

## **EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – JULY 15, 2020**

### **TAMIL NADU**

- **On July 14, the Tamil Nadu cabinet - cleared a proposal to include the students admitted under Right to Education (RTE) Act in its special 7.5% NEET quota proposed for government school students.**
- ✓ However, these students with access to elementary education under Right to Education (RTE) Act will have to migrate to government schools and study for four years, starting from class 9
- ✓ It includes the students, who study under RTE up to class 8 in private schools, and come back to study in government schools up to class 12
- ✓ The State has cleared the proposal for 7.5% quota to benefit the government school students in admission to medical courses through NEET exams during its last cabinet meeting on June 15
- ✓ The proposal was cleared following the recommendations of Justice P Kalaiyaran commission
  - ✓ The commission had recommended reservation for students who studied from class 6 to 12 in government schools.
- ✓ The original proposal was sent to Governor Banwarilal Purohit for his assent to take an ordinance route to benefit the students from this academic year, which will commence shortly.
  - ✓ The governor has been consulting constitutional experts in this regard.
- ✓ The state government has been relentlessly pushing for the NEET quota for students of government schools
  - ✓ In this regard, the state cabinet has approved two bills earlier - The Tamil Nadu Admission to MBBS and BDS Courses Bill, 2017 and the Tamil Nadu Admission to PG Courses in Medicine and Dentistry Bill, 2017.
  - ✓ However, these bills were not provided the Presidential assent to eventually become a law.

- **On July 14, Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami - launched televised lessons for Class 10 students through Kalvi TV.**



- ✓ The lessons will be broadcast on the State-run channel for two-and-a-half hours every day, from Monday to Friday.
  - ✓ During the occasion, the CM also launched the distribution of free textbooks for students of Classes X and XII for the 2020-21 academic year.
  - ✓ Lessons for students of other classes would also be broadcast in due course of time.
  - ✓ Further, the Chief Minister inaugurated a scheme for downloading video lessons for Class XII students through hi-tech labs set up at government and aided schools across the State.
  - ✓ In a related development, Commissioner of School Education Siji Thomas Vaidyan, who headed a committee tasked with finding ways to tackle the challenges faced by the School Education Department due to the COVID-19 lockdown, submitted a report to the Chief Minister.
- **On July 14, the Tamil Nadu Cabinet - approved investments to the tune of ₹2,500 crore by four companies in various sectors across the State and also cleared incentive packages for them.**
  - ✓ The investments include an international automobile component-maker engaged in manufacturing airbags, which is planning to allocate ₹900 crore in its unit in Kancheepuram district.
    - ✓ It will invest over ₹400 crore in the first phase, and the rest over a 10-year period.
  - ✓ Further, Ather Energy Private Limited, which manufactures electric vehicles and batteries, will invest around ₹600 crore near Hosur.
  - ✓ Another company, Philips Carbon Black Limited (a part of RP-Sanjiv Goenka Group), one of the largest carbon black producers in the country, will invest around ₹600 crore in its unit at Thervoy Kandigai in Tiruvallur district.
  - ✓ Lastly, ITC's Paperboards and Specialty Papers Division (ITC-PSPD) will invest around ₹500 crore in a unit near Mettupalayam in Coimbatore district.
  - ✓ The government also decided to amend the existing procedures for the appointment of district Kazis under the Kazis Act, 1880.

- ✓ Accordingly, the Cabinet will make rules for deciding terms of appointment, responsibility and remuneration of district kazis.
- **Tamil Nadu – gets its second non-brahmin priest for a temple, after a gap of nearly two years.**
- ✓ P Thyagarajan of Madurai, the second government-trained non-Brahmin has been named a temple priest now.
  - ✓ He has been posted to a Vinayaka Temple in Nagamalai Pudukkottai near Madurai, which comes under the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments (HR&CE) department and administered by the management of Meenakshi Sundareswarar Temple.
  - ✓ After completion of the course at Meenakshi Sundareswarar Temple in Madurai, Thiagarajan worked as a priest in a temple in Nehru Nagar for about three years and later went in to work as a priest at Malaysia for nearly five years
- ✓ Earlier, T Marichamy from Madurai was appointed as Tamil Nadu's first non-brahmin priest at the Ayyappan temple in Tallakulam in February 2018
- ✓ In the year 2006, the DMK government issued a landmark Government Order (GO) allowing non-brahmins to become archakars in temples managed by the Department of Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments (HR&CE)
  - ✓ Accordingly, 206 non-brahmins took up a year-long course in one of the six government-run Saivite or Vaishnavite Veda Agama Padasalas at Meenakshi Sundareswarar temple (Madurai), Arunachalesvara temple (Tiruvannamalai), Dhantayuthapaniswamy temple (Palani), Subramaniya Swamy temple (Tiruchendur), Ranganathaswamy temple (Srirangam) and Parthasarathy temple (Triplicane) in 2007-08.
  - ✓ However, the padasalas stopped conducting the course a year later.
- **Tamil Nadu – reported 67 deaths and 4,526 fresh Covid-19 cases on July 14**
- ✓ This is the first time that the number of new cases in the State has crossed 4,500.
  - ✓ With this, the state's case tally reached 1,47,324 and the toll rose to 2,099
- ✓ On the day, a total of 4,743 patients were discharged, taking the total recovered to 97,310.
- ✓ A total of 47,912 active cases are undergoing treatment in various hospitals and covid care centres
- ✓ All districts recorded cases on the day, while fourteen districts, excluding Chennai, reported more than 100 infections each.
  - ✓ Chennai, despite drop in cases, continued to remain the state's hotspot.
  - ✓ The state's capital reported 1,078 new cases and the adjoining districts -- Tiruvallur (360), Kancheepuram (117) and Chengalpet (264) -- together accounted for 741 cases.
  - ✓ Madurai had 450 new cases, the second day in a row crossing 400-mark, taking its cumulative tally to 6,990 including 4,199 active cases.

**Keeping count** | A tracker, across parameters, on how the pandemic has affected the State so far

	Until July 7	July 8	July 9	July 10	July 11	July 12	July 13	July 14	Total
Cases reported	1,18,594	3,756	4,231	3,680	3,965	4,244	4,328	4,526	1,47,324
Recovered and discharged	71,116	3,051	3,994	4,163	3,591	3,617	3,035	4,743	97,310
Deceased	1,636	64	65	64	69	68	66	67	2,099

Persons tested



Districts with maximum cases



\*Changes in 24 hours    As on July 13, 6 p.m.    As on July 14, 6 p.m.

Active Cases + Discharged + Died will not equal Total Cases as 2 deaths were cross-notified to other States and 1 patient, who initially tested positive for COVID-19, later tested negative after death, as per the Health and Family Welfare Department.

- ✓ A total of 41,357 samples were tested in the last 24 hours in the State, taking the cumulative samples tested so far to 16,95,365.
- ✓ One more private laboratory — the KHM Medical Centre, Chennai — has been approved for Covid-19 testing.
  - ✓ With this, the state has 106 testing facilities now.

## STATES

- **On July 14, the Karnataka government - promulgated an ordinance that will now permit non-farmers to buy farmland and grow crops**
- ✓ This means, anyone can buy or own farm land in the State with the only rider being they can't use it for other activities.
- ✓ The government promulgated the Karnataka Land Reforms (Amendment) Ordinance, 2020, to amend the Karnataka Land Reforms Act, 1961 and notified after governor Vajubhai R Vala gave his assent to it on July 13.
- ✓ The cabinet had earlier taken a decision to repeal sections 79-A (prohibition on acquisition of land by certain persons), 79-B (prohibition on holding agricultural land by certain persons), 79-C (penalty for failure to furnish declaration) and Section 80 (transfer to non-agriculturists barred) of the Act.
- ✓ The amended Act will also enable the state to attract investment in the farm sector and boost food output.

## NATIONAL

- **On July 14, 2020, the Goa Bench of GST Authority of Advance Ruling (AAR) – ruled that alcohol-based sanitizers will attract 18% GST.**
- ✓ The Ministry of Consumer Affairs had recently classified hand sanitizers as essential commodity.

- ✓ However, the AAR held that merely classifying any goods as essential commodity would not be a criteria for exempting such goods from the tax.
  - ✓ The Springfields Distilleries had moved to Goa AAR seeking clarification over the GST rates and the classification of goods
  - ✓ Essential Commodity refers to goods that are considered essential to maintain a minimum acceptable standard of living.
  - ✓ Under this classification, the Central Government can control production, supply and distribution of the commodity and also impose stock limit
  - ✓ Essential commodity Act was enacted in 1955 to ensure delivery of certain products and commodities.
  - ✓ Currently there are 9 commodities included.
  - ✓ They are Fertilizers- Organic, Inorganic and mixed Food items (including edible oils) Seeds of food crops and seeds of fruits and vegetables, Face Mask, Hand Sanitizers, Drugs, Petroleum and petroleum products, Raw jute and jute textiles
  - ✓ In May 2020, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitaraman had announced that the act is to be amended.
- **Railway coach factory at Kapurthala - has developed Post-Covid coaches to prevent the spread of viral infection**



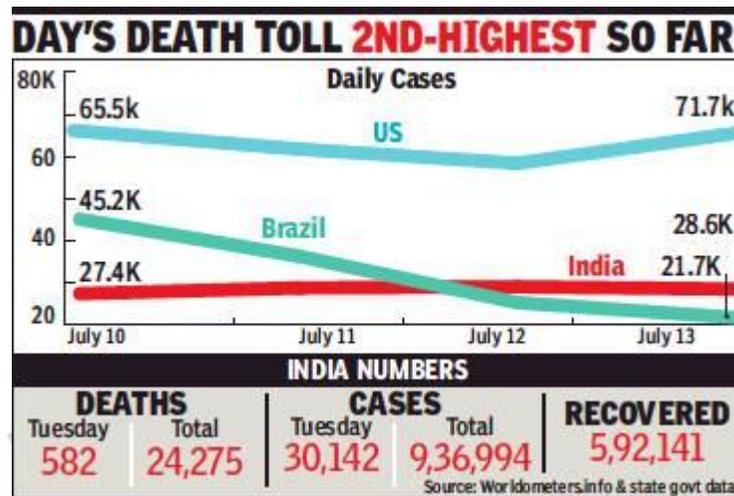
- ✓ The specially manufactured coaches will have hands-free amenities, copper-coated handrails and latches, plasma air purification and titanium di-oxide coating for a safe journey.
  - ✓ The hands-free amenities includes foot-operated water tap and soap dispenser, foot-operated lavatory door, foot-operated flush valve, outside washbasin with foot-operated water tap and soap dispenser.
  - ✓ Further, this Coach has the provision of plasma air equipment in AC duct.
  - ✓ This equipment will sterilize the air and surfaces inside the AC coach using ionized air to make the coach Covid-19 and particulate matter resistant.
- **The Union HRD Ministry – has released the ‘Pragyata’ guidelines for ‘online’ and digital education on July 14**
- ✓ The guidelines recommend a cap on daily sessions and their durations for different levels of school students.

## MAX OF 30 MINUTES FOR PRE-PRIMARY

- 1 Pre-primary students: Online sessions not more than 30 mins
  - 2 Classes I to VIII: Two sessions of up to 45 mins each
  - 3 Classes IX to XII: Four sessions of 30-45 mins each
- Important to have presentations that are easily readable: Slides must not have more than five bullet points & maximum use of infographics
  - HRD min frames guidelines following parents' concern about schools increasing kids' exposure to screens manifold

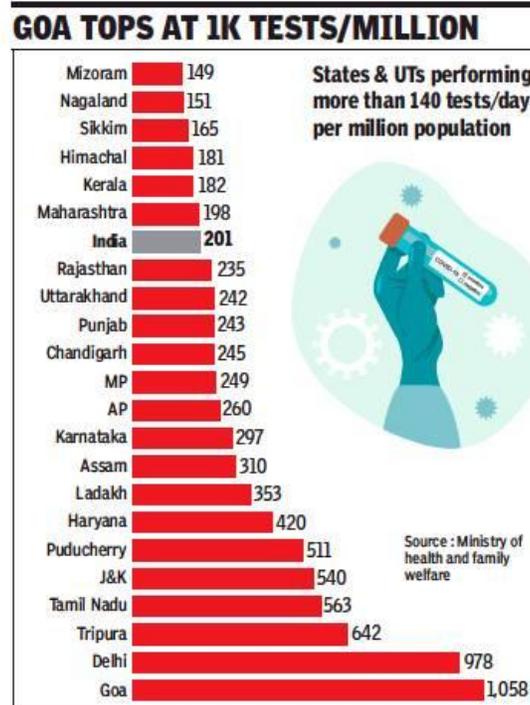
- ✓ For kindergarten, nursery and preschool, the guidelines don't recommend any 'online' screen time for children
- ✓ However, they recommend that teachers spend a maximum of 30 minutes per day to interact with parents and guide them.
- ✓ Further, for classes I to VIII, two online sessions of up to 45 minutes each are suggested and for classes IX to XII, four sessions of 30-45 minutes durations have been recommended.
- ✓ A 10-15 minute break needs to be provided between the different sessions
- ✓ **The guidelines include eight steps of online or digital learning – plan, review, arrange, guide, talk, assign, track and appreciate.**
- ✓ These steps guide the planning and implementation of digital education step by step with examples.
- ✓ These 'advisory' guidelines are prepared by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)
- ✓ State governments have been asked to further 'develop' on them and formulate their own rules, based on local needs.
- ✓ The ministry framed the guidelines following concerns being raised by parents on schools conducting online classes like regular schools thereby increasing children's exposure time to digital screen, since the closure of schools from March 16, 2020 after the Covid-19 outbreak.
- ✓ The guidelines are meant to help schools remodel their ways of teaching.
- ✓ They have highlighted that the teaching method must have presentations which are easily readable, slides must follow certain rules like not more than five bullet points, maximise use of infographics, graphs, charts, avoid tables as much as possible.
- ✓ The guidelines have been developed from the perspective of learners, with a focus on online, blended, digital education for students who are presently at home due to the lockdown.

- ✓ The guidelines also made specific recommendations based on the accessibility of digital resources across households – right from those with access to 4G connections with laptop, smartphone, basicphone, radio and TV to those with no digital device.
- **On July 14, the fresh Covid-19 cases in the country zoomed past the 30,000 mark for the first time to reach 30,142 cases and a cumulative total of 9,36,994.**
- ✓ The total deaths from the virus crossed 24,000 to reach 24,275 with the second-highest single-day addition of 582 fatalities reported on the day.



- ✓ India's daily Covid-19 cases were the second highest in the world after the US, having overtaken Brazil's daily tally on July 12 and 13.
  - ✓ Brazil's daily count had fallen sharply since July 10, when it had reported over 45,000 new infections, while India's caseload was gradually rising.
- ✓ In another record of sorts, as many as 10 states reported more than 1,000 fresh infections each on the day.
- ✓ The record rise in daily cases was attributed to the highest single-day increase in infections in at least seven states — Tamil Nadu (4,526 new cases), Bihar (1,432), Gujarat (915), Madhya Pradesh (798), Haryana (699), Kerala (608) and Goa (170).
- ✓ Besides, major Covid-19 states such as Maharashtra (6,741 new cases), Delhi (1,606), Assam (1,001) and Rajasthan (635) reported much higher numbers than the previous day.
- ✓ Maharashtra again recorded the highest death toll at 213, followed by Karnataka (87), Tamil Nadu (67), Andhra Pradesh (43), Delhi (35) and Uttar Pradesh (28).
- ✓ Karnataka rose to the number 4 spot in the country in terms of Covid-19 cases, surpassing Gujarat on the day.
  - ✓ With 2,496 new cases, Karnataka's total tally rose to 44,077.
- ✓ Maharashtra has reported 2.6 lakh cases, Tamil Nadu 1.4 lakh cases and Delhi 1.1lakh cases, as on date.

- ✓ Around 22 states in India are conducting at least 140 Covid-19 tests per day per million population, meeting the World Health Organisation (WHO) criteria of “comprehensive” testing, the health ministry said



- ✓ At present, India is conducting around 201 tests per day per million population.
  - ✓ Among the states with high disease prevalence, Delhi’s testing rate is the highest at 978 tests per day per million population, whereas Tamil Nadu is doing 563 tests per day per million population.
  - ✓ Maharashtra is conducting 198 tests per day per million population.
  - ✓ Gujarat and West Bengal were among the states with testing rate below the 140 mark.

## INTERNATIONAL

- **On July 13, the Cyberspace Administration of China - announced to start a two-month campaign to clean up websites that target minor users under the age of 18.**
- ✓ It had also informed that the regulator intends to strictly control actions and information that induce minors to carry out behaviors that have value-oriented issues
- ✓ Further, the regulator will look at the content on online learning websites as well as the ones that have the live streaming or instant messaging tools that aim at minors.
- ✓ Along with it, android applications that offer quick part-time jobs for easy money, entertainment will also be checked by the regulatory body.

- ✓ China had also launched a similar campaign to clean up its internet earlier in May 2020. The rectification effort was launched by the Cyberspace Administration, the public security bureau, the information technology ministry, and the market regulator of China.
- ✓ Under the campaign, there was apparent censorship by the authorities that had blocked foreign media websites and had shut down the domestic accounts of Social media.
- ✓ This campaign is scheduled to run until the end of 2020.

## SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

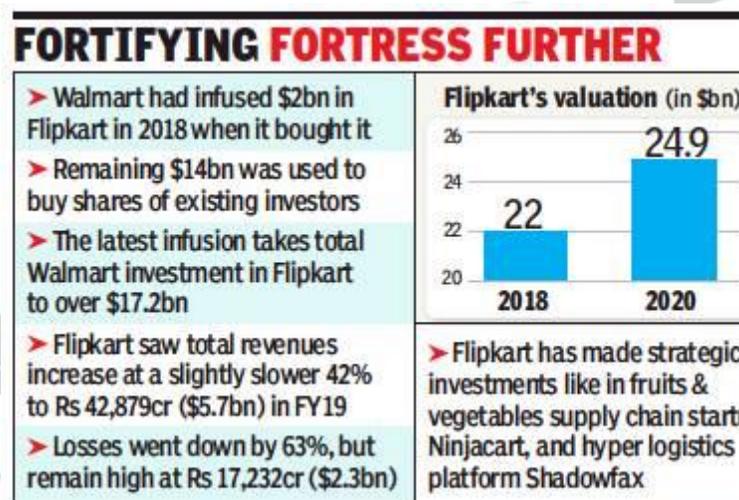
- **A New Comet by name 'NEOWISE' or C/2020 F3 - will be visible to the naked eye for 20 minutes every day starting from July 14, 2020 for the next 20 days.**
- ✓ The comet will be visible an hour before dawn initially and it will be visible in the evening later this month
- ✓ Then, it will start fading away when it starts entering the outer parts of the solar system in August.
- ✓ The comet will be closest to Earth on July 22 at a distance of about 103 million kilometres when it will be crossing the planet's orbit.
- ✓ It will be visible in the northwest sky, which is 20 degrees from the horizon.
- ✓ The celestial occurrence is a rare event, as the NEOWISE Comet will be visible from the Earth next time in the year 8,786, almost 6000 years later.
- ✓ NEOWISE Comet was discovered by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) on March 27, 2020.
  - ✓ The comet is reported to be 5 km wide and has a nucleus covered with sooty dark particles left over from its formation.
  - ✓ It was formed around the same time when our solar system came into existence, about 4.6 billion years ago.
- **The IIT Kanpur - has developed an Ultra Violet Sanitizing product called "Shudh".**



- ✓ The device is capable to disinfect 10 ×10 square feet room in just 15 minutes
- ✓ SHUDH is smartphone operated and is easily transportable.
- ✓ It has six UV lights, with each UV light is of 15 watts.
- ✓ The device can be operated by means of a remote as well.
- ✓ It can be used to disinfect at highly vulnerable places such as hotels, hospitals, malls, offices and schools
- ✓ Usually UVC (Ultra Violet-C) is used to kill micro organisms, including drug resistant bacteria

## ECONOMY

- **US-based retail giant, Walmart – has proposed to invest another \$1.2 billion in Flipkart**
- ✓ The move comes two years after the acquisition of 77% stake for \$16 billion in the entity



- ✓ The investment will be done in two tranches this financial year
- ✓ It values the company at \$24.9 billion, an increase of 13% from the \$22 billion at the time of the acquisition in 2018.
- ✓ Walmart's shareholding in the entity will go up to a "little over 80%" with this round of infusion
- ✓ The remaining major shareholders in Flipkart include China's Tencent and New York-based Tiger Global, both of which own 5%, besides Microsoft and co-founder Binny Bansal.
- ✓ The capital will be used for the online retail business of the Singapore-registered Flipkart — which also includes fashion portal Myntra
- ✓ The group's payments unit PhonePe has been looking to raise capital separately
- ✓ PhonePe is in talks with existing backers like Tencent to raise \$1 billion and has been seeking a valuation of at least \$8 billion
- ✓ Walmart's buyout of Flipkart has been one of the largest M&A deals in India's corporate history.

- ✓ In terms of proposed areas where Walmart's new capital will be allocated, there are three primary segments — grocery & food retail, digitising small sellers & businesses, and experiments around video & social-commerce.

## AWARDS

- **The Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education - has conferred the 'National award for excellence in outstanding research in forestry' for the year 2019 on scientist Kannan C S Warriar, Senior principal, Institute of Forest Genetics and Tree Breeding (IFGTB), Coimbatore**



- ✓ The award recognizes the release of three productive clones of casuarina, also known as Kattadi and Savukku, that are suitable for salt affected soils for the first time in the country.
- ✓ The country has around 6.73 million hectares of salt affected land.
- ✓ The scientist, in his 27 years in forestry research, has 232 research publications.

## SPORTS

- **The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) – has announced the appointment of Hemang Amin as the interim chief executive officer (CEO)**
- ✓ Earlier, Rahul Johri resigned as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of BCCI, whose resignation was accepted by BCCI last week
- ✓ Johri, who was given an extension till April 30, 2021, left before the end of his five-year contract.



- ✓ Amin has been serving as the Chief Operating Officer of the Indian Premier League (IPL).

- ✓ The BCCI apex council is set to meet on July 17 after more than two months
- ✓ Among the major positions to be filled are CEO and chief financial officer (CFO), posts that were introduced in 2016.
- ✓ Amin's had joined the IPL executives' team in 2010 after stints at the Bombay Stock Exchange and Deutsche Bank.

## INTERNATIONAL DAY

### ➤ World Youth Skill Day – July 15

- ✓ The day has marked the fifth anniversary of the launch of Skill India Mission.

PM to address on the occasion of  
World Youth Skills Day

July 14, 2020



Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will deliver a video address on the occasion of World Youth Skills Day tomorrow. The day marks the 5th anniversary of the launch of Skill India Mission. A Digital Conclave is being organized by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship to mark the occasion.

- ✓ PM Modi attended the Digital Conclave which was organised by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and also delivered a Video address.
- ✓ Skill India is an initiative of the Central government which offers courses across various sectors in order to empower the youth.
- ✓ The initiative aims at making them more employable and productive in their work environment.
- ✓ World Youth Skill Day is an UN-recognised event which is celebrated every year on July 15.
- ✓ This day aims at equipping young people with decent work and entrepreneurship, employment, as well as highlighting the crucial role of skilled youth in addressing the current and future challenges, as per the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)
- ✓ Theme 2020 - Skills for a resilient youth
- ✓ During the day, various events are organized by UNESCO and ILO.
- ✓ The UN decided to mark the day since 2014
- ✓ A resolution initiated by Sri Lanka with the assistance of G77 and China was passed in December 2018.
- ✓ The UN Sustainable Development Goal 4 aims to provide technical and vocational education and training

# THE STATE OF FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION IN THE WORLD – A UN REPORT

- **The United Nations – has released the state of food security and nutrition in the world report on July 13**
- ✓ As per the report, the number of undernourished people in India has declined by 60 million, from 21.7% of the population in 2004-06 to 14% in 2017-19
- ✓ Moreover, there were less stunted children but more obese adults in India.



- ✓ It further held that the number of undernourished people in India declined from 249.4 million in 2004–06 to 189.2 million in 2017–19.
  - ✓ In percentage terms, the prevalence of undernourishment in the total population in India declined from 21.7% in 2004-06 to 14% in 2017-19,
- ✓ The two sub-regions showing reductions in undernourishment -- eastern and southern Asia -- are dominated by the two largest economies of the continent -- China and India.
- ✓ Also, the prevalence of stunting in children under 5 years of age in India declined from 47.8% in 2012 to 34.7% in 2019
  - ✓ In terms of absolute numbers, this has reduced from 62 million in 2012 to 40.3 million in 2019.
- ✓ More Indian adults became obese during the period 2012-16, it said.
  - ✓ The number of adults (18 years and older) who are obese rose from 25.2 million in 2012 to 34.3 million in 2016 or from 3.1% to 3.9%.
- ✓ The number of women of reproductive age (15–49) affected by anaemia increased from 165.6 million in 2012 to 175.6 million in 2016.
- ✓ The number of infants 0–5 months of age exclusively breastfed went up from 11.2 million in 2012 to 13.9 million in 2019.
- ✓ The report said that almost 690 million people globally were undernourished (or hungry) in 2019, up by 10 million from 2018.

## Burden of malnutrition

(Children under 5 yrs of age)

**144MN**

children  
stunted

(too short for  
their age)

**47MN**

children  
wasted

(too thin for  
their height)

**38.3MN**

children  
overweight

**340MN**

children suffer  
micronutrient  
deficiencies

## Undernourished people in the world (mn)



\* The projections  
up to 2030 do  
not reflect the  
potential impact  
of the Covid-19  
pandemic

- ✓ The poverty levels with hunger are mostly prevalent in Asia, but expanding fastest in Africa.
  - ✓ Across the planet, the report forecasts, that the Covid-19 pandemic could push over 130 million more people into chronic hunger by the end of 2020.
  - ✓ In percentage terms, Africa is the hardest hit region, with 19.1% of its people undernourished.
  - ✓ At the current trends, by 2030, Africa will be home to more than half of the world's chronically hungry
- ✓ The report has been considered the most authoritative global study tracking progress towards ending hunger and malnutrition
- ✓ The report is prepared jointly by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef), the UN World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO).