



International Tea Day

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Why in News

Recently, the **first International Tea Day** was observed on 21st May after it was designated by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2019.

- The UN General Assembly called on the **Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO is an agency of the United Nations)** to lead the observance of the day.
- May 21 was chosen because the **season of tea production begins in May** in most of the tea producing countries.

Key Points

- Tea is a beverage made from the **Camellia sinensis plant**. It is the world's most consumed drink, after water.
- **Origin:** It is believed that tea originated in **northeast India, north Myanmar and southwest China**, but the exact place where the plant first grew is not known. There is evidence that tea was consumed in China 5,000 years ago.
- **Economy:**
 - **Tea production and processing** constitutes a main source of livelihoods and subsistence for millions in developing and least developed countries.
 - It is a labour-intensive sector, providing jobs, especially in remote and economically disadvantaged areas.
 - Tea can play a **significant role in rural development, poverty reduction and food security** in developing countries, being one of the most important **cash crops**.

- **Sustainable Development:** Tea production and processing contributes towards various **sustainable development goals**:
 - Reduction of extreme poverty (Goal 1).
 - Fight against hunger (Goal 2).
 - Empowerment of women (Goal 5).
 - Sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems (Goal 15).
- **Plantation condition:**
 - Tea is a **tropical** and **sub-tropical plant** and grows well in moderately hot and humid climates.
 - The ideal temperature for its growth is 20°-30°C and temperatures above 35°C and below 10°C are harmful for the bush.
 - It requires 150-300 cm annual rainfall which should be well distributed throughout the year.
 - The most suitable soil for tea cultivation is **slightly acidic soil (without calcium)** with porous sub-soil which permits a free percolation of water.
- **Climate Change:**
 - Changes in temperature and rainfall patterns, with more floods and droughts, are already affecting yields, tea product quality and prices, lowering incomes and threatening rural livelihoods.
 - In parallel, there is a growing recognition of the need to contribute to **climate change** mitigation, by reducing carbon emissions from tea production and processing.
- FAO has designated 4 tea cultivation sites in **China, Korea** and **Japan** as **Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems**.
 - Pu'er Traditional Tea Agrosystem (China)
 - Fuzhou Jasmine and Tea Culture System (China)
 - Traditional Tea-grass Integrated System (Japan)
 - Traditional Hadong Tea Agrosystem, Hwagae-myeon (Republic of Korea)



Watch Video At:

https://youtu.be/M8tSwibr5_w

Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems

- Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) was started by the FAO to safeguard and support the **world's agricultural heritage systems**.
- GIAHS are outstanding landscapes of aesthetic beauty that combine agricultural biodiversity, resilient ecosystems and a valuable cultural heritage.
- **Three recognised GIAHS sites in India:**
 - Kuttanad Below Sea Level Farming System of **Kerala**.
 - Koraput Traditional Agriculture of **Odisha**.
 - Pampore Saffron Heritage of **Kashmir**.