

## Fear of vaccines

### Why in news?

\n\n

A recent judgment in a vaccine compensation case in Europe has ruled that courts may consider vaccines to be the cause of an illness, even in the absence of scientific evidence confirming a link.

\n\n

### What is the case?

\n\n

\n

- A French man vaccinated against hepatitis B developed multiple sclerosis and ultimately died.

\n

- The ruling gave way for consideration of circumstantial evidence in judgements.

\n

- This includes prior health of the patient, absence of family history and alleged numbers of other similar cases.

\n

\n\n

### What is the impact of the judgement?

\n\n

\n

- The EU court verdict has drawn criticisms from various experts.

\n

- Vaccines are among the most effective public health interventions saving millions of lives.

\n

- The minor risks caused by side effects of vaccines far outweigh the benefits.

\n

- The judgement has sown seeds of doubt about proven vaccines.

\n

- The resulting **hesitancy over vaccine** use could cause a **rise in vaccine-**

**preventable diseases** and outbreaks of deadly infections.

\n

\n\n

## **What should be done?**

\n\n

\n

- Public health interventions must be guided by scientific panels.
- All reported side effects of vaccines need to be evaluated scientifically.
- Most countries have now established effective vaccine pharmacovigilance programmes.
- For example India's adverse events following immunization (AEFI) surveillance programme.
- This surveillance programme has helped India to win similar legal battles against pentavalent vaccine use.
- The need of the hour is to ensure effective surveillance, compensation for those affected and to promote public confidence in vaccines.

\n

\n\n

## **Quick Facts**

\n\n

## **Multiple sclerosis**

\n\n

It is an autoimmune disorder in which the body's immune system attacks its own tissues.

\n\n

## **Hepatitis B**

\n\n

It is a potentially life-threatening liver infection caused by the hepatitis B virus (HBV).

\n\n

\n\n

**Source: The Hindu**

\n

