Irregularities in Organ Transplantation

Why in news?

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Some irregularities in connection with organ transplantations have been found in the state of Tamil Nadu.

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How has TN been in organ transplantation?

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- Tamil Nadu is a pioneer in orderly and transparent allocation of deceased-donor organs.
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- It has worked consistently to eliminate commerce in kidneys procured from poor living donors.
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- The Transplant Authority of Tamil Nadu has served as a model for other States.
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- The state also offers a subsidy for poor patients for a liver transplant.
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- Every effort must be made to ensure that it retains this high reputation.
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What is the recent finding?

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- The Union Ministry of Health & Family Welfare has found some irregularities in organ transplantation in TN.
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- Preferential allotment of hearts and lungs has been made to foreign patients.
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- Hearts harvested from brain-dead patients were given to foreign nationals admitted to corporate hospitals.

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- International patients get priority in cadaver transplants, bypassing long list of Indians.
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- The Directorate General of Health Services convened a meeting and framed strict guidelines for allocation of organs to foreigners.
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What is the procedure?

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- The provisions are laid out in the Transplantation of Human Organs and Tissues Rules.
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- State governments are expected to ensure that transplantations are done legally and ethically.
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- Citizens enrolled in the State and national waiting lists are prioritised over foreign nationals.
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- Organs go to the most suitable recipients on the rule-based parameters.
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- It is offered to domicile, citizenship, Indian origin and foreign nationality, in that order.
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What lies ahead?

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- There must be an inquiry into how allocations for organ transplants are made in Tamil Nadu.
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- Any inquiry should shed light on the factors that led to the decisions.
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- It should importantly include whether registered citizens were overlooked.
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- Hospitals and professionals engaging in commerce or unethical behaviour should be addressed.
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- It has to cover such issues as the capacity of district-level hospitals to

perform transplants.
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- Arrangements to air-lift organs should also be addressed, since domestic patients are unable to afford flight facilities.
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- Enrolling all domestic patients through State registries should be the priority for the *NOTTO*.
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Source: The Hindu

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Quick Fact

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NOTTO

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- The National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation (NOTTO) functions under the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.
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- It is an all-India apex body for coordination and networking for procurement and distribution of organs/tissues and transplantation.
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