

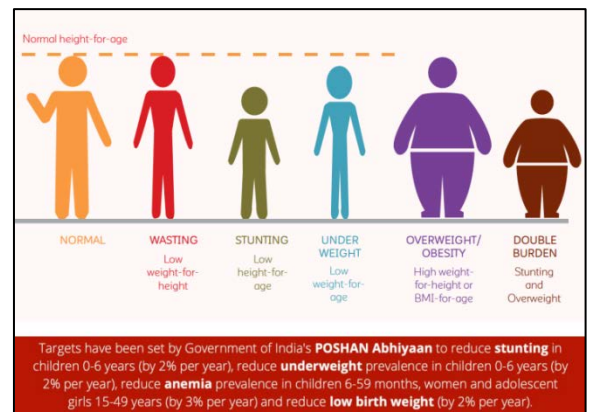


14 December, 2023

Asia and the Pacific Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition 2023

Context: High food, feed, and fuel prices, along with a slow pandemic recovery, have seriously affected the health and livelihoods of vulnerable people in the Asia-Pacific region, as per new report of FAO.

- **Impact of Higher Prices and Slow Pandemic Recovery:**
 - Around **55 million more people in Asia were undernourished in 2022** compared to pre-COVID-19 levels.
 - **Southern Asia is the most affected region**, with about half of the world's undernourished and food-insecure people residing in the Asia-Pacific region.
- **Gender Disparities in Nutrition:**
 - **Women in the region generally fare worse** in food insecurity compared to men, **except for Eastern Asia**.
 - Almost **one-tenth of women face severe food insecurity**, and nearly **one-fourth experience moderate food insecurity**.
- **Nutrition Challenges in Children:**
 - **Anaemia rates** among women of reproductive age still **fall short of global nutrition targets**.
 - Prevalence rates of **stunting, wasting, and obesity** in children **under five** are **rising**.
 - **Southern Asia has the highest percentage of children under five affected by wasting** compared to the global average in 2022.
- **Impact of COVID-19 and 5Fs Crisis:**
 - The region witnessed alarming statistics during the COVID-19 pandemic and the **"5Fs" crisis (food, feed, fuel, fertilizers, and finance)**.
 - Long-term effects of these crises continue to affect the region.
- **Regional Undernourishment Statistics:**
 - With a total of **370.7 million undernourished people**, Asia-Pacific represents **half of the global total**.
 - **Undernourishment in Asia and the Pacific fell to 8.4% in 2022**, down from 8.8% in the previous year, but still 55 million more than in 2019.
- **Cost of Healthy Diet and Affordability:**
 - Higher prices of food, fuel, fertilizers, and animal feed contribute to malnutrition and food security issues.
 - The **cost of a healthy diet rose by 5.3% in purchasing power parity**, with an **average cost of 4.15 purchasing power parity dollars per person per day** in the Asia-Pacific.
 - The cost of a healthy diet was estimated to be out of reach for 232.8 million people in the region, accounting for 85% of the total number of undernourished people.
- **Regional Disparities in Malnutrition:**
 - South-West Pacific Islands have one in every five people malnourished.
 - In 2021, 1.9 billion people in the region could not afford a healthy diet, showing improvement from 2020.
- **Undernourishment Trends:**
 - **Southern Asia had the most people (1.4 billion) who could not afford the cost of a healthy diet in 2021**.
 - South-eastern Asia saw an increase of 8.4 million people (0.9 percentage points) facing challenges in affording a healthy diet compared to 2020.



Revised Criminal Reform Bills introduced in Parliament

Context: The Centre presented three updated criminal reform Bills in Lok Sabha, replacing the earlier versions introduced in August this year.

- The Centre recently introduced revised criminal reform Bills in Lok Sabha, replacing versions presented in August.
- Originating from Union Home Minister Amit Shah, these Bills sought to replace significant legal frameworks, including the Indian Penal Code (IPC), the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), and the Indian Evidence Act.
- **Background**
 - On August 11, the Bills—**Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) 2023**, **Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) 2023**, and **Bharatiya Sakshya (BS) Bill 2023**—were introduced to modernize criminal laws.
 - Promptly referred to a **standing committee, chaired by BJP MP Brij Lal**, the Bills underwent scrutiny and received recommendations for amendments.
- **Committee Recommendations**
 - **Handcuffs**
 - The initial BNSS allowed the use of handcuffs for serious offences, including "economic offences."
 - The committee suggested restricting handcuffs for specific crimes. The new Bill adopts this by deleting "economic offences" from the provision, making it more focused.

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- **Mercy Petitions**
 - The committee proposed establishing a quasi-judicial board for mercy petitions.
 - The new Bill removes the provision forwarding mercy petitions to the Home Department, broadens the scope of unappealable orders, and changes the numbering from clause 473 to 472.
- **Preventive Detention Powers**
 - The BNSS 2023 expanded police powers in preventive action, lacking specified time limits.
 - The new Bill introduces a 24-hour time limit for detention and replaces "judicial magistrate" with a more general term, "Magistrate."
- **Community Service**
 - The earlier BNSS included "community service" without defining it.
 - The new Bill defines "community service" and adds clarity to its application as a form of punishment for specific offences.

➤ **Difference between CPC, IPC and CrPC**

Particulars	IPC (Indian Penal Code)	CrPC (Code of Criminal Procedure)
Purpose	Defines criminal actions and their corresponding punishments.	Outlines the process for investigation, trial, and punishment of criminal offenses.
Scope	Encompasses substantive criminal law, covering a wide range of offenses.	Primarily deals with criminal justice administration and procedural aspects.
Type	Substantive law providing the substance of criminal law.	Procedural law providing the procedures for enforcing criminal law.
Applicability	Applicable nationwide to the entire territory of India.	Applicable throughout India, with certain exceptions for Jammu and Kashmir.
Offense Categories	Categorizes offenses into sections, addressing crimes against persons, property, etc.	Focuses on procedures for arrest, bail, investigation, trial, and appeals.
Punishments	Prescribes punishments for various criminal offenses.	Establishes rules and guidelines for fair trial, sentencing, and appeals.
Functions	Defines what actions are considered crimes and their consequences.	Outlines the legal procedures to be followed during criminal proceedings.
Role	Serves as the primary source of substantive criminal law in India.	Facilitates the fair and efficient administration of criminal justice.
Integration	Works in conjunction with the CrPC to ensure proper enforcement of criminal laws.	Integrates with the IPC by providing the legal framework for criminal procedures.
Comprehensiveness	Covers a broad spectrum of offenses against persons, property, morality, etc.	Focuses on the procedural aspects, ensuring due process and protection of rights.
Implementation	Specifies the offenses and penalties applicable in different situations.	Ensures the lawful and just application of criminal laws during legal proceedings.
Examples	Offenses against the human body, property, women, public tranquility, etc.	Arrest procedures, bail hearings, trial processes, and appeals.

Global River City Alliance

Context: At the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Dubai, the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) inaugurates the Global River Cities Alliance.

➤ **Initiation and Partners:**

- **Launched by the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)** under India's Ministry of Jal Shakti.
- Partner countries include **Egypt, Netherlands, Denmark, Ghana, Australia, Bhutan, Cambodia, Japan, and global river cities like The Hague (Netherlands), Adelaide (Australia), Szolnok (Hungary).**
- International funding organizations **World Bank, Asian Development Bank, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank**, and knowledge partner **KPMG** are also part of GRCA.

➤ **Formation and Objectives:**

- International alliance initiated during the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) in Dubai, UAE, on December 12, 2023.
- Aims to promote river conservation and sustainable water management globally.
- Expands on the **River Cities Alliance (RCA) formed by NMCG in 2021.**

➤ **Aim and Scope:**

- Aims to drive large-scale adoption of sustainable river management practices globally.
- **Covers 275+ global river cities across 11 countries.**
- Focuses on climate action to coordinate river rejuvenation activities on a global scale.

➤ **Significance and Partners:**

- Presents a model of **multi-stakeholder and multi-country cooperation.**
- Partners **include countries, cities, funding agencies, and knowledge partners.**
- Signifies potential for global common action to drive local-level change.

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- **Promotion of Objectives:**
 - Platform for collaboration and knowledge exchange between stakeholders like governments, urban planners, and funding institutions.
 - Activities include twinning of cities, capacity building, and technical support.
 - Coordination for effective architecture and implementation of GRCA's objectives.
- **Key Activities:**
 - Workshops, capacity-building programs, and peer-to-peer learning through city twinning.
 - Publishing reports and case studies on global best practices.
 - Providing funding for research and pilot projects.
- **River Cities Alliance (RCA)**
 - **Formation and Members:**
 - Formed in 2021 by NMCG along with the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA).
 - Includes 142 Indian river cities as members.
 - **Objectives:**
 - Provides a common platform for member cities to discuss and exchange information on sustainable urban river management.
 - Promotes sharing of best practices and innovations among member cities.
- **National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)**
 - **Initiation and Mandate:**
 - Established in 2011 under the Ministry of Jal Shakti.
 - Serves as the implementation arm of the Namami Gange program.
 - Focuses on the rejuvenation of the Ganga river.
 - **Aims of NMCG and Namami Gange:**
 - Ensure effective abatement of pollution in the Ganga.
 - Improve water quality and ecology through integrated river basin management.
 - Achieve environmental and ecological sustainability in river basin development.
 - Water conservation through rainwater harvesting and aquifer recharge.
 - Involvement of stakeholders in cleaning initiatives, including industries and religious bodies.

NEWS IN BETWEEN THE LINES

Food and Agriculture Organization



Recently, a report released by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) revealed that about 55 million more people in Asia were undernourished in 2022 than before the COVID-19 pandemic, with Southern Asia most affected.

About the Food and Agriculture Organisation:

- The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations.
- It works to end hunger and achieve food security for all.
- Its goal is to ensure that people have access to enough high-quality food and lead healthy lives.
- It was founded on 16th October 1945 with the mandate to improve agricultural productivity and living conditions for rural populations.
- Its headquarter is in Rome, Italy.
- It operates in more than 130 countries worldwide, with 195 member countries including 194 nations and the European Union.

Yellow Smoke



Recently, on the 22nd anniversary of the attack on Parliament, two men jumped into the Lok Sabha chamber carrying canisters emitting yellow smoke.

About Yellow Smoke:

- Yellow-brown smog is a type of photochemical smog.
- It contains high levels of nitrogen, which gives it a yellow-brown colour.
- The major chemical pollutants contributing to photochemical smog include NO, NO₂, volatile organic compounds, ozone and PAN (Peroxyacetyl Nitrate).
- Some effects of smog including the development of allergies and asthma, induction of respiratory failure, decreased immunity of the body, induction of circulatory system and heart diseases, development of neoplastic diseases, etc.

Green Hydrogen



Recently, there's been a push to financially support export-focused green hydrogen projects, along with talks about creating multi-location SEZs for this purpose.

About Green Hydrogen:

- Green hydrogen is a colorless, odorless, tasteless, non-toxic and highly combustible gaseous substance.
- It is a clean source and has the potential to reduce carbon emissions.
- It is a type of hydrogen produced through the electrolysis of water using renewable energy sources like solar or wind energy.
- In countries like India, investing in the National Hydrogen Mission could lead to its use in transportation, power generation and various industries.
- It has the potential to replace traditional fertilizers in agriculture through the production of ammonia using renewable energy sources.

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Plutonium



On 14th December 1940, the element plutonium was first isolated by researchers at the University of California, Berkeley.

About Plutonium:

- Plutonium is a **radioactive, silvery-gray metallic element** with the **symbol Pu** and atomic number **94**.
- It is the element with the **highest atomic number** to occur naturally.
- It is one of the **heaviest elements** known and is primarily produced in nuclear reactors as a by-product of the fission of **uranium-238**.
- It is used in **nuclear power reactors, nuclear weapons** and **medicine**.
- This element hit international headlines in **August 1945** when the U.S. dropped two nuclear bombs on **Hiroshima** and **Nagasaki**.
- The American scientist who led the team that first isolated plutonium and shared the chemistry **Nobel Prize** in **1951** was **Glenn T. Seaborg**.

CCS and CDR



Recently, at the COP28 climate talks underway in Dubai, draft decisions thus far have referred to the abatement and removal of carbon emissions using CCS and CDR technologies.

About the CCS and CDR:

- Carbon capture and storage (CCS) and carbon dioxide removal (CDR) are both technologies that **reduce the amount of carbon dioxide (CO₂)** in the atmosphere.
- CCS is a climate change mitigation technology that **captures CO₂ from industrial processes** and **power plants** before it's released into the atmosphere.
- CDR removes CO₂ from the atmosphere, **cooling the planet**.
- It has a **net negative emission footprint**, while CCS has the potential to be carbon neutral.
- These sources include the **fossil fuel industry** (where **coal, oil** and **gas** are combusted to generate power) and industrial processes like **steel** and **cement production**.
- Projections suggest a need to sequester 5 billion tonnes of CO₂ by **2040** for a 50% chance of **limiting warming to 1.5 degrees C**.

Place in News

Portuguese Republic

India-Portugal Senior Consultative Body Meeting on Cooperation in the field of Public Administration and Governance Reforms held recently.

Portuguese Republic (Capital: Lisbon)

Location: The Portuguese Republic is located in southwestern Europe, on the Iberian Peninsula.

Boundaries: It shares its borders with Spain (North and East) and the Atlantic Ocean (West and South).

Physical Features:

- Portugal is dominated by two main mountain ranges: the **Serra da Estrela** in the center and the **Serra de Monchique** in the south.
- The country also has extensive plateaus, notably the **Trás-os-Montes Plateau** in the northeast.
- The **Tagus (Rio Tejo)** is the **longest river**, flowing through the capital city of Lisbon.
- The Portuguese Republic includes the archipelagos of the **Azores** and **Madeira**, both autonomous regions.



POINTS TO PONDER

- ❖ ASEAN members have decided to deny the rotational presidency to which country in 2026? - **Myanmar**
- ❖ Where was the first 'Global Symposium for Farmers' Rights' held? - **New Delhi**
- ❖ The YUVAi initiative is a partnership between the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology and which company? - **Meta**
- ❖ Which bank serves as the sponsor for the National Asset Reconstruction Company (NARCL)? - **Canara Bank**
- ❖ Under which Union Ministry does the Indian Medicines Pharmaceutical Corporation Limited operate? - **Ministry of Ayush**

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