



World Food Day 2021

Why in News

[World Food Day](#) is celebrated every year on **October 16th** to commemorate the date of the founding of the [United Nations](#) (UN) [Food and Agriculture Organisation](#) in 1945.

- **FAO** is a **specialised agency of the UN** that leads international efforts to **defeat hunger**.
- In **2021**, the UN Secretary-General also convened the very **first [Food Systems Summit](#)** to discuss ways to transform the production and consumption of food.



Key Points

- **About:**
 - It is observed annually to **address the problem of global hunger**.
 - The day is also observed by organisations like [World Food Programme](#) (Was awarded [nobel peace prize 2020](#)) and [International Fund for Agricultural Development](#).
 - It emphasises on the [Sustainable Development Goal 2](#) (SDG 2) i.e. Zero Hunger.
- **Need of the Hour:**
 - The [Covid-19 pandemic](#) has underlined that an **urgent change of route is needed**.
 - It has made it even **harder for farmers** - already grappling with climate variability and extremes - to sell their harvests, while **rising poverty** is pushing an increased number of city residents to use food banks, and millions of people require **emergency food aid**.
 - World **needs sustainable agri-food systems** that are capable of **nourishing 10 billion**

people by 2050.

▪ **FAO's Contribution in India:**

- It has closely watched India's fight against **malnutrition** in the past decades but its scope had many constraints.
 - Due to reasons such as pregnancy at a young age, lack of education and information, inadequate access to drinking water, lack of cleanliness, etc. **India is lagging behind in achieving the expected results of "malnutrition free India" by 2022**, envisaged under the National Nutrition Mission (**POSHAN Abhiyaan**).
- FAO supported India's proposal to declare 2023 as the **International Year of Millets**.
 - The move will **encourage intake of nutritious food, increase their availability further and benefit small and medium farmers** who mostly grow coarse grains on their land where there is a problem of water and the land is not so fertile.

▪ **FAO's Hunger Index, India's Opposition and Farmers Protest:**

- India has slipped to 101st position in the **Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2021**.
- However, the **Indian government has questioned the poll-based assessment and methodology** used by the FAO.
 - India claims the methodology to be unscientific.
- On the other hand the **food producers (farmers) of the country are on the roads for close to a year** and are on warpath **against the central government** while vehemently opposing the **farm laws**.
 - Farmers are terming the **laws to be anti-peasant (food producers)** and saying these laws will provide alarming loss to them which could further impact India's ranking in combating hunger and nutrition.

▪ **Related Indian Initiatives:**

- The **Eat Right India** and **Fit India Movement** along with **Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Jal Jeevan Mission** and other efforts will improve the health of Indians and heal the environment.
- Introduction of 17 new **biofortified varieties** of crops to overcome the shortcomings of the common variety of crops which lacks important micronutrients.
 - Example: **MACS 4028 Wheat, Madhuban Gajar**, etc.
- Increased ambit and effective implementation of the **Food Security Act, 2013**.
- **Amendments** to the **APMC (agricultural produce market committee) Acts** to make them more competitive.
- Steps to ensure that farmers get one and a half times the cost as **Minimum Support Price (MSP)**, which along with the government procurement, is an important part of ensuring the country's food security.
- Development of a large network of **Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs)**.
- **Amendments in the Essential Commodities Act, 1955** to deal with the issue of grain wastage in India.
- Government is making efforts to make India Trans Fat free by 2022, a year ahead of the **World Health Organisation (WHO)** target, in synergy with the vision of New **India @75** (75 years of India's independence).
 - **Trans Fat** is a food toxin present in Partially Hydrogenated Vegetable Oils (PHVOs) (e.g. vanaspati, shortening, margarine, etc.), baked and fried foods.
 - It is a major contributor to the rise in **non-communicable diseases** in India and also a modifiable risk factor for **Cardio-Vascular Diseases (CVD)**. Eliminating CVD risk factor is especially relevant during **Covid-19** as people with CVD are predisposed to have serious conditions having an impact on mortality.

[Source: IE](#)

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