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## **GIST OF IMPORTANT REPORT**

# **REFORMS IN URBAN PLANNING CAPACITY IN INDIA**

**Report by: NITI Aayog**

**For Civil Services Examination**

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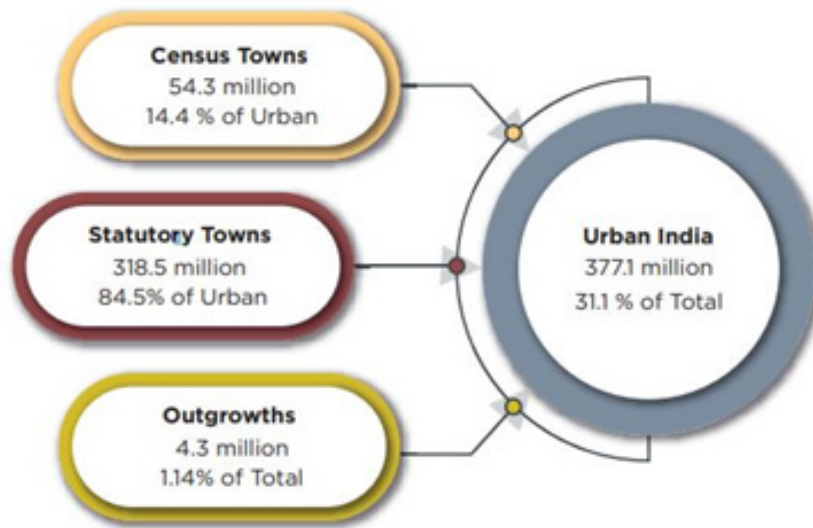
# REFORMS IN URBAN PLANNING CAPACITY IN INDIA

Recently, The NITI Aayog launched a report on measures to ramp up urban planning capacity in India, recommending a set of short to long term interventions that can create an enabling environment for planning in India.

## About the Current Status

- India is the second largest urban system in the world: with almost 11% of the total global urban population living in Indian cities.
  - ▶ This is still more than highly urbanised countries/regions like the United States, Japan, Western Europe, and South America.
- The United Nations in 2019: estimated that India will surpass China as the world's most populous country by 2027.
  - ▶ Also, India's urbanisation is poised to accelerate in the coming decades. During 2011–36, urban growth will be responsible for 73% of the rise in total population.
- Economic transformation: The country has reached a turning point in its journey of its economic transformation wherein half of the country would be 'urban' in a few decades.
- Urban growth: is expected to contribute to 73% of the total population increase by 2036.
- Covid-19 revealed the dire need for planning and management of our cities: with an emphasis on the health of citizens.
- Nature of transformation: census towns contributed over 30% of the net increase in urban population between 2001 and 2011 indicating the nature of transformation that is taking place in the rural areas.
- India is transitioning from a mostly rural to a quasi-urban country: This poses challenges for sustainable development and at the same time presents a great opportunity for leveraging the benefits of urbanisation with robust systems in place.

## Composition of Urban Population



## Population and Levels of Urbanisation of India and Other Countries

S. No.	Country	Total population (in millions)	Urban* population (in millions)	Percentage urban
1	2	3	4	
1	World	7,632.81	4,219.81	55.28
<b>Advanced economies</b>				
2	United States	326.77	268.78	82.26
3	Germany	82.29	63.62	77.31
4	Japan	127.19	116.52	91.61
5	United Kingdom	66.57	55.52	83.39
<b>Emerging market and developing economies</b>				
6	China	1,415.05	837.02	59.15
7	India	1,354.05	<b>460.78</b>	34.03
<b>Continents/regions</b>				
8	North America	363.84	298.99	82.17
9	South America	428.24	360.35	84.14
10	Western Europe	194.07	154.99	79.86

### India's Global Commitments

- Cities play a decisive role in achieving India's commitments to global agendas, such as
  - ▶ United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030;
  - ▶ UN-Habitat's New Urban Agenda; and
  - ▶ The Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

- **The SDGs specifically Goal 11:** (making cities inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable) promote urban planning as one of the recommended methods for achieving sustainable development.
  - ▶ They include a new focus on participatory and integrated planning for urban areas, peri-urban areas, and rural areas.
- **The New Urban Agenda adopted at Habitat III in 2016:** puts forth principles for the planning, construction, development, management, and improvement of urban areas.
- **The Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC):** relies upon the pledges of the countries known as National Determined Contributions (NDCs).
  - ▶ India's NDC includes the goals to reduce the emission intensity of country's GDP by 33 to 35 percent by 2030 from 2005 level. Urban areas hold a key in such massive emission reduction.
- **India's National Growth Targets:** Several growth targets of India reflect the need for concerted action for fulfilling the full potential of the urban economy.
  - ▶ economic growth target: USD 5 trillion economy by 2024,
  - ▶ Employment target: total workforce estimated to be 0.64 billion by 2030, of which 0.26 billion to be employed in urban areas.
  - ▶ Infrastructure targets: creation of 11 large industrial corridors as part of the National Industrial Corridor Programme, several multi-modal logistic parks, etc., and
  - ▶ Environmental protection targets: river rejuvenation, clean air in cities, etc. Strategic spatial planning will be instrumental in attaining India's growth targets, sustainable development, and to prevent negative externalities of urbanisation.
- **National Infrastructure Pipeline:** The Ministry of Finance had launched the National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP) for FY 2020–25 to facilitate infrastructure projects in the country with a projected investment of Rs 111 lakh crore during the period 2020–25.
- **Focus on Urban Local Bodies, 15th Finance Commission:** The 15th Finance Commission's report, 'Finance Commission in Covid Times Report' noted that cities are engines of economic growth and adopted a differentiated approach in the allocation of grants to urban local bodies (ULBs).

## Levels of Planning

### ■ At the city level

- ▶ **Land use planning:** development plans, master plan, town planning schemes, building construction permits, development control regulations, inter-agency coordination local area plans for redevelopment of inner-city areas, heritage conservation, environmental improvement etc.
- ▶ **Mobility planning:** comprehensive mobility plans (including parking strategies, adoption of intelligent transportation systems), planning of bus/rail rapid transit systems, etc.
- ▶ **Environmental infrastructure planning:** city sanitation plans, water supply infrastructure plans, solid waste management plans etc.
- ▶ Implementation of various government schemes and programmes such as SAAPs and formulation of GIS-based master plans under AMRUT scheme
- ▶ Public outreach including participatory planning and grievances redressals.

### ■ At the regional level

- ▶ Land use planning: district/metropolitan development plans, regional plans: district development plans, metropolitan development plans, industrial area plans (industrial regions/SEZs, tourism management plans).

- ▶ Regional infrastructure: planning of highways, metropolitan transportation planning, planning of multi-modal logistic parks, etc.
- ▶ At the National/State level
- ▶ Policy framework such as National Urban Transport Policy, National Housing and Habitat Policy, etc.
- ▶ Design of programmes/missions such as the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT), Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), Smart Cities Mission (SCM), Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM)
- ▶ Strategic/Project planning.

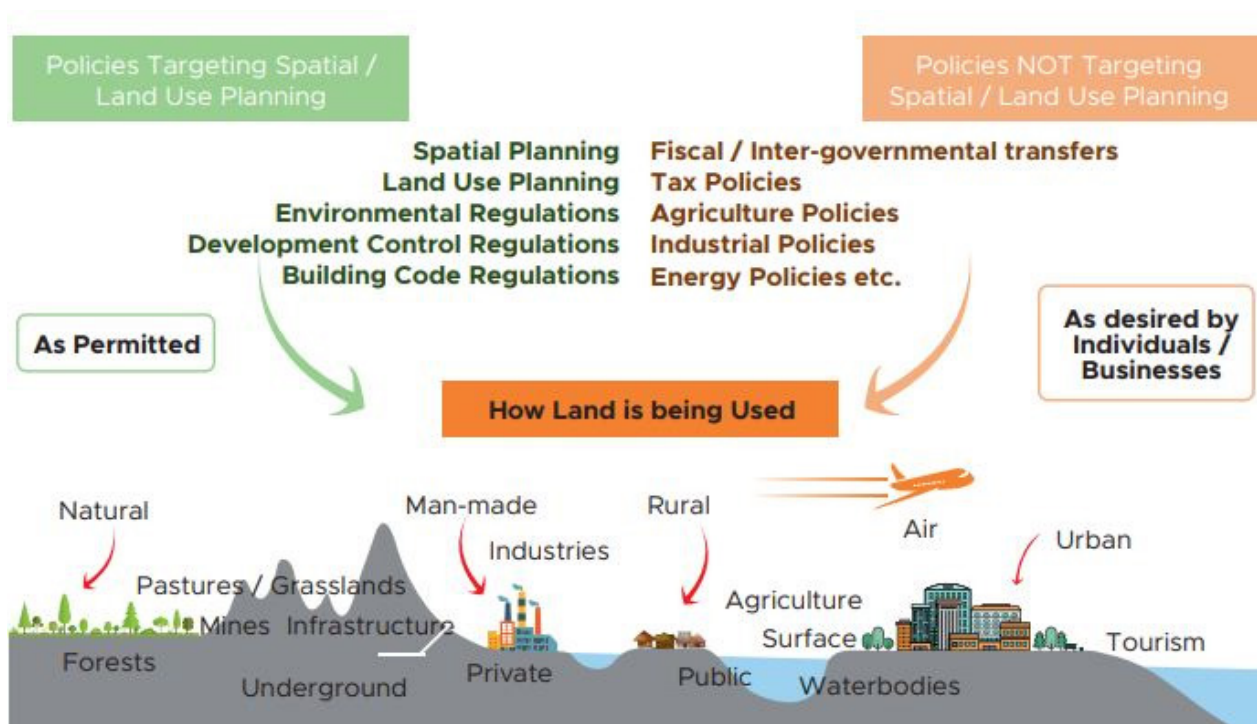
## ■ Issues/ Challenges

- ▶ **Pressure on poor population:** Over the years, cities have expanded and become burdened by the stresses and strains of unplanned urbanization, the brunt of which is faced by the poor and the marginalised, the biodiversity and the economy.
- ▶ **Lack of adequate urban planning:** Issues like lack of availability of serviced land, traffic congestion, pressure on basic infrastructure; extreme air pollution, urban flooding, water scarcity and droughts are not merely a reflection of infrastructural shortcomings in the cities.
  - These issues indicate a deep and substantial lack of adequate urban planning and governance frameworks.
- ▶ **Lack of government efforts:** A lot of efforts have been made by the Centre and the State Governments in the urban sector. However, urban planning, which is the foundation for the integrated development of cities, citizens, and the environment, has not received adequate attention.
- ▶ **Basic services for all:** As the State and city governments continue to solve urban issues in a fire fighting mode, urban areas struggle to achieve 'basic services for all'.
- ▶ **For long-term sustainable urban transformation:** systemic issues need to be identified and addressed.
  - India's urban story may be lauded globally or suffer irreversible damages in the next 10-15 years depending upon corrective policy measures and actions taken at the beginning of this decade.
- ▶ **Governing issues:** A significant proportion of urbanization in the country is unacknowledged and unaddressed.
  - Almost half of the urban settlements are census towns, that is, they continue to be governed as 'rural' entities.
- ▶ **Vulnerabilities:** Small and medium towns face vulnerabilities due to rapid growth and inadequate planning.
- ▶ **Lack of proper definitions:** Several studies have indicated that the current definitions of 'urban' are not reflective of the extent of urbanization that the country has already witnessed.
- ▶ **Seventy-Fourth amendments Act 1992:** The transfer of the urban planning function from States/UTs to elected urban local governments did not happen as was envisaged through the Constitutional (Seventy-Fourth amendments) Act 1992.
  - The existing framework has become complex, which often leads to overlapping of functions, lack of accountability and coordination, time delays, resource wastage, etc.
- ▶ **Lack of master plan:** Master plans are statutory instruments to guide and regulate the development of cities and are critical for managing urbanization as well as 'spatial sustainability'.
  - However, 65% of the urban settlements do not have any master plan. This leads to piecemeal interventions, haphazard constructions, urban sprawl, and environmental pollution, which can further aggravate issues such as traffic congestion, flooding, etc.
- ▶ **Updating without any proper evidence:** Urbanizable/developable land is costly as well as limited in supply. City governments guide and regulate development through planning regulations and building bye-laws.
  - In many cities, development control regulations were formulated several decades ago and have been

updated arbitrarily without sufficient empirical evidence on their impacts.

- ▶ **Land records:** In urban areas, land is confronted with competing uses due to market forces, social necessities, as well as environmental concerns. If the land use plan of a city diverges from the status of land records, it may not get implemented on ground.
- ▶ **Lack of expertise:** Massive capacities for problem-solving, innovation, and ideation are required to address the present and future challenges in the planning and management of cities, towns, villages and their infrastructure.
- ▶ It may not be feasible to create such capacities in the public sector given the size and scale of urbanisation in India.
- ▶ **Lack of private participation:** Over the years, many private sector companies developed in India in the domains of architecture, civil engineering and construction. However, the ecosystem of the private sector in urban planning domain has remained under-developed.
- ▶ **An inadequate number of urban planners in the State planning machineries:** and lacks of multi-disciplinary teams are serious issues. Also, in several States, ironically, a qualification in town planning is not even an essential criterion for such jobs.

## Spatial and Non-Spatial Factors Affecting Land Use



### The key definitions

- **Statutory Towns:** Settlements that are notified under law by the concerned State/UT government and with local bodies such as municipal corporations, municipalities, municipal committees, etc., irrespective of their demographic characteristics.
- **Census Towns:** Settlements that are classified as urban in the census after they have met the following criteria: a minimum population of 5,000, at least 75% of the male 'main workers' engaged in non-agricultural pursuits, and a density of population of at least 400 persons per sq. km. These are governed as villages and do not necessarily have urban local bodies.

- Outgrowths: These are viable units, such as a village, clearly identifiable in terms of their boundaries and locations. Outgrowths possess urban features in terms of infrastructure and amenities, such as pucca roads, electricity, etc., and are physically contiguous with the core town of the urban agglomeration.

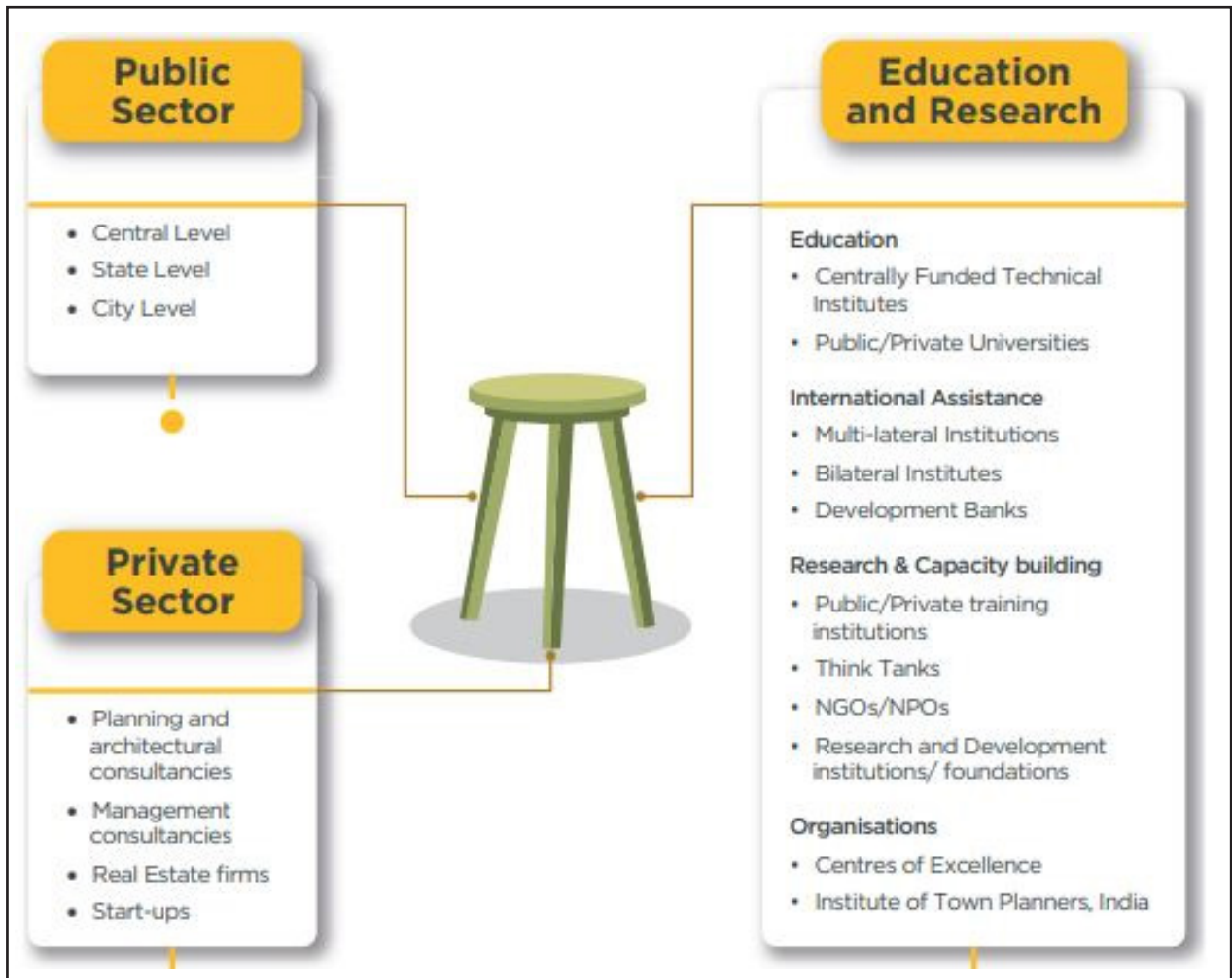
## The recommendations of the Advisory Committee/ Suggestions

- **Programmatic intervention for planning of healthy cities:** Every city must aspire to become a 'healthy city for all' by 2030. This would need a convergence of multi-sectoral efforts at the intersections of spatial planning, public health, and socio-economic development.
  - ▶ Also, the focus of planning urban development must encompass not only the million-plus cities but also hundreds of small- and medium-sized towns.
- **Programmatic intervention for optimum utilization of urban land:** All the cities/towns under the proposed 'Healthy Cities Programme' should strengthen development control regulations based on scientific evidence to maximize the efficiency of urban land.
- **Ramping up of human resources:** The public sector must have an adequate workforce in terms of quantity and quality to tackle the challenges of urbanization. The Advisory Committee recommends that the States/UTs may need to
  - ▶ Expedite the filling up of vacant positions of town planners, and
  - ▶ Additionally sanction town planners' posts as lateral entry positions for a minimum period of 3 years and a maximum of 5 years to close the gaps.
- **Ensuring qualified professionals for undertaking urban planning:** Urban areas and their developmental complexities have increased over the years.
  - ▶ The States may need to undertake requisite amendments in their recruitment rules to ensure the entry of qualified candidates into town planning positions.
- **Mainstreaming capacity-building activities and rejuvenation of capacity building centres:** Concerted efforts are required by the States/UTs to ensure regular capacity building of their town planning staff.
  - ▶ Also, the existing centres of excellence established by MoHUA and State-level training institutions need to be further strengthened to regularly build the skills and expertise of urban functionaries.
- **Re-engineering of urban governance:** There is a need to bring in more institutional clarity and also multi-disciplinary expertise to solve urban challenges.
  - ▶ The Advisory Committee recommends the constitution of a high-powered committee to re-engineer the present urban-planning governance structure.
- **Revision of Town and Country Planning Acts:** Most States have enacted the Town and Country Planning Act, which enables them to prepare and notify master plans for implementation.
  - ▶ These Acts provide a fundamental basis to transform cities, regions, and their character. However, many need to be reviewed and upgraded to the latest advancements in technology, urban and regional planning approaches and policies.
- **De-mystifying planning and involving citizens:** Due to the planning process being highly technocratic in nature, the public's participation in it is limited.
- While it is important to maintain the master plans' technical rigour, it is equally important to demystify them for enabling citizen participation at relevant stages.
- **Building local leadership:** It is important to enlighten the city leadership about the significance of urban planning and public policy to achieve integrated development, mobilize finances, ensure affordable housing, and make cities more economically productive, liveable as well as inclusive.
- **Steps for enhancing the role of private sector:** The private sector needs to be evolved to heighten its role and employment opportunities for planners.



- Adequate capacities for project planning, risk structuring and negotiating to enter into public-private partnerships or manage private consultancies need to be built at various levels in the public sector.

## Components of Cumulative Capacity of Urban Planning in India



### ■ Steps for strengthening the urban planning education system

- History of human settlements in the Indian subcontinent must be taught to all young planners in a more exhaustive and analytical manner: Educational institutions must also focus on teaching economics to future planners in a way that equips them to understand its applications in urbanisation, urban development and policy.
- The Central universities and technical institutions: in all the States/ UTs of the Indian Himalayan Region may be encouraged to establish a 'department of planning and public policy' and offer postgraduate degree programmes (M.Tech.) with specializations in 'hill area planning', 'environmental planning', 'regional planning', and 'rural area planning'.
- Synergize with the Ministries: All such institutions may synergize with the Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Panchayati Raj and respective state rural development departments/directorates and develop demand-driven short-term programmes on rural area planning.
- National Institute Ranking Framework: 'Planning' as an umbrella term, including all its specializations such as environment, housing, transportation, infrastructure, logistics, rural area, regional, etc., or any other nomenclature approved by AICTE, should be included as a discipline under the National Institute Ranking Framework (NIRF) to encourage healthy competition among the institutions.

- The growth and development of the educational institutions need mentoring from peers: The Advisory Committee recommends that the institutions in the domain of planning education may identify prominent international and national institutes, connect with them and sign MoUs for mentoring.
- Faculty shortage in educational institutions conducting degree and PhD programmes in planning needs to be resolved in a time bound manner: In this regard, the faculty recruitment rules, particularly of the centrally funded technical institutions, need to be reviewed and strengthened with suitable provisions.

### Schemes/Programmes Related

- **Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP):** All CRPs are annually trained for conducting the People's Plan and Mission Antyodaya (MA) survey, which is jointly carried out by MoRD and MoPR.
  - ▶ The data collected from MA surveys highlights the gaps in infrastructure and services available in the village (up to village level granularity) and supports in informed planning of Gram Panchayats.
- **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS):** The geospatial plan of components permitted under MGNREGS is prepared at the gram panchayat level and is based on a ridge-to-village approach.
- **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Livelihood Mission:** The Village Poverty Reduction Plan is a community demand initiative prepared by self-help groups and integrated with GPDP.
- **Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana:** Under this scheme, a Village Development Plan (VDP) is prepared by charge officer.
- **Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission (SPMRM):** An Integrated Cluster Action Plan (ICAP) and spatial plan are being prepared under the Mission.
  - ▶ The spatial plan is a long-term settlement plan, which is prepared based on the principle of sustainable and optimum use of regional resources.
- **AMRUT Mission:** To ensure that every household has access to a tap with the assured supply of water and a sewerage connection.
- **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban:** Addresses Urban housing shortage among the Urban Poor including the Slum Dwellers by ensuring a pucca house to eligible urban poor.

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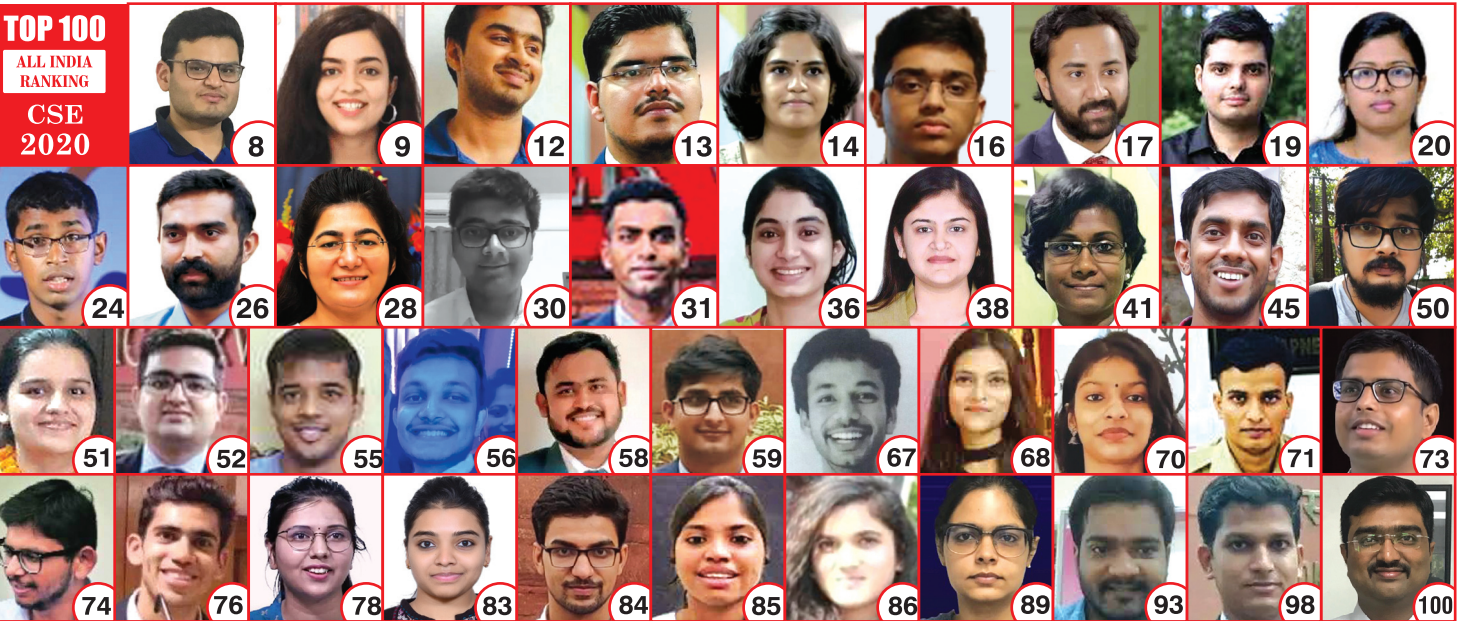
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