

# UPSC Daily Current Affairs 14 May 2021

## 1. Texas lawmakers approve abortion ban as early as 6 weeks

(Topic- GS Paper II–Social Issue, Source- Outlook India)

### Why in the news?

- Recently, Texas would ban abortions after as early as six weeks and allow private citizens to enforce the rule through civil lawsuits against doctors and others under a measure given final approval by state lawmakers.

### Key highlights of the bill

- It is also called “heartbeat bills”.
- The bill would ban abortions after the first detection of an embryonic “heartbeat.”
- The advanced technology can detect an electric signal flutter as early as six weeks into a pregnancy, even though the embryo isn’t yet a fetus and doesn’t have a heart.
- **According to Medical Expert, an embryo is termed a fetus beginning in the 11th week of pregnancy.**
- A unique provision in the Texas bill prohibits state officials from enforcing the ban.
- Instead, it allows anyone, even someone outside Texas, to sue a doctor or anyone else who may have helped someone get an abortion after the time limit, and seek financial damages of up to \$10,000 per defendant.
- The bill does not punish women who obtain abortions.

### Note:

- Texas law currently bans abortion after 20 weeks, with exceptions for a woman with a life-threatening medical condition or if the fetus has a severe abnormality.

### Related Information

#### India and Pregnancy Law

- **In India**, according to the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Bill, 2020 which has been passed by the Parliament has the provision that, a pregnancy may be terminated up to 20 weeks by a married woman in the case of failure of contraceptive method or device.
- The Bill also allows unmarried women to also terminate a pregnancy for this reason.

## 2. Centre pins hopes on 5 Covid vaccines apart from Covishield, Covaxin, Sputnik

(Topic- GS Paper III–Science and Technology, Source- The Hindu)

### Why in the news?

- According to the NITI Aayog (health) member VK Paul, India is hoping to produce at least two billion vaccine doses against Covid-19 by the end of this year.
- The tentative list presented by the government comprises eight vaccines, including Covishield, Covaxin and Sputnik V.
- The government is hoping to get five more vaccines in which four of them will be made in India.

### About the 5 emerging vaccines

#### Bio E Subunit vaccine

- It is a subunit vaccine which is in the third phase of trial. In the phase 1/2 trial, the vaccine was found to be safe and well-tolerated.
- The Centre is hoping to get 30 crore doses of this vaccine between August and December, provided it gets authorisation.

#### Zydus Cadila DNA vaccine

- It is in the last leg of phase 3 trial and will soon apply for the licence.
- It is a three-dose vaccine and will be administered using a needle-free technology.

#### Novavax/Covavax

- Pune's Serum Institute of India will manufacture this vaccine, developed by the US's Novavax.

#### Bharat Biotech's nasal vaccine

- This is a single shot, a needle-free vaccine that Bharat Biotech is developing.
- The vaccine is in the 1/2 trial phase.

#### Genova mRNA vaccine

- Pune's Genova Biopharmaceuticals is developing this messenger RNA vaccine.
- Pfizer and Moderna are also mRNA vaccines.

**Out of these five vaccines, four are Indian while Covavax is being developed abroad, though it will be produced by India's Serum Institute.**

### Related Information

#### About Sputnik V

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- The tranche of Sputnik V vaccine that arrived from India will be available in the market from next week, while the production of Sputnik in India by Dr Reddy's Laboratories will begin in July 2021.

### About the 'Sputnik V' vaccine



- Russia named the newly approved vaccine "Sputnik V," in reference to Sputnik 1, the world's first artificial satellite, launched in 1957 during the space race.
- It uses two strains of adenovirus that typically cause mild colds in humans.

### Developed by

- The vaccine has been developed by Moscow's Gamaleya Institute in collaboration with the Russia's defence ministry.

### Efficacy

- The efficacy of Sputnik V was 92%.

### About Sputnik Light Vaccine

- It is the first component — recombinant human adenovirus serotype number 26 (rAd26) — of Sputnik V vaccine that has been approved by over 60 countries, including India.
- It will also be effective on new strains of coronavirus”.

### Efficacy

- The Sputnik Light demonstrated 79.4% efficacy.

### 3. Amphotericin B

(Topic- GS Paper III–Science and Technology, Source- Indian Express)

#### Why in the news?

- The government has recently started engaging pharmaceutical companies manufacturing amphotericin B to raise the production of anti-fungal drug used to treat mucormycosis, the “black fungus” infection seen in **some covid-19 patients**.

#### About Amphotericin B

- Amphotericin B is an antifungal medication used for serious fungal infections and leishmaniasis.
- The fungal infections it is used to treat include aspergillosis, blastomycosis, candidiasis, coccidioidomycosis, and cryptococcosis.
- It is typically given by injection into a vein.

#### Related Information

##### About Mucormycosis

- Mucormycosis, commonly called black fungus, is a rare but serious fungal infection caused by a kind of fungus called mucormycete, which is abundant in the environment.
- It mainly affects people who have health problems or take medicines that lower the body’s ability to fight germs and sickness.

##### Symptoms

- These include pain and redness around eyes and/or nose, fever, headache, coughing, shortness of breath, bloody vomits, and altered mental status.
- Warning signs can include toothache, loosening of teeth, blurred or double vision with pain.

##### Who is vulnerable ?

- Vulnerable groups include people who have health problems or take medicines that lower the body’s ability to fight germs and sickness.
- These include those with diabetes, cancer, or those who have had an organ transplant.

##### Prevention

- Use masks if you are visiting dusty construction sites.
- Wear shoes, long trousers, long-sleeved shirts and gloves while gardening.
- Maintain personal hygiene including a thorough scrub bath.
- Mucormycosis does not spread between people or between people and animals.

##### Diagnosis

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- It depends on the location of the suspected infection.
- A sample of fluid from your respiratory system may be collected for testing in the lab; otherwise a tissue biopsy or a CT scans of your lungs, sinuses etc may be conducted.

### Treatment

- Mucormycosis needs to be treated with prescription antifungal medicine.
- In some cases, it can require surgery.

## 4. Migration and Development Brief: World Bank report

(Topic- GS Paper III–Economics, Source- The Hindu)

### Why in the news?

- Recently, World Bank has released its **Migration and Development Brief Report**.

### About Migration and Development Brief Report

- The Migration and Development Brief report provides updates on global trends in migration and remittances.
- It highlights developments related to migration-related Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators for which the World Bank is a custodian: increasing the volume of remittances as a percentage of gross domestic product (SDG indicator 17.3.2) and reducing remittance costs (SDG indicator 10.c.1).

### Key highlights

- China, which received USD 59.5 billion in remittances in 2020 against USD 68.3 billion the previous year, is a distant second in terms of global remittances for the year.
- India and China are followed by Mexico (USD42.8 billion), the Philippines (USD34.9 billion), Egypt (USD29.6 billion), Pakistan (USD26 billion), France (USD24.4 billion) and Bangladesh (USD21 billion).
- In neighbouring Pakistan, remittances rose by about 17 per cent, with the biggest growth coming from Saudi Arabia, followed by the European Union countries and the United Arab Emirates.
- In Bangladesh, remittances also showed a brisk uptick in 2020 (18.4 per cent), and Sri Lanka witnessed remittance growth of 5.8 per cent.
- In contrast, remittances to Nepal fell by about two per cent, reflecting a 17 per cent decline in the first quarter of 2020.

### India and the Report

- According to a World Bank report , India received over USD83 billion in remittances in 2020, a drop of just 0.2 per cent from the previous year, despite a pandemic that devastated the world economy.

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- In 2019, India had received USD83.3 billion in remittances.

## 5. Whitley Award 2021

(Topic- GS Paper III–Environment, Source- PIB)

### Why in the news?

- Recently, Nuklu Phom a church worker from Nagaland has won the Whitley Award, also known as the ‘Green Oscar’,
- **Nuklu Phom** is the only Indian to win the prestigious award for his efforts to create a network of community-owned forests in the state and protect the rare Amur falcon.

### About Whitley Award 2021

- It is presented annually by the Whitley Fund for Nature which is a U.K based Charity fund.
- It involves process of reference, application and interview.
- The Whitley Fund for Nature was established by Edward Whitley in 1994.

### Objectives

- The Whitley Awards support grassroots leaders in countries rich in natural resources but lacking in financial resource for conservation.
- Winners are local environmental heroes, acting on the latest science and leading projects with passion.
- Through them they support work rooted in communities that creates lasting benefits for habitats, wildlife and people.

### About Amur falcons



- It is the world’s longest travelling raptors start travelling with the onset of winters.

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- The raptors breed in southeastern Siberia and northern China, and migrate in millions across India and then over the Indian Ocean to southern Africa before returning to Mongolia and Siberia.
- They get their name from the Amur River that forms the border between Russia and China.
- In India, Doyang Lake in Nagaland is better known as a stopover for the Amur falcons during their annual migration from their breeding grounds to warmer South Africa.
- Therefore, **Nagaland is also known as the “Falcon Capital of the World,”**

### Conservation Status

- The birds are the “**least concern**” under the IUCN Red List.
- The species is protected under the Indian Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, and the Convention on Migratory Species.

### 6. India's public spending on healthcare lowest in BRICS nations

(Topic- GS Paper III–Health, Source- The Hindu)

#### Why in the news?

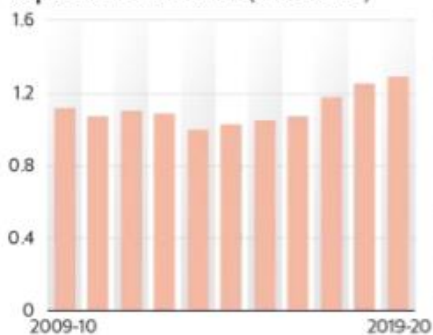
- Recently, Department of Economic Affairs stated that India’s public spending on healthcare is the lowest in BRICS nations during a virtual seminar was held between the Finance Ministry and New Development Bank on the topic of ‘**Social Infrastructure financing and the use of digital technologies**’

More on the news

### Health a low priority

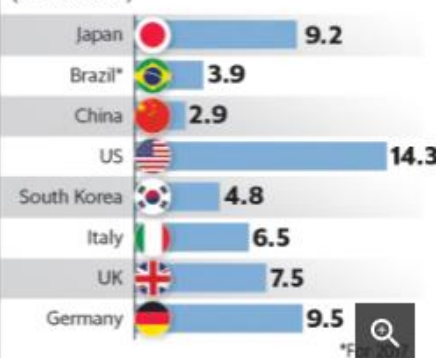
India’s public health expenditure was just 1.29% of GDP in 2019-20. In 2018 too, the country lagged behind BRICs peers as well as developed nations.

India’s (centre plus states) public expenditure on health (as % of GDP)



Source: National Health Profile 2019, Government of India; CARE Ratings’ calculations

Public expenditure on health in 2018 (as % of GDP)



Source: OECD, Conta-Satélite de Saúde

Graphic: Sarvesh Kumar Sharma/Mint



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- As per Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), in the BRICS nations Brazil spends the most (9.2%), followed by South Africa (8.1%), Russia (5.3%), China (5%) whereas Indian spend only 3.6% of GDP on healthcare.
- Developed nations—the US (16.9%), Germany (11.2%), France (11.2%) and Japan (10.9%)—spend even more on health care.

### About BRICS

- BRICS is the grouping of five major emerging countries Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa which together represent about 42 per cent of the population, 23 per cent of GDP, 30 per cent of the territory, and 18 per cent of the global trade.

### Related Information

#### Health in Union Budget 2021-22

- The overall Union health budget for 2021-22 is Rs 2,23,846 crore out of which expenditure of major items (like D/o Health and Family Welfare + D/o Health Research + M/o AYUSH) has increased from Rs 69,234 crore (BE 2020-2021) to Rs 76,902 crore (2021-2022).
- It is an increase of about 10%, the allocation for this year.
- Rest is for Drinking water and Sanitation and others.
- India currently ranks **145 out of 180 countries on quality of and access to healthcare, and 179 of 189 countries in prioritisation of health in government budgets.**

#### Economy Survey on HealthCare

- The 2021 Economic Survey set out the importance of increasing public health spending and also discusses in detail market failures in health.
- It showed that an increase in public health expenditure from the current levels in India to 3% of the GDP can reduce out-of-pocket expenses (OoPE) from 60% currently to about 30%.
- As is well known, the OoPE on health burdens not just the poor but also the middle class of this country.
- The Economic Survey therefore makes a case for increasing public spending on health from 1% to 2.5-3% of GDP, as the National Health Policy (NHP) 2017 states.
- This is necessary to improve India's poor standings on various indicators of health, such as share of OoPE, equitable and good quality access to healthcare, availability of infrastructure and human resources for health.

### 7. World Food Prize 2021

(Topic- GS Paper III–Agriculture, Source- AIR)

#### Why in the news?

- Recently, Dr Shakuntala Haraksingh Thilsted, a global nutrition expert of Indian descent has won the prestigious 2021 World Food Prize.

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- She has won the prize for her groundbreaking research in developing holistic, nutrition-sensitive approaches to aquaculture and food systems.

### About World Food Prize 2021

- The World Food Prize is an international award recognizing the achievements of individuals who have advanced human development by improving the quality, quantity, or availability of food in the world.
- It is an annual award that recognizes contributions in any field involved in the world food supply including plant, animal and soil science; food science and technology; nutrition, rural development, etc.

### Eligibility

- It is open for any individual without regard to race, religion, nationality or political beliefs.

### Significance of this award

- The award was conceived in 1987 by Dr Norman E. Borlaug who is also known as the Father of the Green Revolution.
- M.S. Swaminathan, the father of India's green revolution was the first recipient of this award in 1987.

## 8. SEBI pitches for 'person in control' over 'promoter'

(Topic- GS Paper III–Economics, Source- Indian Express)

### Why in the news?

- The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has recently proposed doing away with the **concept of promoters** and moving to '**person in control**' in a consultation paper.

### Key Highlights

- The consultation paper suggested that a **three-year transition** period for moving from the promoter to person in control concept.
- It said this shift is necessitated by the changing investor landscape in India where concentration of ownership and controlling rights do not vest completely in the hands of the promoters or promoter group because of the emergence of new shareholders such as private equity and institutional investors.
- Also, investor focus on the quality of board and management has increased, thereby reducing the relevance of the concept of promoter.

### What is person in control concept?

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- Control Person means any person that holds a sufficient number of any of the securities of an issuer so as to affect materially the control of that issuer, or that holds more than 20% of the outstanding voting securities of an issuer.
- Control Person means any individual who has a Control relationship with the Fund or an investment adviser of the Fund.
- Control Person means a director or executive officer of a licensee or a person who has the authority to participate in the direction, directly or indirectly through 1 or more other persons, of the management or policies of a licensee.

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