



## World Food Day 2021

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### Why in News

**World Food Day** is celebrated every year on **October 16<sup>th</sup>** 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 101<sup>st</sup> 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' 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**