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Current affairs summary for prelims

16 July, 2024

Tirzepatide

Context: *Last week, for the first time, an expert committee of India's drug regulator approved the drug tirzepatide.*

Diabetes Drug for Weight Loss

Ozempic and Semaglutide

- In 2017, the US FDA approved Novo Nordisk's Ozempic (semaglutide) for managing type 2 diabetes.
- Ozempic led to weight loss, prompting off-label prescriptions for obesity.
- Social media popularized Ozempic for weight loss, leading Novo Nordisk to explore semaglutide for non-diabetic weight loss.
- In 2021, Novo Nordisk released Wegovy, an FDA-approved obesity treatment with a higher maximum dose of semaglutide than Ozempic.
- Both drugs face global shortages due to high demand.

Tirzepatide and Zepbound

- Eli Lilly's tirzepatide, marketed as Zepbound, is nearing regulatory approval in India.
- In November 2023, the FDA approved Zepbound for obesity, following the success of Eli Lilly's type 2 diabetes medication, Mounjaro.
- Both Zepbound and Mounjaro contain tirzepatide and are used off-label for weight loss.
- Both drugs face global shortages due to high demand.

Semaglutide vs. Tirzepatide

- FDA approved Wegovy (semaglutide) and Zepbound (tirzepatide) for chronic weight management in adults.
- Suitable for obese individuals (BMI > 30) or overweight individuals (BMI 27-30) with related health conditions.
- Administered as under-the-skin injections with gradually increasing dosages (2.4 mg for semaglutide, 15 mg for tirzepatide).
- Both drugs help manage glucose levels and promote satiety through GLP-1.
- Tirzepatide also boosts GIP, enhancing weight regulation.

Global Trials for Zepbound

- Phase three trials involved 2,539 participants, randomized to receive placebo or tirzepatide (5 mg, 10 mg, or 15 mg).
- After 72 weeks, the 5 mg group lost 15% body weight, 10 mg group lost 19.5%, and 15 mg group lost 20.9%.
- 91% of the 15 mg group achieved at least 5% weight loss.
- The placebo group saw only a 3.1% weight reduction.
- Significant improvements in cardiometabolic measures were observed.

Regulatory Clearance and Phase IV Trial

- Zepbound received regulatory clearance in India based on global trial data, including Indian participants.
- An expert committee requires a phase IV, post-marketing surveillance trial to monitor side effects and efficacy in India's diverse population.

Side Effects of Zepbound

- Common side effects: nausea, diarrhea, vomiting, constipation, abdominal pain, indigestion, injection-site reactions, fatigue, allergic reactions, belching, hair loss, heartburn.
- Risk of thyroid tumors, including thyroid cancer.
- Not suitable for individuals with a history of medullary thyroid carcinoma (MTC) or Multiple Endocrine Neoplasia syndrome type 2 (MEN 2).
- Zepbound is prescription-only and not for cosmetic weight loss.

Weight Regain After Stopping Medication

- Obesity drugs are not one-time solutions; continued use is necessary for lasting effects.
- Wegovy's STEP 1 extension trial showed significant weight regain after stopping the medication.
- Obesity is a complex, chronic disease requiring lifelong management.

Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India (PM-SHRI) Scheme

Context: *The Education Ministry has halted Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan funds to Delhi, Punjab, and West Bengal due to their reluctance to join the Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India (PM-SHRI) scheme.*

PM-SHRI Scheme Overview

- **Goal:** Empower 14,500 schools across the country with 21st-century skills.
- **Objective:** Provide high-quality, inclusive education that caters to diverse backgrounds, multilingual needs, and varying academic abilities.
- **Function:** Serve as laboratories for the new education policy.
- **Funding:** Centrally sponsored, with a 60:40 cost split between the Union government and states/UTs.

Key Features

- **Infrastructure:** Improvement of school facilities.
- **Early Education:** Balvatika, foundational literacy, and numeracy.
- **Green Schools:** Development of environmentally friendly schools.
- Modern Facilities: Including ICT.
- **Counseling:** Focused on well-being and career guidance.

- **Extracurricular:** Emphasis on sports and arts for every child.
- **Inclusivity:** Appropriate infrastructure for girls and those with special needs.
- **Language Support:** Encouragement of mother tongue and local languages.
- **Teaching Methods:** Holistic, integrated, and learner-centered approaches.
- **Assessment:** A 'School Quality Assessment Framework' to measure progress and performance.
- **Local Integration:** Connecting schools with local entrepreneurial ecosystems and higher education institutions.

Selection Procedure for Schools

- **Eligibility:** All elementary, secondary, and senior secondary schools managed by the Centre, State, UT, or local bodies with a UDISE+ code can apply.
- **Step 1:** State government must agree to implement the NEP in its entirety.
- **Step 2:** Shortlisting of schools that meet minimum benchmarks.
- **Step 3:** Inspection and recommendation by teams from States, Kendriya Vidyalaya, or Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya.
- **Selection Limit:** A maximum of two schools from a block or urban local body.
- **Final Decision:** Made by an expert committee.
- **UDISE:** The Unified District Information System for Education, initiated in 2012-13, is a key management information system for school education.

Benefits for Schools and Students

- **Model Schools:** PM SHRI institutions will serve as model schools embodying the full spirit of the NEP.
- **Holistic Pedagogy:** Experiential, integrated, toy-based, discovery-oriented, learner-centered, and discussion-based teaching methods.
- **Mentorship:** PM SHRI Schools will mentor other schools to spread NEP policies.
- **Technology Integration:** Incorporation of environment-friendly and tech-driven tools.
- **Conceptual Understanding:** Competency-based assessment focused on real-life application.
- **Quality Assessment:** School Quality Assessment Framework (SQAF) will evaluate resource effectiveness.
- **Employment Opportunities:** Collaboration with Sector Skill Councils and local industries for internships and better job prospects.

Passage of Bills in Parliament

Context: *On July 15, Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud agreed to schedule hearings for petitions challenging the Centre's use of the Money Bill route to pass controversial amendments in Parliament.*

What are Bills?

- Bills are proposals for new laws or amendments to existing laws presented for debate and approval in Parliament.
- If a bill passes all required stages in Parliament and receives final approval, it becomes an Act of Parliament.
- **There are four main types of bills:**
  - Ordinary Bills
  - Money Bills
  - Financial Bills
  - Constitutional Amendment Bills

Legislative Procedure in Indian Parliament

- The Constitution of India specifies separate procedures for the enactment of Ordinary Bills, Money Bills, Financial Bills, and Constitutional Amendment Bills.

Passing of Ordinary Bills

- An Ordinary Bill can be introduced in either House of Parliament by any member.
- It must pass through five stages to become an Act.

First Reading

- The member asks for the leave of the House to introduce the Bill.
- The Bill's title and objectives are read out, and it is published in the Gazette of India.
- No discussion occurs at this stage.

Second Reading

- Involves general and detailed scrutiny of the Bill.
- It consists of three sub-stages: General Discussion, Committee Stage, and Consideration Stage.

Stage of General Discussion

- Printed copies of the bill are distributed.
- Principles and provisions are discussed generally, without details.
- **The House can:**
  - Consider the bill immediately or on a fixed date.
  - Refer the bill to a Select Committee or a Joint Committee.
  - Circulate the bill to elicit public opinion.

Committee Stage

- The Select or Joint Committee examines the bill clause by clause and can amend it.
- The committee reports back to the House.

Consideration Stage

- The House considers the bill clause by clause.

- Members can move amendments, which become part of the bill if accepted.

➢ **Third Reading**
- Debate is confined to acceptance or rejection of the bill as a whole.
- If passed, it is transmitted to the Second House for consideration.

➢ **Bill in Second House**
- Passes through all three stages again.
- The Second House can:
- Pass the bill without amendments.
- Pass with amendments and return it.
- Reject the bill.
- Keep the bill pending.

➢ **Deadlock and Joint Sitting**
- If a deadlock arises, the President can summon a joint sitting of both Houses.
- A bill passed by the majority in the joint sitting is deemed passed by both Houses.

➢ **Assent of President**
- The President can give assent, withhold assent, or return the bill for reconsideration.
- If returned and passed again, the President must give assent.

➢ **Passing of Money Bills**
- Money Bills contain only provisions mentioned in Article 110 of the Indian Constitution.
- Can only be introduced in the Lok Sabha by a minister on the President's recommendation.
- The Rajya Sabha can only make recommendations and must return the bill within 14 days.
- The Lok Sabha can accept or reject the recommendations.
- The President can give or withhold assent but cannot return the bill.

➢ **Passing of Financial Bills**
- Financial Bills deal with fiscal matters (revenue or expenditure).

➢ **Financial Bills (I)**
- Similar to Money Bills but follow the legislative procedure of an Ordinary Bill after introduction.
- Can be rejected or amended by the Rajya Sabha.
- The President can summon a joint sitting if there is a deadlock.

➢ **Financial Bill (II)**
- Treated as an Ordinary Bill in all respects.
- Can be introduced in either House without the President's recommendation.
- Requires the President's recommendation at the consideration stage.
- The President can summon a joint sitting if there is a deadlock.

➢ **Passing of Constitutional Amendment Bills**
- Article 368 defines the procedure for amending the Constitution.
- Details are covered in a separate article on Constitutional Amendment Bills.

➢ **Deadlock in Legislative Procedure**
- A deadlock occurs if:
- The other House rejects the bill.
- There is disagreement on amendments.
- The bill is pending for more than six months.
- The President can summon a joint sitting to resolve the deadlock.

NEWS IN BETWEEN THE LINES

Indian Council of Agricultural Research

The two-day-long Foundation and Technology Day of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) began in New Delhi yesterday on 15th of July.

About Indian Council of Agricultural Research:

- The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) was established on **16 July 1929 as** a registered society under the **Societies Registration Act, 1860.**
- It was **formerly known as Imperial Council of Agricultural Research.**
- It operates under the **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare**, Government of India.
- It is the **apex body** for **coordinating**, **guiding** and **managing research** and **education** in agriculture, including **horticulture**, **fisheries** and **animal sciences** across India.
- It has played a pioneering role in ushering the **Green Revolution in India.**
- Through its research and technology development, the country has increased **foodgrain** production by **5.6 times**, horticultural crop production by **10.5 times**, fish production by 16.8 times, milk production by 10.4 times, and egg production by 52.9 times from 1950-51 to 2017-18.
- Its headquarter is located in **New Delhi**

UNRWA

Recently, India released the first instalment of 2.5 million dollars to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for Palestine refugees for the year 2024-25.

About UNRWA:

- The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) is a **United Nations agency** that **provides assistance** and **protection** to Palestinian refugees.
- The UN General Assembly **established UNRWA in 1949** to offer direct relief and works programs for refugees in **Jordan**, **Lebanon**, **Syria**, **the West Bank** and **Gaza**.
- It provides education, health care, relief and social services, camp infrastructure improvement, microfinance, and emergency assistance.
- It is funded almost entirely by voluntary contributions from UN Member States, and the General Assembly has repeatedly renewed its mandate, most recently extending it until **June 30, 2026.**
- Currently, **around 5.9 million Palestine refugees**, mostly descendants of original refugees, access the agency's services, with **over 1 million in Gaza** sheltering in UNRWA schools and other facilities.

Indian Newspaper Society

Recently, the Prime Minister of India inaugurated Indian Newspaper Society (INS) Towers in Mumbai, Maharashtra.

About Indian Newspaper Society:

- The Indian Newspaper Society (INS) traces its origins to **October 11, 1927,** when it was initially established as The **India**, **Burma & Ceylon Newspapers' London Committee**.
- It is **an independent body** that authenticates circulation figures of newspapers and periodicals in India, while also protecting and promoting press freedom.
- The organization was **renamed the Indian & Eastern Newspaper Society** (IENS) on **October 4, 1935.**
- The primary objective of the INS was to serve as a central body to **promote and protect** the **common interests of newspapers** in **India**, **Burma** and **Ceylon**.
- The Indian & Eastern Newspaper Society was **officially formed on February 27, 1939,** at a meeting held in Statesman House, New Delhi.
- The inauguration was **chaired by Mr. Arthur Moore,** the Editor of The Statesman.
- The founding members of the Society included prominent publications like **Bombay Chronicle, The Times of India**, **The Rangoon Gazette**, **The Hindu** and The Statesman.

Gram Nyayalayas

Recently, the Supreme Court has directed the States/UTs and their High Courts for detailed reports on gram nyayalayas, which aim to provide swift and affordable justice in rural areas and ease the burden on local courts.

About the Gram Nyayalayas:

- Gram Nyayalayas are **village courts established to provide speedy and easy access** to justice in rural areas of India.
- These courts were established under the **Gram Nyayalayas Act, 2008,** passed by the Parliament of India.
- The Constitution of India, **under Article 39-A,** mandates free legal aid to the poor and weaker sections of society to ensure justice for all.
- Although the initial target was to establish **5000 Gram Nyayalayas**, only **about 200 are currently functional.**
- The **114th report of the Law Commission of India recommended** the establishment of Gram Nyayalayas to provide speedy, substantial, and inexpensive justice to the common man.
- Each Gram Nyayalaya functions as a **court of Judicial Magistrate of the first class.**
- The **presiding officer, known as Nyayadhikari,** is appointed by the State Government in consultation with the High Court.
- Gram Nyayalayas are established for every Panchayat at the intermediate level or for a group of contiguous Panchayats in a district.
- The **jurisdiction of Gram Nyayalayas is specified by the State Government** in consultation with the respective High Court.

Place in News

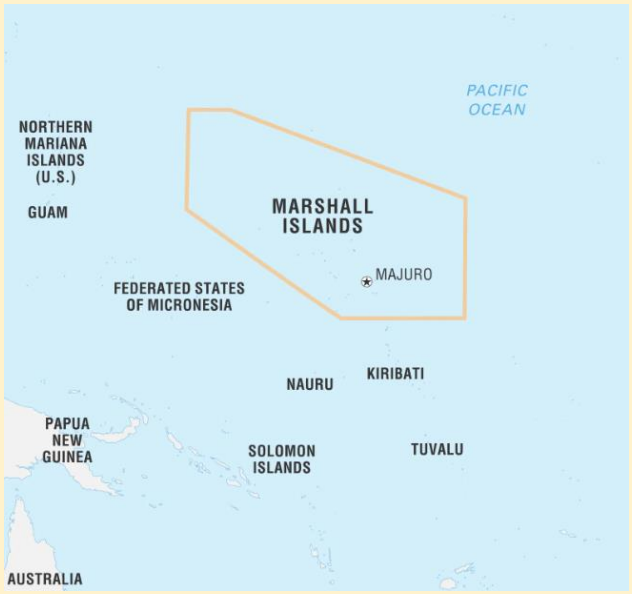
Marshall Islands

Recently, India signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Marshall Islands to implement 4 community development projects.

Marshall Islands (Capital: Majuro)

Location: Marshall Islands, a country of atolls and islands, is an island country **west of the International Date Line** and Located in the Pacific Ocean.

Boundaries: The country shares maritime boundaries with the **Federated States of Micronesia** (West), **Wake Island (N**orth), **Kiribati** (Southeast) and **Nauru** (South).



Physical Features:

- The highest point in the Marshall Islands is **Likiep Atoll.**
- The Marshall Islands have a **tropical climate**.

Independence: The Marshall Islands gained independence from the United States on October 21, 1986, through the Compact of Free Association.

Membership: The Marshall Islands is a member of various international organizations, including the **United Nations** (UN), **the Pacific Islands Forum** (PIF) and **the International Monetary Fund** (IMF).

Language: The official languages of the Marshall Islands are **Marshallese** and **English**.

POINTS TO PONDER

- Which country recently won their second consecutive Copa America championship by defeating Colombia? **– Argentina**
- Who won the men's single title at the 2024 Wimbledon Tennis Championships? **– Carlos Alcaraz**
- In which state will India host the first World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit (WAVES) from November 20-24, 2024? **– Goa**
- Project 2025, recently seen in the news, is associated with which country? **– USA**
- Which organization recently approved a $1.5 billion loan to India to develop its low-carbon energy sector? **– World Bank**