



Aquamation

For Prelims: Aquamation, Nobel Peace Prize, greenhouse gases, Desmond Tutu water cremation, green cremation, flameless cremation, chemical cremation.

For Mains: Noble prize, Apartheid

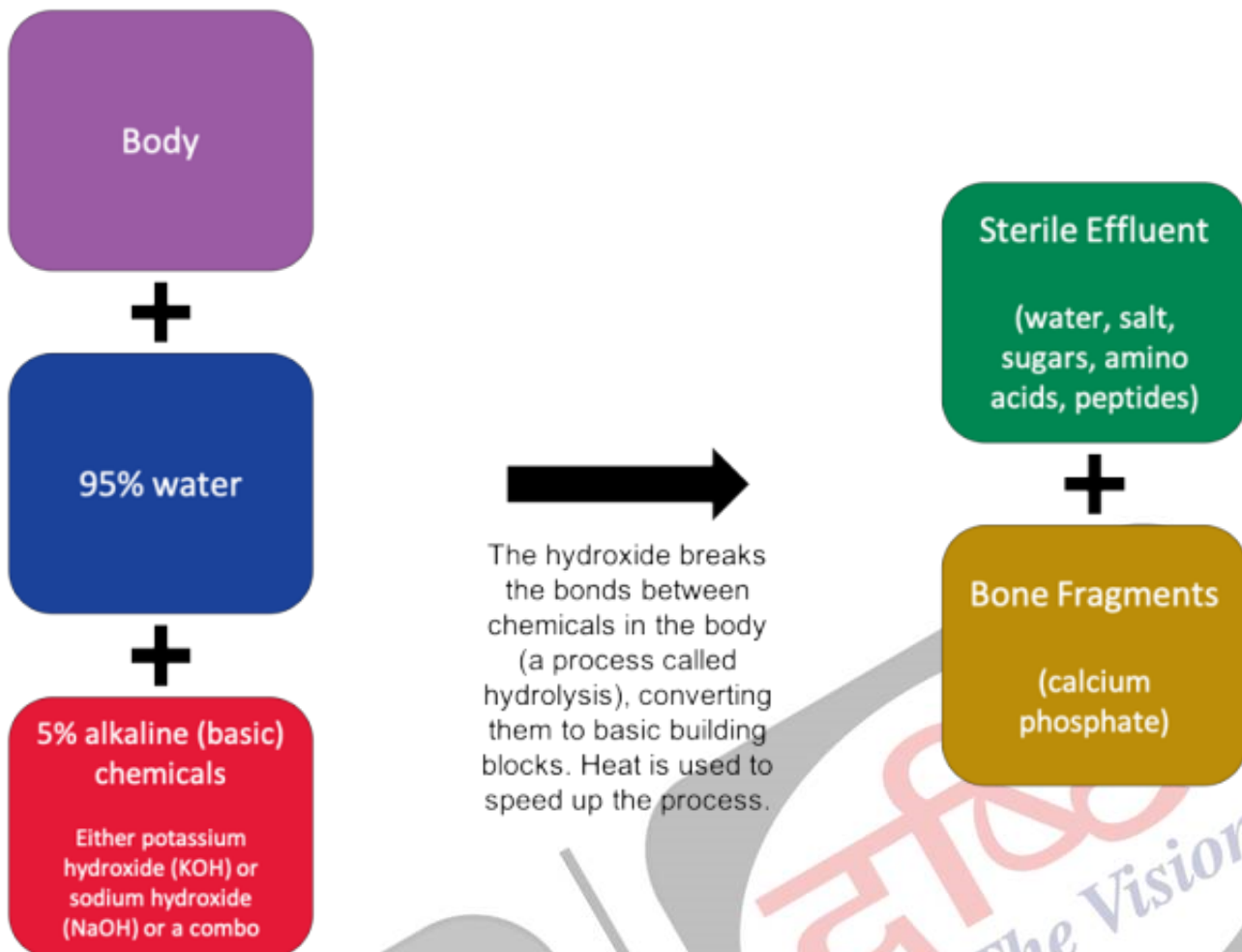
Why in News

Recently, the [Nobel Peace Prize](#) winner **Anglican archbishop** and **anti-apartheid campaigner Desmond Tutu** died. He was very passionate about **protecting the environment and taking necessary actions**.

- In concurrence of his passion to save the environment, **his body underwent aquamation**, a green alternative to traditional cremation methods.
- The process of aquamation uses energy which is **five times less than fire**. It also reduces by **about 35% the amount of greenhouse gases** that are emitted during cremation.

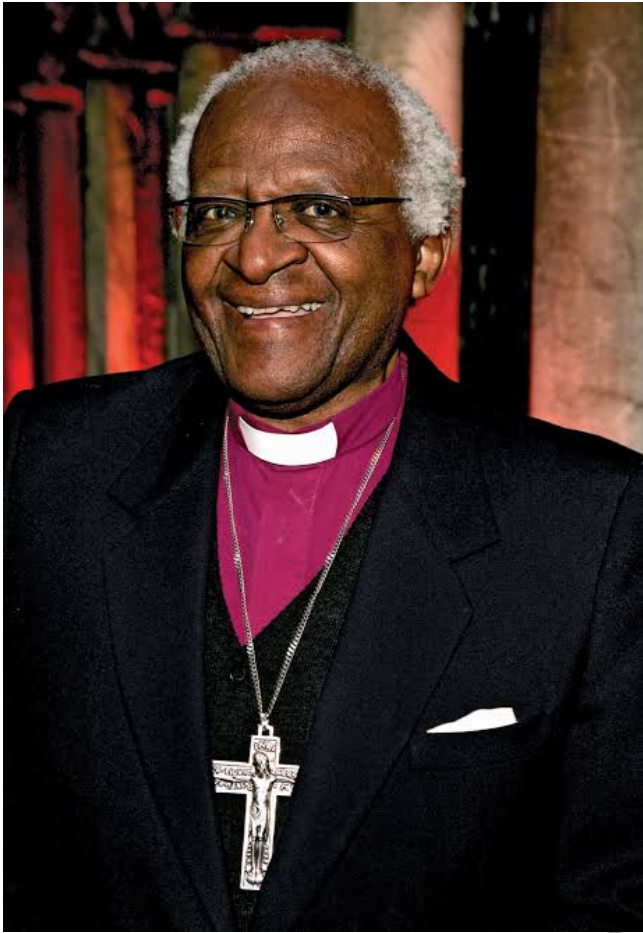
Key Points

- **About Aquamation:**
 - It is a process in which the body of the deceased is **immersed for a few hours in a mixture of water and a strong alkali** in a pressurized metal cylinder and heated to around **150 degree centigrade**.
 - The combination of **gentle water flow, temperature and alkalinity accentuate the breakdown of the organic materials**.
 - The process leaves behind **bone fragments and a neutral liquid called effluent**.
 - The effluent is sterile, and contains salts, sugars, amino acids and peptides.
 - There is **no tissue and no DNA** left after the process completes.
- **Background:** The process was developed and **patented in 1888 by Amos Herbert Hanson**, a farmer who was trying to develop an ingenious way to make fertilizer from animal carcasses.
 - The first commercial system was installed at **Albany Medical College in 1993**.
 - Thereafter, the process continued to be in use by hospitals and universities with donated body programmes.
 - This process is referred to as alkaline hydrolysis or as **Cremation Association of North America (CANA)** (an international non-profit organisation) calls it **flameless cremation**.
 - The process is also known as **water cremation, green cremation or chemical cremation**.



Desmond Tutu

- Desmond Tutu is one of **South Africa's most well-known human rights activists**, winning the **1984 Nobel Peace Prize** for his efforts in resolving and [ending apartheid](#).
 - He is known as the **voice of the voiceless for Black South Africans**.
- When **Nelson Mandela** was elected as the nation's first Black president—he appointed Tutu chairperson of the **Truth & Reconciliation Commission**.
 - The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was a **court-like restorative justice body** assembled in South Africa in 1996 after the end of apartheid.
- As the chairman, Desmond Tutu has formulated his objective as “a **democratic and just society without racial divisions**”, and has set forward the following points as minimum demands:
 - Equal civil rights for all
 - The abolition of South Africa's passport laws
 - A **Common system** of education
 - The cessation of forced deportation from South Africa to the so-called “**homelands**”.



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