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Current affairs summary for prelims

23 April, 2024

National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation

Context: *All organ transplants, from living or deceased donors, will receive a unique NOTTO-ID for both donor and recipient.*

➢ **New Directive on Organ Transplantation:**

- All organ transplants, from living or deceased donors, will be assigned a unique NOTTO-ID.
- Hospitals must generate this ID from the NOTTO website (www.notto.mohfw.gov.in).
- The directive aims to curb commercial organ dealing, particularly involving foreign citizens.
- The Union Health Ministry issued the directive to all States and Union Territories in response to reports of malpractice and an increase in organ transplants related to foreigners in India.
- Stricter monitoring of such transplants by local authorities is emphasised.

➢ **Key Guidelines:**

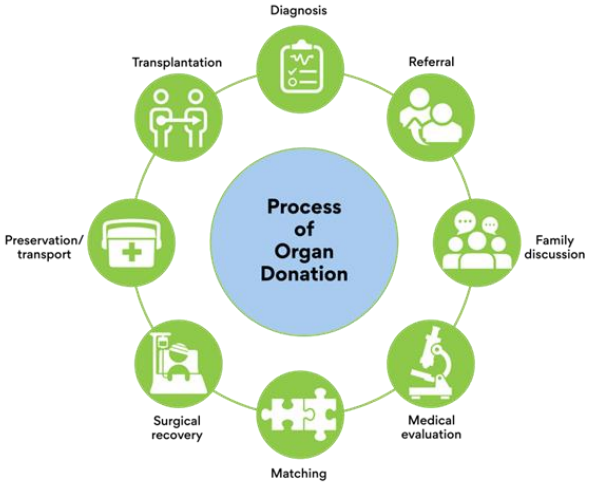
- The Appropriate Authority of each State, as per the Transplantation of Human Organs and Tissues Act (THOTA), 1994, must investigate transplants involving foreign nationals.
- NOTTO-ID is mandatory for organ allocation in deceased donor transplants and should be generated within 48 hours for living donor transplants.
- Regular inspections of registered hospitals for transplant/retrieval are mandated by the appropriate State authority.
- Violations of THOTA, 1994 and its rules may result in the suspension of registration for performing organ transplants at involved hospitals.

➢ **Data Sharing and Compliance:**

- States are urged to share transplant data, including cases involving foreigners, with NOTTO monthly.
- Foreign nationals require prior approval from the authorisation committee for organ removal or transplantation under THOTA.
- Senior embassy officials certify the relationship between donor and recipient, and assess donation authenticity, ensuring no financial transactions or coercion.

➢ **Verification Procedures:**

- Embassy officials verify the authenticity of donor and recipient documents.
- Assessment by the authorisation committee and senior embassy officials ensures donation is voluntary, without financial gain, and free of coercion or pressure.



Change in Health Insurance Rules

Context: *IRDAI instructed insurance companies to extend regular health policies to all, including seniors, students, and children.*

➢ **New Health Insurance Provision:**

- IRDAI instructs insurers to design products for various demographics, including seniors, students, children, and maternity.
- Insurers are encouraged to offer coverage for individuals with pre-existing medical conditions.
- This directive aims to promote comprehensive coverage for entire families, including parents, rather than restrictive offerings for seniors.

➢ **Impact and Benefits:**

- The move is expected to benefit both senior citizens and working adults caring for aging parents.
- It will improve access to quality healthcare services and encourage more Indians to secure their loved ones against serious medical conditions and illnesses.
- Insurance companies mobilized Rs 1.09 lakh crore in premium in the year ended March 2024, with government schemes accounting for Rs 10,577 crore.

➢ **Previous Age Limit for Health Coverage:**

- Until now, IRDAI norms capped health insurance buying age at 65.
- After 65, obtaining insurance came with tougher conditions, including mandatory pre-insurance health check-ups and no cover for pre-existing ailments.
- Premiums increased with age, forcing those older than 50 to accept limited cover and removal of certain insurance riders.

Face to Face Centres
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- **Considerations for Senior Citizens:**
  - Individuals with no medical conditions should seek comprehensive coverage with 100% bill payments and minimal waiting periods.
  - Those with existing health issues should evaluate options from various insurers, considering factors such as network coverage and policy terms and conditions.
- **Challenges in Implementation:**
  - Insurers may not be eager to cater to the 65-plus age bracket, and policies for this demographic may have stringent terms and conditions.
  - Older individuals seeking insurance for the first time may face high premiums and exclusions due to pre-existing conditions.
  - Insurers should align their interests with customer needs to ensure comprehensive and equitable coverage across all demographics.

Star Campaigners

Context: *The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) appointed Sunita Kejriwal, wife of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, as a 'star campaigner' for its Gujarat campaign.*

- **Star Campaigner Guidelines:**
  - Star campaigners are individuals nominated by political parties to campaign in specific constituencies.
  - They are typically well-known and influential figures within the party.
  - Recognised parties can appoint up to 40 star campaigners, while unrecognised parties can appoint up to 20.
  - The list of star campaigners must be submitted to the Election Commission within a week of election notification.
- **Recent Developments:**
  - The Election Commission revoked the star campaigner status of Congress leader Kamal Nath due to violations of the model code of conduct.
  - However, the Supreme Court ruled that the EC cannot revoke the star campaigner status of any candidate.
- **Section 77 of the RP Act:**
  - The Representation of the People Act, 1951 (RP Act) governs expenditure by 'leaders of a political party', commonly known as 'star campaigners'.
  - Star campaigners are typically high-ranking leaders of a political party, but can also include celebrities, as long as they are party members.
  - Recognised national or state political parties can appoint up to 40 star campaigners, while registered unrecognised parties can appoint up to 20.
  - Names of star campaigners must be submitted to the Election Commission (EC) and Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) within seven days of election notification.
  - For multi-phase elections, parties can submit separate lists of star campaigners for each phase, although major parties usually provide a single list applicable for all phases.
- **Expenditure Rules:**
  - Expenses on rallies and travel by star campaigners are covered by the candidate.
  - If a candidate shares the stage with a star campaigner or their name is mentioned during an event, the candidate bears the expenses.
  - Expenses are equally divided among candidates if there are multiple candidates sharing the stage or featured in posters.

News in Between the Lines

Article 142

Recently, the Supreme Court used its extraordinary powers under Article 142 of the Constitution to do "complete justice" to permit the medical termination of pregnancy of a 14-year-old rape survivor in Maharashtra.

About Article 142:

- Article 142 of the Indian Constitution **gives the Supreme Court the power to pass orders** and decrees to ensure "complete justice" in any case.
- It empowers the Court to go beyond its usual limits to settle disputes in a manner that suits the specifics of the case.
- Orders issued under **Article 142 are enforceable throughout India** as prescribed by law or **order of the President**.
- The interpretation and applicability of Article 142 have evolved through various precedents.
- Noticeable uses of Article 142 include settling civil and criminal proceedings, awarding compensation in the **Bhopal Gas Disaster Case**, handing over disputed land in the **Babri Masjid Case** and addressing exceptional circumstances in the **Manohar Lal Sharma v. Principal Secretary case** to uphold the rule of law.

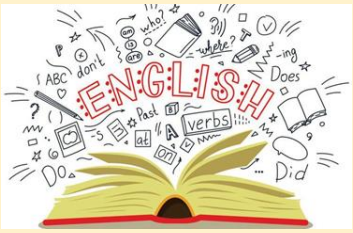
Blackbucks

Recently, Bihar's blackbucks faced water scarcity, but efforts by forest officials to fill waterholes aim to prevent them from straying into human habitats and becoming vulnerable to poaching.

About the Blackbucks:

- Blackbucks (Antilope cervicapra) are **antelopes** native to the Indian subcontinent.
- They primarily **inhabit grasslands, plains and open woodlands.**
- Blackbucks are listed as **'endangered'** in the Red List of Threatened Species by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (**IUCN**), categorized under Schedule I of the **Wildlife Protection Act of 1972**, and included in **Appendix III of CITES.**
- **Males** (bucks) are distinguished by their **black coat,** while **females** (does) have a **lighter brown coat**.
- Both sexes have **long**, **twisted horns**, with those of males being longer and more curved.
- They are primarily **herbivorous**, **feeding on grasses**, **leaves** and occasionally agricultural crops.
- India's **protected areas** for blackbucks include **Gir National Park in Gujarat**, **Ranthambore National Park in Rajasthan**, **Kanha National Park in Madhya Pradesh**, **Ranebennur Blackbuck Sanctuary in Karnataka**, **Vallanadu Wildlife Sanctuary in Tamil Nadu** and **Kaimur Wildlife Sanctuary in Bihar**.

English Language Day



English Language Day is celebrated on April 23rd every year.

About English Language Day:

- English Language Day was **established in 2010 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)** to recognize the importance of the English language and to promote multilingualism and cultural diversity.
- The day commemorates the birth and **death anniversary of William Shakespeare**, a famous English playwright and poet.
- The **theme** for English Language Day in 2024 is **"Using technology for multilingual learning: Challenges and opportunities".**
- It **promotes the use of English** as a tool for international communication, education and collaboration, while also **encouraging respect for linguistic diversity** and the preservation of endangered languages.

Siachen Glacier

Recently, the Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday visited Siachen glacier and carried out on-the-ground assessment of the security situation and also interacted with soldiers deployed there.

About Siachen Glacier:

- Siachen Glacier is **located in the eastern Karakoram Range in the Himalayas**, forming the northernmost part of the Indian-administered region of Jammu and Kashmir.
- It **runs from northwest to southeast**, originating at an altitude of 6,115 meters at the base of the **Indira Col** West and descending to 3,570 meters.
- It is the **world's highest battlefield**, situated at altitudes ranging from 16,000 to 20,000 feet.
- The Siachen Glacier is the **second-longest glacier** in the **world's non-polar areas**, **following the Fedchenko Glacier in Tajikistan.**
- Control over Siachen Glacier provides a strategic advantage due to its proximity to the Line of **Control (LoC) between India and Pakistan**.

	▪ It serves as a **crucial barrier** against any potential threat from **Pakistan** and **China**. ▪ **Operation Meghdoot**, launched by the Indian Army on **April 13, 1984**, aimed to secure control over the Siachen Glacier, thwarting Pakistan's attempts to occupy the region. ▪ Since then, both India and Pakistan have maintained military presence in the area, resulting in a prolonged conflict **known as the Siachen Conflict.** ▪ The **Nubra River originates from the Siachen Glacier**, contributing to the region's hydrology. ▪ It is characterized by **extreme weather conditions**, including freezing temperatures, blizzards, and high-altitude sickness.
Place in News **Poland**	*Recently, Poland's President Andrzej Duda said that his country is ready to host NATO's nuclear arms after Russia reinforced its armaments in neighbouring Belarus and the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad.* **Poland (Capital: Warsaw)** **Location:** Poland is a country located in Central **Europe**. **Boundaries:** Poland shares its borders with **Ukraine** and **Belarus** (East), **Germany** (West), the **Baltic Sea** (North), **Lithuania** the **Russian exclave of Kaliningrad Oblast** (Northeast), the **Czech Republic** and **Slovakia** (South). **Physical Features:** ▪ The highest point in Poland is **Rysy**, which is located in the Tatra Mountains along the border with Slovakia. ▪ Some major rivers in Poland include the **Vistula**, **Oder**, **Warta**, **Bug** and **Narew**. ▪ Some major lakes in Poland include Lake **Sniardwy**, **Lake Mamry**, **Lake Lebsko**, **Lake Wigry** and **Lake Mikolajskie**. ▪ Poland possesses significant mineral resources including **coal**, **copper**, **silver**, **zinc**, lead, salt, and **natural gas**, etc. **Membership:** Poland is a member of various international organizations including the **European Union**, **NATO** (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) and the **United Nations, WTO (World Trade Organization), etc.**

POINTS TO PONDER

- With which country did India recently sign an agreement to operate a large research hub in New Delhi? **– Russia**
- Which country recently tested the Pyoljji-1-2 anti-aircraft missile? **– North Korea**
- In which country is the city of Capri located, as recently seen in the news? **– Italy**
- Who has been appointed as the Director General of the National Security Guard (NSG) recently? **– Nalin Prabhat**
- The Nagorno-Karabakh Region, recently in the news, is located in which mountainous region? **– South Caucasus Range**