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## News Analysis (22 Jul, 2020)

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### Achieving Zero Hunger by 2030: UN Report

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#### Why in News

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According to a study titled **State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World**, hunger and malnutrition is increasing around the world. In this scenario, achieving the **Sustainable Development Goal (2) of 'Zero Hunger' by 2030** will be very difficult.

- The **State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World** is the most authoritative global study tracking progress towards **ending hunger and malnutrition**.
- It is produced jointly by the **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** of the United Nations, the **International Fund for Agriculture (IFAD)**, the **United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)**, the **UN World Food Programme (WFP)** and the **World Health Organization (WHO)**.

#### Key Points

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- **Increasing Hunger:**
  - **Steep Rise:** The study estimates that almost 690 million people went hungry in 2019 – up by 10 million from 2018, and by nearly 60 million in five years
    - Hunger is an uncomfortable or painful physical sensation caused by insufficient consumption of dietary energy.
    - For decades, FAO has used the **prevalence of undernourishment** indicator to estimate the extent of hunger in the world, thus “hunger” may also be referred to as **undernourishment**.
  - **Chronic Hunger:** There has been **no change in the hunger trend since 2000**, After steadily diminishing for decades, chronic hunger slowly began to rise in 2014 and continues to do so.
  - **Regional Hotspots: Asia remains home to the greatest number of hunger** (381 million). **Africa is second** (250 million), followed by **Latin America** and the **Caribbean (combined 48 million)**.
  - **Rate of Hunger:** The rate of undernourishment (hunger) **in Africa is double compared to Asia** and it is expected that by 2030, Africa will be home to more than half of the world’s chronically hungry.
  - **Impact of Covid-19:** The **Covid-19 pandemic** could also push over 130 million more people into chronic hunger by the end of 2020.
  - **Reasons: High costs and low affordability** was the main reason behind the hunger.
- **Increasing Malnutrition:**
  - **Affordability:** The study estimates that 3 billion people or more cannot afford a healthy diet.
    - In sub-Saharan Africa and southern Asia, this is the case for 57% of the population.
    - The key reason behind malnutrition is the high cost of nutritious foods and the low affordability of healthy diets for vast numbers of families.
      - According to the study, a healthy diet costs far more than **USD 1.90/day**, which is the **international poverty threshold**.
      - It puts the price of even the least expensive healthy diet at five times the price of filling stomachs with starch only.
  - **Impact on Children:** According to the study, in 2019, nearly a third of children under five (191 million) were **stunted (too short) or wasted (too thin)**. Another 38 million under-fives were overweight.

## Suggestions

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- **Shifting of Diet: global switch to healthy diets would help check the backslide into hunger** while delivering enormous savings.
  - Shift to a healthy diet will reduce the health costs associated with unhealthy diets.
  - The diet related social cost of greenhouse gas emissions, estimated at USD 1.7 trillion, could also be cut by up to three-quarters by 2030.
- **Transform Food Systems: The transformation of food systems will not only reduce the cost of nutritious foods but also increase the affordability of healthy diets.**
- The study calls on governments:
  - To **mainstream nutrition in their approaches to agriculture.**
  - Work to **cut cost-escalating factors in the production, storage, transport, distribution and marketing of food** – including **by reducing inefficiencies and food loss and waste.**
  - **Support local small-scale producers** to grow and sell more nutritious foods and secure their access to markets.
  - **Prioritize children's nutrition** as the category in greatest need.
  - Foster **behaviour change** through education and communication;
  - Embed **nutrition in national social protection systems** and investment strategies.

## Way Forward

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This study is the reminder that such a huge percentage of humanity is still going hungry and should be a wake up call for the government in particular and society in general. Innovative strategies such as shifting towards **Smart Food** is the need of the hour, which is highly nutritious and will certainly help to reduce hunger.

**Source: WHO**

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## Tech Cold War Between U.S.A and China

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### Why in News

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Recently, the U.S.A blocked China's access to chip making tools and designated Chinese telecom giants Huawei, ZTE as national security threats. However, with the **5G rollout** approaching, the move will impact several countries including India.

Recently, the **United Kingdom also reversed its earlier decision and blocked Huawei from its 5G network rollout.**

### Key Points

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- **U.S.A-China Tech Relation:**

- China has **traditionally resisted** against American big-data companies such as
- However, both the Countries still have significant dealings on the technology side.

Last year, Apple recorded USD 100 million of daily sales in China, while Huawei Technologies reported record revenues primarily from its exposure in western markets, including the U.S.A.

- The latest steps by U.S.A against Huawei mark the **first real prohibitory action** by a western government in the nearly two decades.
  - This has been done on the ground that China's equipment is **designed to aid snooping**.
  - There have been apprehensions that American telecoms players are too much dependent on subsidised Chinese technology.

- **Impact of Ban on Chip Making Tools:**

- Huawei could face shortages in its supply of specialist chips for which it relies on the U.S.A.
- Technological cold war could extend beyond the U.S.A and China, and compel other countries, including India, to effectively choose between one of the camps.

Some of the countries perceive the same threat as that of the U.S.A, and others are wary of trade sanctions by the U.S.A.

- This could have a bearing on the growing competition to dominate next-generation technologies such as 5G networks and **artificial intelligence**.
- Impact the plans of most countries preparing to transition to a 5G regime, including India.

- **India's Position:**

- **In 2009**, the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) had advised Indian mobile companies to suspend deals with Chinese equipment makers after fears that Chinese equipment were being **used for hacking and spying**.
- However, India did not took strong actions on any of DoT's recommendations. Indeed, much of India's telecom growth story has been supported by Chinese companies in both hardware and software.
- The approach changed after the **standoff in Ladakh**, wherein India has asked state-owned telecom service providers to exclude Chinese companies from the scope of their network upgrade contracts.

India also justified the **ban on 59 mobile apps** with Chinese links on grounds of a threat to national security.

- This was part of the **wider decision to signal curbs on Chinese investments** and tech companies in the country.
- The border clashes and the U.S.A action could now force India into the anti-China camp.

## Conclusion

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- With the Chinese being increasingly blocked by governments in 5G networks, other global players could be at a competitive advantage.
  - The other leaders in the telecoms network equipment market are the European players such as Ericsson and Nokia, and South Korea's Samsung.
  - India's Reliance Jio has also designed and developed a complete 5G solution from scratch.
- This could also have a bearing on the global 5G rollout, especially in the countries outside of North America and Europe.

## Source: IE

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## China Proposes Territory Swap with Bhutan

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### Why in News

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Recently, China has offered Bhutan a “**package solution**” to its boundary dispute. Although the package solution is not specified, it may be seen as a **revival of the 1996 proposal by China for a territory swap**.

### Key Points

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- **Territory Swap:**



**Disputed areas between Bhutan and China**

- In 1996, China wanted **to exchange the valleys to the north of Bhutan** (an area of 495 square kilometres), **with the pasture land to the west (including Doklam)**, totalling 269 square kilometres.
- The deal would have benefited Bhutan by giving it the larger chunk of land, and resolving its tensions with China.
- However **it was a big worry for India**, as the Doklam swap would have given **China access to the strategically sensitive “chicken neck” of the Siliguri corridor.**



- **Repeated Claim Over Sakteng:**

- China also **repeated its claim on Bhutan’s eastern boundary at Sakteng.**
- Earlier, China has made the claim over Sakteng at an online meeting of the <sup>th</sup> **Global Environment Facility (GEF) Council**, while unsuccessfully objecting to the funding request to develop the Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary project in eastern Bhutan.
- China claims that the **boundary between China and Bhutan has never been delimited.** It has had disputes over the **eastern, central and western sectors of Bhutan.**
- However, **Bhutan outrightly rejected the claim** made by China by saying that Sakteng is an integral and sovereign territory of Bhutan.
- According to Bhutan, China and Bhutan have a **dispute in only two sectors** of the border, one **in the north (central) – Pasamlung and Jakarlung,** and **second in the west – Doklam.**
- There has been no mention of eastern Bhutan, where Sakteng is based, in 24 previous rounds of boundary negotiations held between the two countries between 1984 and 2016.

- **Reason Behind the New Offer:**

- The aim may be **to pressure Bhutan** into concluding a deal quickly on terms on offer, otherwise the claims may keep increasing.
- The similar offer was made to India on Arunachal Pradesh, which subsequently expanded to include a Chinese claim on Tawang in 1985.

- **Concerns for India:**

- In 2017 China had intruded into **Doklam plateau**, which is claimed by Bhutan, leading to a standoff between Indian and Chinese Armies.
- Even after the **India-Bhutan Friendship Treaty** of 2007, Indian military is virtually responsible for protecting Bhutan from the kind of external threat that the Chinese military poses.
  - According to the India-Bhutan Friendship Treaty of 1949, Bhutan allowed India to "guide" its foreign policy and defence affairs.
  - However, the 1949 treaty was amended in 2007 to respect the sensitivities of Bhutan regarding its sovereignty.
  - Under the India-Bhutan Friendship Treaty of 2007, the two sides have agreed to cooperate closely with each other on issues relating to their national interests.

Neither Government shall allow the use of its territory for activities harmful to the national security and interest of the other.
- China has said that a third party should not point fingers in the China-Bhutan border issue, which is an apparent reference to India.

## Way Forward

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Bhutan has protested against Chinese territorial claims in eastern Bhutan and said that it will also contest in future if China refers to the territory as disputed. Safety of Border from China is a concern for both India and Bhutan. Therefore, both sides need to work together on this issue.

### Source: TH

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## Indian Military Equipment of Russian Origin

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### Why in News

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According to a paper published by Stimson Center, **86% of the equipment, weapons and platforms** currently in military service in India are of **Russian** origin.

The Stimson Center is a **nonprofit think tank** based in Washington, USA. It aims to **enhance international peace and security** through a combination of analysis and outreach.

### Key Points

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- **Data Analysis:**
  - **Stimson Center** data shows that more than **55% of Indian defence imports** since 2014 have been from Russia.
  - For the **Navy**, more than **41% equipment is of Russian origin while two-thirds for the Indian Air Force (IAF)**.
  - The figure for the **Army is 90%**, as it assigns around 10,000 pieces of military hardware from Russia.
  - **Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)** data shows that **Russia** continues to occupy **the First position** as India's **defence supplier**, with 9.3 billion USD worth of exports to India.
    - The **USA** is at **second**, with defence supplies worth 2.3 billion USD to India in the same period.
- **Russia's Military Equipment:**
  - The Navy's only active **aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya** and it's only **nuclear attack submarine** in service, **Chakra II**, are from Russia.
  - So are the **Army's T-90 and T-72 main battle tanks** and IAF's **Su30 MKI fighter**.
  - The country's only **nuclear-capable supersonic cruise missile, BrahMos**, is produced by a joint venture with Russia.
  - As India has been spreading its supplier base with Israel, USA and France, Russia still remains a major supplier. This is indicated by following latest developments:
    - India has approved proposals to acquire 21 Mig29 and 12 Su30 MKI fighter aircraft from Russia for 2.4 billion USD.
    - India and Russia had agreed to a joint programme to develop a variant of **Fifth Generation Fighter Aircraft Programme (FGFA)** in 2007.
      - As India has not committed to the **Fifth Generation Fighter Aircraft Programme (FGFA) programme** with Russia.
    - It is negotiating on the price of AK103 rifles for **Make in India**.
- **USA's Military Equipment: Apache and Chinook helicopters**, M777 howitzer guns for the Army.
  - **Boeing C-17 and C-130J** for IAF and **P8I submarine hunter aircraft** for Navy.

- **Reasons:** There are many reasons for **India's dependency on Russia** for the supply of military equipments:
  - **Legacy Issue:** India and Russia have a **longstanding defence relationship** and there is familiarity with each other's processes and systems.
  - **Specialised Equipment:** The kind of specialised equipment that Russia provides to India makes a difference from other countries, e.g. the **S-400 Air Defence Missile Systems**, nuclear submarines and aircraft carrier.
  - **Combat Capability:** Each of the systems supplied by Russia has its advantages and uses as they have been used effectively to develop **maximum combat capability** especially when focusing on India's higher-end strike platforms.
- **Significance:**
  - **Border Clash with China:** Notwithstanding India's growing mutual convergence with the USA against China following the **recent tensions on the Ladakh border**, its armed forces remain heavily dependent on equipment, weapons and military platforms of Russian origin which form the bulk of its inventory.
  - **USA's CAATSA:** Recently, the **USA has asked all its allies and partners, including India, to stop transactions with Russia**. The USA can risk triggering sanctions under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA).

**Source: IE**

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## **Supply of DDT to South Africa for Malaria Control Program**

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### **Why in News**

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Recently, **HIL (India) Limited** has supplied 20.60 Metric tonne of **Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT)**, a fertilizer to South Africa for their **malaria** control program.

The Company is further in the process of supplying DDT to Zimbabwe and Zambia in the current Financial Year 2020-21.

### **HIL (India) Limited**

- It is a PSU under the **Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers**.
- It was incorporated in 1954 to manufacture and supply DDT to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare for **malaria control programmes**.
- It is the **sole manufacturer of DDT** globally.

## Key Points

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- **DDT:**
  - It is a colorless, tasteless, and almost odorless crystalline chemical compound.
    - It was first synthesized in 1874 by the Austrian chemist Othmar Zeidler.
    - Its insecticidal action was discovered by the **Swiss chemist Paul Hermann Muller** in 1939.
    - He was awarded the **Nobel Prize** in Physiology or Medicine in 1948 "for his discovery of the high efficiency of DDT as a **contact poison against several arthropods.**  
**Arthropods** are invertebrate species which include insects (Mosquitos), arachnids (Spiders), and crustaceans (Crabs) etc.
  - Originally developed as **an insecticide**, it became infamous for its **environmental impacts.**
  - A worldwide ban on agricultural use was formalized under the **Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants.**
  - However, its limited use in **disease vector control continues**, because of its **effectiveness in reducing malarial infections.**
  - The **World Health Organisation** (WHO) recommends DDT as one of the efficient **Indoor Residual Spraying (IRS)** chemicals to **curb mosquito menace** and it is widely used by Southern African countries like South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Namibia, Mozambique and India.  
IRS is a **core vector control intervention** that involves the application of a residual insecticide to internal walls and ceilings of housing structures where malaria vectors may come into contact with the insecticide.
  - **Supply to South Africa: South Africa will be utilising DDT** in three provinces bordering **Mozambique.**
  - The region is **highly affected with Malaria** and it has reported **maximum morbidity and mortality.**
- **Supply to Other Countries:** HIL (India) Limited has recently exported **Malathion Technical 95%** to Iran under Government-to-Government initiative for the **Locust Control Programme** and also exported **Agrochemical-fungicide** to Latin American region.

## Malaria

- **Malaria** is caused by **Plasmodium parasites.**  
The parasites are spread to people through the bites of infected **female Anopheles mosquitoes, called "malaria vectors".**

- **Impact:** Malaria continues to be one of the **major public health problems** globally.
  - In 2018, an estimated **228 million cases** of malaria occurred worldwide.
  - Most of the **cases and deaths (93%)** were reported from **African Region**.
  - In the South East Asia Region, **India accounts** for the majority of cases and death.
  - According to **World Malaria Report 2019**, India reported 2.6 million fewer cases in 2018 **compared to 2017**. Thus the overall incidence of malaria in the country has reduced.
  - However, 7 states (**Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Gujarat, Odisha and Madhya Pradesh**) account for about 90% of the burden of malaria cases in India.

**Source: PIB**

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## **Delhi Sero-Survey**

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### **Why in News**

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Recently, the **National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC)** conducted a **sero-surveillance study** for **Covid-19** in **New Delhi**.

NCDC is under administrative control of the Directorate General of Health Services in the **Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**.

### **Key Points**

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- **Sero-surveillance:**
  - **Detects Specific Antibodies:** It seeks to assess the prevalence of disease in a population by **detecting the presence of specific antibodies** against the virus.
  - **Immunity Check:** It can also be conducted to check if a person has developed **immunity** to certain diseases.
  - **Past Infections:** It **indicates past infections** (and which triggered an immune response), and is **not used to detect active infections**.
  - **Tested Immunoglobulin G Using ELISA:** The **Sera (a part of blood) of samples were tested for IgG antibodies** and Covid-19 infection using **Covid Kavach ELISA kits** approved by the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)**.
    - **IgG** (Immunoglobulin G) is a type of antibody which develops in most Covid-19 patients (infections) at around two weeks after infection and remains in the blood even after recovery.
    - **ELISA** (Enzyme-Linked Immunosorbent Assay) is a test that detects and measures antibodies in blood
- **Coverage of the Latest Study:**
  - **Coverage Period:** It was conducted from 27<sup>th</sup> June - 10<sup>th</sup> July 2020. It was done when the city was reporting over 3,000 cases a day.
  - **Coverage Groups:** A total **21,387 samples** were randomly collected across the 11 districts of the capital, which were then divided into two groups, of **less than 18 years and older**.
- **Result:**

of the people surveyed had **developed IgG antibodies**, indicating they had been exposed to the novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) that causes Covid-19, with a large number showing no symptoms (**asymptomatic**).
- **Government's Response:**
  - **Impact of Proactive Efforts:** Only 23.48% were found to be infected in a study carried out in a city with several pockets of dense population, shows that the **proactive efforts by the government** to prevent the spread of Covid-19, including prompt lockdown, effective containment and surveillance measures, contact tracing and tracking, as well as citizens' compliance **had yielded benefits**.
  - **Challenges:** The remaining proportion of the population (**about 77%**) is **still vulnerable** to contracting the novel coronavirus infection.
    - Containment measures need to continue with the same rigour.
    - Non-pharmacological interventions such as **physical distancing, use of face mask/cover, hand hygiene, cough etiquette** and avoidance of crowded places etc. must be followed strictly.

- **Concerns:**
  - The 23.48% rate of seropositivity **cannot be extrapolated over Delhi's entire population.**
  - Further, currently there **isn't enough scientific data available about the level and duration of immunity** that the body will develop after a person tests Covid-positive.
- **Sero-surveillance in the Past:**
  - **ICMR** had conducted a pilot sero-survey in **April 2020** across **83 districts in 21 states.**
  - The initial results, which are being peer-reviewed, suggested that the percentage of the **general population** that could have been infected was with **urban areas** showing a higher prevalence of about

## Way Forward

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- The robust data collected through the study will help in the disease control programme.
- Such scientific studies are extremely important and should be performed from time to time to understand the lessons from the past.

## Source: PIB

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## Idea of Social Security Number for Migrants

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### Why in News

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The **Parliamentary Standing Committee on Labour** has recommended that the government introduce a **social security number** for migrant workers, especially those working in the **unorganised sectors** which are beyond the purview of the labour laws.

### Key Points

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- **Background:**
  - The Ministry of Labour and Employment was **unable to give any concrete figures on the number of migrant workers.**
  - However, the officials quoted data from the Railway Ministry. About 1.08 crore migrant workers had travelled on Special Shramik express trains initiated by the government to ferry migrant workers.
    - It was pointed out that **students and family members of the workers** too used these trains and **thus this figure doesn't accurately record** the number of migrant workers.

- **Social Security Number:**
  - Instead of making Aadhar the basis for providing government benefits to migrants, they should be given a social security number which is a more effective way of covering them for insurance, health and other welfare programmes.
  - A social security number is **essential to avert situations like the one during the extended lockdown** when several lakh workers had to walk back to their homes as they were shut out of employment overnight.
  - The number will not only help in **mapping the number of migrant workers** but also their **migration patterns**.
- **Other Suggestions:**
  - Both the **State of origin** and **State where the worker has migrated** to should have a record.
  - The migrant workers may or may not have access to the Internet, therefore the smallest arm of administration — the **gram sabhas** — should be roped in. The same work can be done by municipality workers in the urban areas.
- **Concerns Raised:**
  - It flagged issues related to the social security fund stated under the **Social Security Code Bill 2019**. There are no specific details in the legislation as to who will contribute to the fund and how it will be utilised.
  - It also discussed **changes in labour laws by some states** in the wake of pandemic and impact on workers.
  - Most of the beneficiaries under the **PM Garib Kalyan Yojana** were **local workers** and **not migrants**.

## Social Security Code Bill, 2019

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- The central government has been working to **concise 44 central labour** laws into four broad codes on **wages**, industrial relations, social security and **occupational health & safety**.
- The Social Security Code Bill **seeks to amend and consolidate nine laws** related to social security, including the Employees' Provident Fund Act, 1952, the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961, and the Unorganised Workers' Social Security Act, 2008.
  - Social security refers to measures to ensure access to **health care and provision of income security to workers**.
- It proposes setting up a **social security fund**. This fund will provide welfare benefits such as pension, medical cover, and death and disablement benefits to all workers, **including gig workers**.
  - Gig workers refer to workers outside of the traditional employer-employee relationship (e.g., freelancers).
- The Code provides for the **establishment of several bodies** to administer the social security schemes notified by the government.

- It provides that every woman shall be entitled to, and her employer shall be liable for, the payment of **maternity benefit** at the rate of the average daily wage for the period of her actual absence, i.e. the period immediately preceding the day of her delivery, and any period immediately following that day.
- The Code specifies **penalties** for various offences, such as falsification of reports, punishable with imprisonment of up to six months.

**Source: TH**

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## **Investments in India**

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### **Why in News**

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According to a recent survey by **Projects Today**, overall **fresh investment announcements in India slumped to the lowest in five years** in the first quarter of the financial year 2020-21.

- The period saw extended **pandemic-induced lockdowns**.
- During this time, **Tamil Nadu emerged as the country's top investment destination**.
- Projects Today is an **independent firm that tracks investment projects** in the country.

### **Key Points**

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- Investments **improved every passing month** in the quarter (April to June).
  - In **April**, there was an announcement of 260 new projects worth Rs. 20,181.6 crore.
  - In **May**, it rose to 436 new projects worth Rs. 37,922 crore.
  - In **June**, after the announcement of Unlocking 1.0 of the economy, there was a further surge in the number of new projects. In all, the month saw the announcement of 545 new projects with a total investment of Rs. 39,755.43 crore.
    - **Reliance secured investments** from some of the world's largest firms such as



- **However, fresh project expenditure from Central government agencies dipped** in June 2020, though it is expected to rise in coming months.
  - With **falling revenues due to the lockdown and mounting expenses due to the pandemic**, the government has blocked the initiation of approved/appraised new schemes by various ministries and departments for the next 9 months or till 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.
    - **Atmanirbhar Bharat and Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana** have been insulated from the expenditure cut measures.
    - The coming quarters will also **demonstrate the efficacy of the Centre's stimulus packages**, that included financial and fiscal reforms along with steps to enhance the agriculture and small scale industries, in attracting foreign and domestic private capital.
- Investment projects were largely **dominated by the government sector and private promoters also announced new projects.**
- Apart from investments, **fresh capacity additions are expected in the healthcare and pharma** sectors with immediate effect.
  - Covid-19 has led companies to do **intensive research for its vaccinations** which need fundings.
  - The pandemic gave **boost to the production of Personal Protection Equipment (PPEs), masks, sanitisers etc.** because of more **emphasis on personal hygiene and products related** to it.
  - Development of **various anti-viral and immunity boosting medicines** also went up.
- States like **Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra held investors meet and signed MoUs, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka reworked labour laws**, started **building land banks** and **sent proposals to foreign companies.**
- **Major Challenges:** Country's **slow-moving official machinery, archaic land and labour laws** are some of the things **preventing foreign companies** from bringing in their technology and capital to India.

### Case of Tamil Nadu

- It accounted for **18.63% of the Rs. 97,859 crore of investments** envisaged to execute 1,241 projects in the country in the first quarter.
- The state is also **host to three of the five data centres** envisaged to come up in the country at a total investment of Rs. 7,400 crore.

The **other two data centres are proposed in Maharashtra**, which was second to Tamil Nadu with fresh investments worth Rs. 11,228.8 crore.

### Way Forward

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- India has the required labour force in abundance and it is high time that all the concerns are addressed as soon as possible at the central and state governments level.
- India has all the potential to be the contract manufacturer of the world in areas such as automobile ancillaries, smartphones, electronic items, capital goods, food processing, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, etc.

**Source: TH**

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## **MANODARPAN: Mental Health Initiative**

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### **Why in News**

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Recently, the Ministry of Human Resources Development (MHRD) has launched the 'Manodarpan' initiative under **Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan**.

It is aimed to provide **psychosocial support to students, family members and teachers** for their mental health and well-being during the times of **Covid-19**

### **Key Points**

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- **Description:** The platform includes a **national toll free helpline** for students of schools, universities and colleges, which will be manned by a pool of experienced counsellors, psychologists and mental health professionals.
  - It also has a **website**, a national database of counsellors which will **host an interactive online chat platform**, advisories and tips through webinars and other resources.
- **Significance:** It would act as an element of strengthening **human capital and increasing productivity** for the education sector in the wake of covid-19.
  - Covid 19 **lockdown** had led to forced close down of schools and colleges.
  - Therefore, it would help children as well as their parents in facing tense situations and its effects on academics.

**Source: PIB**

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## **Global Fund**

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### **Why in News**

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Recently, '**key populations affected by HIV/AIDS (or KPs)**' have protested for being ignored by governments and multilateral agencies (including **United Nations**) in **Covid-19** related emergency relief efforts.

- They have petitioned the **Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria** (or simply the **Global Fund**), demanding allocation to meet their basic survival needs of food, shelter, and emergency medical care.
- **KPs include** sex workers, transpeople, gay and bisexual men, drug users, and people living with HIV/AIDS.

## Key Points

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- The Global Fund is an **international financing and partnership organization**.
- It was created in 2000 and its **secretariat is located in Geneva, Switzerland**.
- The Global Fund **aims to** attract, leverage and invest additional resources to **end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria** to support attainment of the **Sustainable Development Goals**.
- It is designed to promote innovative solutions to global health challenges. It works in partnership with governments, civil society, technical agencies, and people affected by the diseases.
- **India joined the Global Fund as a donor in 2006**, and has contributed a total USD 46.5 million to date.  
In 2019, the Government of India **pledged USD 22 million** to the Global Fund's Sixth Replenishment for 2020-22, demonstrating shared commitment toward ending the epidemics of HIV, TB and malaria.

**Source: TH**

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