, with items ranging from 1.5 metre bas relief panel of Revanta in sandstone from **10th CE**, to the 8.5 cm tall, exquisite bronze Nataraja from the **12th CE**.
- The items largely belong to the period of **11th CE to 14th CE**, as well as historic antiquities such as the copper anthropomorphic object of **2000 BC**, or the terracotta vase from the **2nd CE**.
- Some 45 antiquities belong to **Before Common Era (BCE)**

List of important items	
Nataraja 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With its design and dimensions based on Hindu writings on art, the sculpture represents Shiva as the lord of dance and dramatic arts. • This bronze four-armed item depicts Abhaya Mudra with his lower left hand thrown across his body, his upper left hand holding a flame in an open palm, and his right hand holding a damaru.
Thirthankaas: 12th Century CE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On a pedestal, three Thirthankaras are seated. • On the back of the prabhaali, there is an inscription • Dates from the 12th century. • It documents Jasadeva's donation of the image to the Brahma gotra. • A Tirthankara is a person who has mastered the samsara, or cycle of death and rebirth, on their own and paved the way for others to follow.
Paper Painting depicting Rasikapriya and Lingodbhava 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Left) This is a large painting on paper by an anonymous painter depicting the scene possibly influenced by the famed works of Rasikapriya composed by poet Keshava Das [1555-1617]. The reverse of the painting bears a rubber stamp marking which clearly states that it once formed part of the personal collection of Maharaja of Bikaner and was duly accessioned in 1964.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (Right) This object is depicting Siva as Lingodhbhava. The image depicts a four-armed Siva within the linga, representing the eternal flame. On the bottom Vishnu is depicted as a boar digging deep into the earth. Brahma is depicted as a swan flying to reach the sky.
<p>Lord Buddha, Quranic verses</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (Left) A red speckled sandstone statue of Lord Buddha from the 7th-8th centuries. (right) Copper and brass plates with Quranic verses.
<p>Surya-Brahma</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (Left) Surya: Riding on a chariot drawn by seven horses. (right) Brahma: Three-headed, two-armed holding Kamandala in left hand and rosary in right hand.
<p>Standing Buddha</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Religious sculptures from Buddhism - Standing Buddha

CYCLONE GULAB

◎ **CONTEXT:** Recently, Cyclone Gulab made landfall on the eastern coast of India.

About cyclone Gulab

- This name gulab is proposed by Pakistan which means (pronounced as Gul-Aab) Rose.
- The Gulab cyclone is formed in the Bay of Bengal.
- In the 22 years of the 21st century, Cyclone Gulab is only the third Bay of Bengal cyclone to make landfall in September, during the active monsoon season.

What are tropical cyclones?

- Tropical cyclones are low pressure systems that form over warm tropical waters.
- They typically form when the sea-surface temperature is above 26.5°C.
- Tropical cyclones can continue for many days, even weeks, and may follow quite erratic paths.
- A cyclone will dissipate once it moves over land or over cooler oceans.

GETTING GOVERNMENT AID NOT A FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT: SC

◎ CONTEXT:

As per a recent Supreme Court ruling, Government aid to an institution is a matter of policy and it is not a fundamental right.

The Case

- The judgment came on an appeal filed by the Uttar Pradesh' government challenging the **2018 Allahabad High Court verdict** holding that **Regulation 101** framed under **The Intermediate Education Act, 1921** is unconstitutional.
- The apex court set aside the HC verdict.

Key-highlights of the Ruling

- Grant of aid brings with it conditions which the institution receiving it is bound to comply with.
- If an institution does not want to accept the conditions, it can decline the grant but cannot say that the grant must be on its own terms.
- A decision to grant aid is by way of policy.
- While doing so, the government is not only concerned with the interest of the institutions but the ability to undertake such an exercise.
- As regards aided institutions, there cannot be any difference between a minority and non-minority one.

Related Information

- **Article 30** of the Indian Constitution states the right of minorities to establish and administer educational institutions.
 - It says: "All minorities, whether based on religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice."
- **Article 30(1)** says that all minorities, whether based on religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.
- **Article 30(1A)** deals with the fixation of the amount for acquisition of property of any educational institution established by minority groups.
- **Article 30(2)** states that the government should not discriminate against any educational institution on the ground that it is under the management of a minority, whether based on religion or language, while giving aid.

INDIA'S CAG BECOMES EXTERNAL AUDITOR OF INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY

◎ CONTEXT:

India's Comptroller and Auditor General G C Murmu is selected as the external auditor of the International Atomic Energy Agency, for a period of six years from 2022 to 2027 after beating Germany and the United Kingdom among other countries.

About the Organization

- IAEA is a prestigious institution that promotes peaceful use of nuclear energy.
- The IAEA is the world's centre for cooperation in the nuclear field. It was set up as the world's "Atoms for Peace" organization in 1957 within the United Nations family. The Agency works with its Member States and multiple partners worldwide to promote the safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear technologies.
- The IAEA Secretariat is headquartered at the Vienna International Centre in Vienna.
- As an independent international organization related to the United Nations (UN) system, the IAEA's relationship with the UN is regulated by a special agreement.

About

- CAG is an independent authority under the Constitution of India.
- He is the head of the Indian audit & account department and chief Guardian of Public purse.
- It is the institution through which the accountability of the government and other public authorities (all those who spend public funds) to Parliament and State Legislatures and through them to the people is ensured.
- Article 148 broadly deals with the CAG appointment, oath and conditions of service.
- Article 149 deals with Duties and Powers of the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India.
- Article 150 says that the accounts of the Union and of the States shall be kept in such form as the President may, on the advice of the CAG, prescribe.
- Article 151 says that the reports of the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India relating to the accounts of the Union shall be submitted to the president, who shall cause them to be laid before each House of Parliament.
- Article 279 – Calculation of "net proceeds" is ascertained and certified by the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India, whose certificate is final.
- Third Schedule – Section IV of the Third Schedule of the Constitution of India prescribes the form of oath or affirmation to be made by the Judges of the Supreme Court and the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India at the time of assumption of office.
- According to Sixth Schedule the accounts of the District Council or Regional Council should be kept in such form as CAG, with the approval of the President, prescribe. In addition these bodies account are audited in such manner as CAG may think fit, and the reports relating to such accounts shall be submitted to the Governor who shall cause them to be laid before the Council.

NATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY (NDMA) CELEBRATED ITS 17TH FOUNDATION DAY

◎ **CONTEXT:** In the 17th foundation of NDMA, the Government launched two new initiatives:

- Aapda Mitra Scheme
- Common Alerting Protocol

Key-highlights of the scheme

• **AapdaMitra Scheme:**

- AapdaMitra scheme is to prepare the public and up-gradation of skills of people who have the zeal to fight against disaster, work for others and save people by risking their lives.
- In this initiative, arrangements can be made to make them aware of all protocols and take immediate action in case of disaster.
- This scheme has been implemented on an experimental basis in 30 flood-prone districts of 25 states.
- Under this initiative, work has been done to prepare 5,500 Aapda Mitras and Aapda Sakhis for flood protection.

• **Common Alerting Protocol**

- It is to give alerts about the location of lightning 6 minutes in advance and a few hours in advance of a large area.
- With the help of this initiative, many lives can be saved if early warning agencies and such warnings are implemented.

GI TAG TO ASSAM'S JUDIMA WINE RICE

◎ **CONTEXT:** Judima, a home-made rice wine of Assam's Dimasa tribe has become the first traditional brew in all of northeast to bag a Geographical Indication (GI) tag.

Key -points about Judima

- Judima is a rice wine made from sticky rice, which is steamed and mixed with traditional herbs called Thembra (Acacia pennata).
- The wine is a specialty of the **Dimasa tribe** of the state and has a distinct sweet taste.
- It takes around one week to prepare.
- It can be stored for years.
- It is a local traditional drink, the citizens wanted to brand it and ensure its preservation for the future and that's why they formed a group and applied for the GI tag.

Other Recent GI Tagged Products from Assam

- Chokuwa Rice of Assam (2019)
- KajiNemu (a type of lemon) (2020)

CENTRE RELEASES INDIA'S AIRSPACE MAP FOR DRONE OPERATIONS

◎ **CONTEXT:** Ministry of Civil Aviation released India's airspace map for drone operations.

- ◎ **ABOUT:**
- The drone airspace map is an interactive map of India that demarcates the yellow and red zones across the country.
 - The airspace map may be modified by authorized entities from time to time.
 - Anyone planning to operate a drone should mandatorily check the latest airspace map for any changes in zone boundaries.
 - The drone airspace map is freely available on the digital sky platform to all without any login requirements.
 - The map is available on DGCA's **digital sky platform** at <https://digitalsky.dgca.gov.in/home>.

Green Zone

- Green zone is the airspace upto 400 feet that has not been designated as a red or yellow zone; and upto 200 feet above the area located between 8-12 km from the perimeter of an operational airport.
- In green zones, no permission whatsoever is required for operating drones with an all-up weight upto 500 kg.

Yellow Zone

- Yellow zone is the airspace above 400 feet in a designated green zone; above 200 feet in the area located between 8-12 km from the perimeter of an operational airport and above ground in the area located between 5-8 km from the perimeter of an operational airport.
- Drone operations in yellow zone require permission from the concerned air traffic control authority – AAI, IAF, Navy, HAL etc. as the case may be.
- Yellow zone has been reduced from 45 km earlier to 12 km from the airport perimeter.

Red Zone

- Red zone is the 'no-drone zone' within which drones can be operated only after a permission from the Central Government.

- ◎ **BACKGROUND**
- The drone airspace map comes as a follow-through of the liberalized **Drone Rules, 2021** released by the Central Government on 25 August 2021, the **PLI scheme for drones** released on 15 September 2021 and the **Geospatial Data Guidelines** issued on 15 Feb 2021.
 - All these policy reforms will catalyse super-normal growth in the upcoming drone sector.

Significance of the initiative

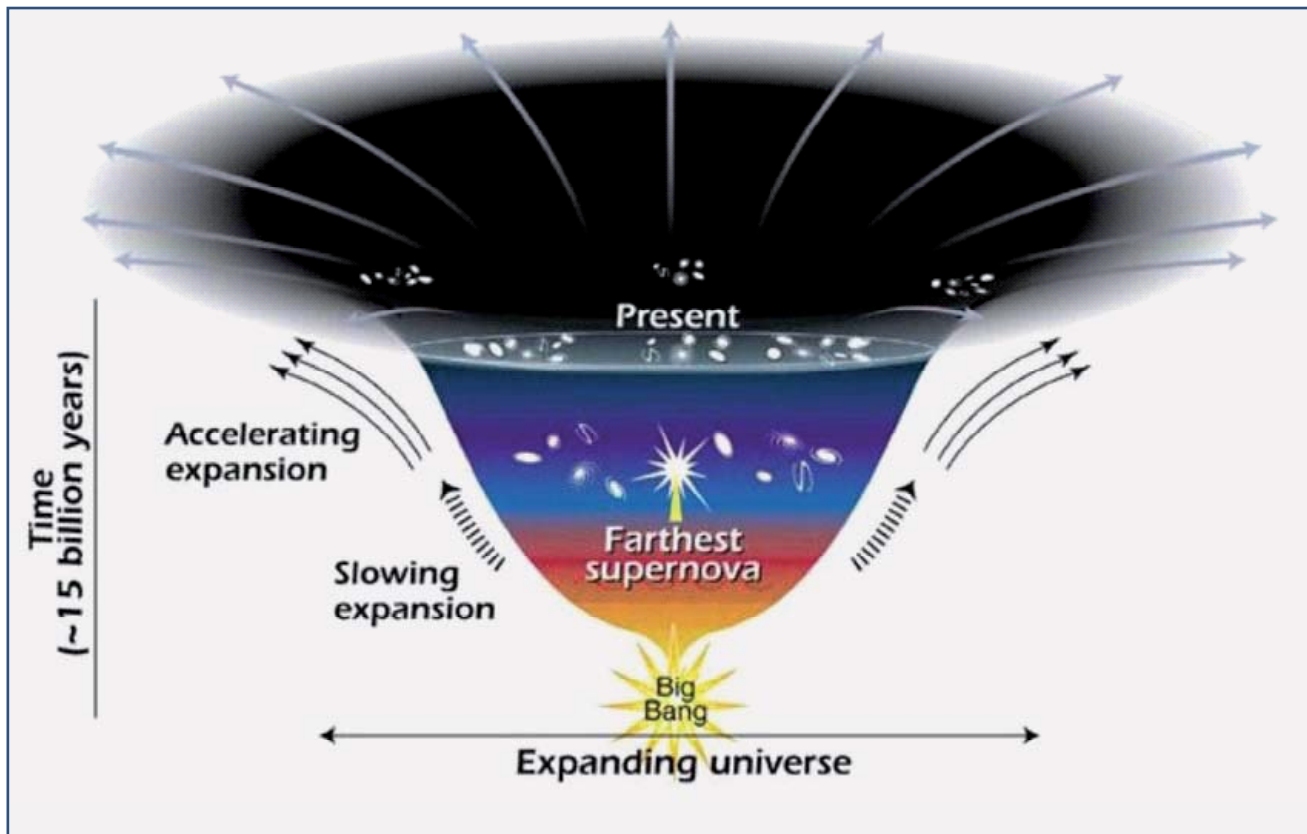
- Drones offer tremendous benefits to almost **all sectors** of the economy. These include – agriculture, mining, infrastructure, surveillance, emergency response, transportation, geo-spatial mapping, defence, and law enforcement to name a few.
- Drones can be significant creators of **employment and economic growth** due to their reach, versatility, and ease of use, especially in India's **remote and inaccessible areas**.

DARK ENERGY

◎ **CONTEXT:** Recently an international team of researchers made the first putative direct detection of dark energy.

What is Dark Energy?

- Dark energy is the name given to the mysterious force that's causing the rate of expansion of our universe to accelerate over time, rather than to slow down.
- That's contrary to what one might expect from a universe that began in a Big Bang.



About the Experiment (XENON1T)

- The experiment named XENON1T, is the world's most sensitive dark matter experiment.
- It was operated deep underground at the INFN Laboratori Nazionali del Gran Sasso in Italy.
- XENON1T, which is designed to detect dark matter, could also be used to detect dark energy.
- Large-scale experiments like XENON1T have been designed to directly detect dark matter, by searching for signs of dark matter 'hitting' ordinary matter, but dark energy is even more elusive."

Dark matter & Dark energy

- While dark matter attracts and holds galaxies together, dark energy repels and causes the expansion of our universe.
- Despite both components being invisible, a lot more is known about dark matter, since its existence was suggested as early as the 1920s, while dark energy wasn't discovered until 1998.

Composition of Universe

In the universe-

- Planets, moons, massive galaxies make up less than 5%
- About 27% is dark matter
- 68% is dark energy

NASA SUCCESSFULLY LAUNCHES LANDSAT 9

◎ **CONTEXT:** **NASA has successfully launched an earth monitoring satellite Landsat 9 from Vandenberg Space Force Base in California.**

- ◎ **BACKGROUND**
- Landsat Program is a series of **Earth-observing satellite missions**.
 - These missions are jointly managed by NASA and the U.S. Geological Survey.
 - This program is the world's longest continuously-acquired collection of data of space-based moderate-resolution land remote sensing data.
 - The mission is to collect data on the forests, farms, urban areas and freshwater of our home planet, generating the longest continuous record of its kind.
 - Landsat data have contributed to our understanding of Earth in many ways — from measuring the speed of Antarctic glaciers, to tracking the use of water crop fields in the Western US, to monitoring deforestation in the Amazon rainforest.

About LANDSAT 9

- LANDSAT 9 program is a partnership between NASA and Earth Resources Observation and Science Center, north of Sioux Falls.
- The Landsat 9 joins Landsat 8 and these satellites will together collect images of Earth's surface.
- It will take 8 days to capture the whole Earth.
- The main focus is repeating global observations for monitoring, understanding and managing Earth's natural resources.
- Landsat 9 aboard the two instruments- the Operational Land Imager 2 (OLI-2) and the Thermal Infrared Sensor 2 (TIRS-2).
 - **OLI-2**
 - ▶ OLI-2 is a push broom sensor that can see the light that we can't see.
 - ▶ It captures sunlight reflected off Earth's surface and studies the visible, near-infrared, and short wave infrared portions of the spectrum.
 - **TIRS-2**
 - ▶ It is an instrument that has a four-element refractive telescope and photosensitive detectors that capture thermal radiation and help study the Earth's surface temperature.

AKASH PRIME SURFACE TO AIR MISSILE

◎ **CONTEXT:** **The Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO) successfully tested a new version of Akash Surface to Air missile Akash Prime from the Integrated Test Range at Chandipur, Odisha.**

About Akash Prime (New Generation)

- The Akash Prime is a medium-range mobile **surface-to-air missile (SAM) system**.
- **Developed by:**DRDO
- **Produced by:**Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL)
- **Operational range:**27-30 km
- **Flight altitude:** around 18 km
- The new version is equipped with an indigenous active **Radio Frequency (RF)** seeker for improved accuracy, as compared to the existing Akash System.
- It is a more reliable performer under a low-temperature environment at higher altitudes.

About Akash missile

- The development of the Akash SAM was started by the DRDO in the late 1980s which is a part of the **Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme**.
- Akash is primarily a Short Range Surface to Air Missile
- This is built to provide air defense cover to the vulnerable areas.
- AKASH Weapon System can engage Multiple Targets in Group Mode or Autonomous Mode.
- It is a medium range nuclear capable supersonic missile.
- The missile system can target aircraft up to 30 km away or at altitudes up to 18,000 mts.
- It is in operational service with the Indian Army and the Indian Air Force.

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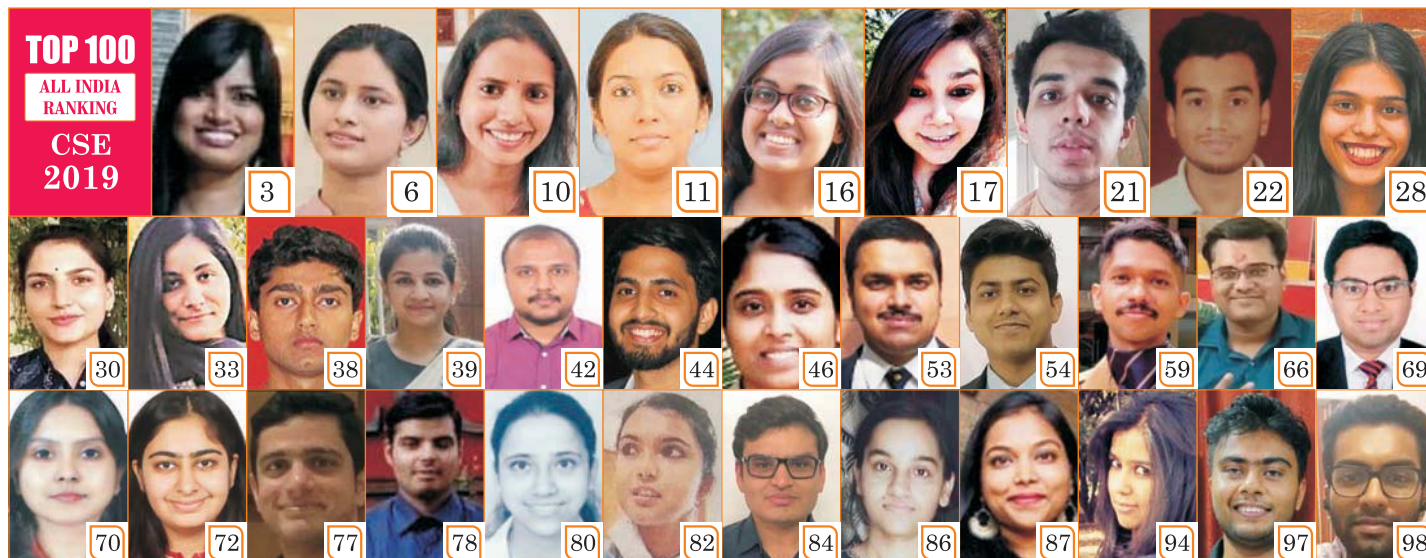
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