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S.NO.	TOPIC
1.	3.21 LAKH APPEALS PENDING WITH INFORMATION COMMISSIONS
2.	MERA YUVA BHARAT
3.	GLOBAL HUNGER INDEX 2023

3.21 LAKH APPEALS PENDING WITH INFORMATION COMMISSIONS

SOURCE: [TH](#)

WHY IN NEWS?

- ✓ More than 3 lakh appeals and complaints are awaiting resolution in 27 State Information Commissions nationwide, and this backlog has been steadily increasing.
- ✓ **Maharashtra reports the highest number of pending cases at 1,15,524**, followed by Karnataka with 41,047 cases. Tamil Nadu did not provide its backlog information.
- ✓ Four Information Commissions (Jharkhand, Telangana, Mizoram, and Tripura) are non-functional as new Information Commissioners were not appointed after the previous ones left office.
- ✓ Six Information Commissions, including the Central Information Commission, and the State Information Commissions of Manipur, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Bihar, and Punjab, are currently without leadership.
- ✓ The '**Report Card on the Performance of Information Commissions in India, 2022-23**' is based on the analysis of Information Commissions' performance and data accessed under the Right to Information (RTI) Act by the **Satark Nagrik Sangathan (SNS)**, an organization dedicated to promoting transparency and accountability in governance.

ABOUT RIGHT TO INFORMATION ACT (RTI) 2005:

- ❖ The RTI Act was **passed by the Indian Parliament on June 15, 2005**, and it came into effect on October 12, 2005.
- ❖ The Act **provides all citizens the right to access information held by public authorities**, and these authorities are mandated to proactively disclose information.
- ❖ The **primary aim** of the legislation is **to enhance transparency and accountability in government offices.**
- ❖ **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:**
 - The RTI movement in India began in the 1990s at the grassroots level, **initiated by the Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangthan.**
 - It gained widespread support and attention across the country. The "**Shourie Committee**" was established as the Government-appointed Working Group in 1997.
 - In **2002, the Freedom of Information Act was passed** and was later replaced by the **Right to Information (RTI) Act of 2005.**
- ❖ **SALIENT FEATURES:**
 - The Act is **applicable to all levels of government, including central, state, and local bodies, as well as organizations substantially funded by the government, including NGOs.**
 - It mandates proactive disclosure of information, with secrecy being the exception.
 - Various authorities, such as the Central Information Commission (CIC) and State Information Commissions (SICs), Information Officers, and Appellate authorities, are established to enforce the Act.
 - The Act includes **fixed timelines for providing information**, with penalties for non-compliance. It overrides the Official Secrets Act in cases of inconsistency.
- ❖ **EXEMPTIONS AND EXCLUSIONS:**
 - The Act specifies exemptions for national security, sovereignty, economic interests, foreign relations, cabinet decisions, personal privacy, law enforcement, and other specific situations.
 - Intelligence and security agencies are generally excluded, but information related to allegations of corruption or human rights violations must not be withheld.



- Additionally, certain exempted information must be disclosed after 20 years, with some exceptions.
- ❖ **INCLUSION OF POLITICAL PARTIES:** In 2013, the CIC affirmed that political parties also fall under the definition of public authorities as per the RTI Act, making them subject to its provisions.

AMENDMENT OF RTI ACT IN 2019:

- The amendments grant the central government the authority to determine the tenure, salaries, and terms and conditions of service for Information Commissioners (ICs), including the Chief Information Commissioner (CIC) in the Central Information Commission (CIC), and the State Information Commissioners (SICs).
- The amendments also **empower the central government to establish rules pertaining to State ICs, essentially giving the executive, rather than the legislative branch,** control over the service conditions of the Information Commissioners.
- While the **original RTI Act accorded CICs and ICs a status equivalent to the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and Election Commissioners (ECs, similar to Supreme Court judges)** in terms of salaries and service conditions, **the amendments equate them with serving civil servants in the same pay grade.**
- **Reduce the tenure of CICs and ICs** in the Central Information Commission (CIC) and State Information Commissions (SICs) **from five years to three years.**
The Central Government is now authorized to relax the rules' provisions for specific groups or categories of individuals, which could lead to varying tenures for different commissioners upon appointment.

CENTRAL INFORMATION COMMISSION (CIC) AND STATE INFORMATION COMMISSIONS (SIC):

- ❖ **Establishment:** CIC and SIC are statutory bodies created under sections 12 and 15, respectively, of the RTI Act, 2005.
- ❖ **Objectives:** They are responsible for enforcing the provisions of the RTI Act, which include handling complaints, inquiries, and monitoring related to the right to information.

KEY FEATURES OF CIC AND SIC:

- ❖ **Composition:**
 - CIC comprises a Chief Information Commissioner and up to ten Information Commissioners.
 - SIC consists of a State Chief Information Commissioner and up to ten State Information Commissioners.
- ❖ **Appointment:**
 - **CIC** members are appointed by the President based on a committee's recommendation, including the Prime Minister, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, and a Union Cabinet Minister.
 - **SIC** members are appointed by the Governor based on a committee's recommendation, including the Chief Minister, Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Assembly, and a State Cabinet Minister.
- ❖ **Eligibility:** Members must have eminence in various fields but cannot be involved in politics or other specific activities.
- ❖ **Tenure:** The members serve a term specified by the Central Government or until they reach 65 years of age, whichever comes earlier.
- ❖ **Removal:** The President or Governor can remove members under specific circumstances and based on certain grounds, following a process involving the Supreme Court.
- ❖ **Salary and Allowances:** These are **determined by the Central Government**, as per the RTI Amendment Act of 2019.
- ❖ **Jurisdiction:**
 - CIC's authority extends over **all Central Public Authorities.**
 - SIC's authority extends over **all State Public Authorities.**



WHY SO MUCH PENDENCY OF APPEALS?

1. **Lack of Transparency:** There is insufficient transparency in the selection criteria and operations of CIC and SIC.
2. **Record Management Issues:** Inadequate record management procedures lead to delays in processing RTI applications.
3. **Vacancy Delays:** Vacancies in CIC are not promptly filled, leading to a backlog of cases.
4. **Capacity Building:** Many Public Information Officers lack knowledge about the RTI Act, causing delays in processing applications.
5. **Second Appeal Delays:** The RTI Act lacks a time limit for hearing and disposing of Second Appeals, leading to inefficiencies.
6. **Poor Information Quality:** Information provided by CPIOs is often of low quality and unsatisfactory to applicants.
7. **Low Public Awareness:** Awareness about RTI, particularly among marginalized communities, is limited.

WAY FORWARD:

1. **Digital Transformation:** Implement an efficient digital system for filing, processing, and tracking appeals to streamline the workflow.
2. **Enhanced Monitoring:** Create a robust monitoring mechanism to oversee the progress of pending appeals regularly.
3. **Capacity Building:** Provide training to Information Commissioners and staff to enhance their knowledge and efficiency in processing appeals.
4. **Strengthening Infrastructure:** Allocate resources to Information Commissions for upgrading their infrastructure, including modern record-keeping and data management systems.
5. **Transparency:** Enhance transparency by publishing appeal status and processing times on Information Commission websites.
6. **Reducing Redundancy:** Explore options to consolidate appeals with similar issues to expedite decision-making and reduce redundancy.
7. **Promote Awareness:** Launch awareness campaigns to educate citizens about the appeals process and their rights under the RTI Act.



MERA YUVA BHARAT

SOURCE: [PIB](#)

WHY IN NEWS?

The Union Cabinet has approved the establishment of Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat) as an autonomous body for youth development.

ABOUT MERA YUVA BHARAT:

- ❖ **BACKGROUND:** The establishment of MY Bharat responds to the changing world with rapid communication, social media, digital opportunities, and emerging technologies. It aims to engage and empower youth through a whole-of-government approach.
- ❖ **OBJECTIVE:** MY Bharat aims to become a comprehensive government platform for youth development, enabling youth to serve as community change agents and nation builders.
- ❖ **TARGET AGE GROUP:** MY Bharat will **benefit youth aged 15-29, aligning with the National Youth Policy's definition of 'Youth.'** For specific programs targeting adolescents, beneficiaries will be in the age group of 10-19 years.
- ❖ **LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT:**
 - Enhance leadership skills through experiential learning, shifting from physical interaction to programmatic skills.
 - Invest in youth to nurture them as social innovators and community leaders.
 - Focus on youth-led development, making them active drivers of progress, not just passive recipients.
- ❖ **ALIGNMENT WITH YOUTH ASPIRATIONS:** MY Bharat seeks to better align the aspirations of youth with the needs of their communities.
- ❖ **CONVERGENCE OF PROGRAMS:** Improve efficiency through the convergence of existing youth development programs.
- ❖ **ONE-STOP SHOP:** MY Bharat will serve as a centralized platform for young people and various government ministries.
- ❖ **CENTRALIZED YOUTH DATABASE:** Create a centralized database of youth to facilitate targeted interventions.
- ❖ **ENHANCED COMMUNICATION:** Establish two-way communication channels to connect youth with government initiatives and engage with other stakeholders working with youth.
- ❖ **PHYGITAL ECOSYSTEM:** Ensure accessibility through the creation of a phygital (physical and digital) ecosystem.

DEMOGRAPHICS BY MID-2023

INDIA	CHINA
26% in 10-24 age group	18% in 10-24 age group
7% to be 65 yrs & above	14% to be 65 yrs & above

UN PROJECTIONS FOR WORLD POPULATION	TALENT MATTERS MORE: BEIJING
804.5 CR BY JUNE-END	<p>“What matters more is talent resource. Nearly 90 cr Chinese are of working age and have had 10.9 years of education.” Wang Wenbin, CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESMAN</p>
850 CR IN 2030	
970 CR IN 2050	
1040 CR IN 2100	

UNDERSTANDING INDIA'S DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDEND:

BACKGROUND: India's population dynamics have evolved significantly since gaining independence. The country has experienced both population growth and a decrease in the total fertility rate (TFR) over time. Although there have been improvements in various mortality indicators, there are challenges in fully utilizing the demographic dividend for enhancing living standards, skill development, and employment generation.

POPULATION GROWTH:

- India currently accounts for 17.5% of the global population.
- According to the UN World Population Prospects 2022, India is poised to become the world's most populous nation by 2023, surpassing China, with a population of 1.4 billion.
- This marks a four-fold increase since Independence when India's population stood at 340 million.
- Projections indicate that India will reach 1.5 billion by 2030 and 1.66 billion by 2050.



- As per the UNFPA's 'State of World Population' report 2023, India's population is now 1,428.6 million, making it the most populous nation globally.
- A significant portion, 68%, of India's population falls within the 15-64 years age group, with 26% in the 10-24 years category, positioning India as one of the world's youngest countries.

DECLINE IN TFR:

- India's Total Fertility Rate (TFR) has substantially decreased, dropping below the replacement level of 2.1 children per woman in 2021.
- In the 1950s, India had a TFR of six, but many states have now achieved a TFR of two, except for Bihar, UP, Jharkhand, Manipur, and Meghalaya.
- The National Family Health Survey 5 (2019-21) revealed that India reached a TFR of 2.0 for the first time, falling from 2.2 in NFHS 4 (2015-16).

IMPROVEMENTS IN MORTALITY INDICATORS:

- Despite challenges, India has shown improvements in various mortality indicators.
- Life expectancy at birth has significantly increased, rising from 32 years in 1947 to 71 years in 2023, with a slightly lower figure of 74 years for women.
- The infant mortality rate has seen substantial decline, from 133 in 1951 to 27 in 2020. In 2023, the rate is 26.619 deaths per 1000 live births, marking a 3.89% reduction from 2022.
- The under-five mortality rate has dropped from 250 to 35.
- Maternal mortality ratio has also decreased from 2,000 in the 1940s to 103 in 2023.

DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDEND:

With 68% of its population in the youth and working-age bracket, India possesses one of the world's largest workforces, providing a global advantage.

India has a substantial window of opportunity extending into the 2040s to harness its "demographic dividend."

NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF POPULATION EXPLOSION ON DEVELOPMENT PROSPECTS:

- **Overcrowding:** Rapid population growth can lead to overcrowding, which strains resources and infrastructure, and can increase crime rates.
- **Environmental Degradation:** Large populations may overuse natural resources, causing deforestation, desertification, and water scarcity. This leads to various forms of pollution, including air, water, and soil pollution.
- **Reduced Quality of Life:** Population growth can result in a lower quality of life due to resource scarcity, a high cost of living, and inadequate infrastructure. For instance, areas like Dharavi are known for slum sprawls.
- **Strains on the Economy:** Rapid population growth places pressure on the economy. It increases government spending on social services and infrastructure, reduces resources available for research and development, and can make job opportunities scarce. The 2017 Venezuela crisis is a pertinent example.
- **Increased Competition for Resources:** Growing populations lead to heightened competition for essential resources like food, housing, and healthcare.

POSITIVE IMPACTS OF POPULATION GROWTH:

- **A Larger Workforce:** A growing population implies a larger workforce, which can drive productivity and economic growth when these individuals are gainfully employed and adequately skilled.
- **Innovation and Entrepreneurship:** A larger population fosters innovation and entrepreneurship, with more individuals contributing ideas and expanding the market for new businesses.
- **Increased Demand:** Growing populations boost demand for goods and services, stimulating economic growth if production capacity can keep up.



- Greater Economies of Scale: Population growth can lower the cost of producing goods and services, enabling companies to reduce prices while maintaining profits.

WAY AHEAD & OTHER MEASURES TO UTILIZE DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDEND:

- **Investing in Education:** Empowering young people with education is crucial to ensure they become productive members of the workforce. Initiatives like the New Education Policy 2020 and Skill India mission are examples.
- **Improving Access to Healthcare:** Ensuring that people have access to healthcare is vital for maintaining a healthy workforce and reducing absenteeism and disability. Programs like Janani Suraksha Yojana, Integrated Child Development Scheme, and Universal Immunization Programme aim to improve healthcare access.
- **Creating Job Opportunities:** Generating job opportunities is essential to help the growing working-age population find employment. Schemes like MGNREGA address this.
- **Promoting Entrepreneurship:** Encouraging entrepreneurship and supporting small and medium-sized enterprises can create jobs and drive economic growth. Initiatives like StartUp India and StandUp India promote entrepreneurship.
- **Investing in Infrastructure:** Investment in infrastructure is crucial, especially in overpopulated regions, to support economic growth. The PM Gati Shakti scheme focuses on enhancing transportation and communication infrastructure.
- **Encouraging Savings and Investment:** Policies promoting savings and investment, including tax incentives, can stimulate economic growth.
- **Strengthening Governance and Institutions:** Fostering a favourable policy environment for family planning through measures like the National Population Policy 2020 and the Family Planning Program of 1977 is essential to harness the demographic dividend.

Many developed nations have successfully leveraged their advantageous demographic phases to achieve higher economic growth and improved living standards.

- ❖ **CHINA'S EXEMPLARY PATH TO SUPERPOWER STATUS:** China stands as a prominent example of harnessing its demographic dividend from the early 1980s to around 2008-2009. During this period, China's strategic policies set it on the path to becoming a superpower.
- ❖ **FACTORS BEHIND CHINA'S ACHIEVEMENT:** China's remarkable success can be attributed to its early emphasis on labour-intensive manufacturing and subsequent structural transformations. These strategies led to an unprecedented annual average growth rate of nearly 10% over four decades.
- ❖ **Success Stories in East Asia:** Countries like Japan (from the mid-1950s to the late 1980s), South Korea (from the early 1990s until 2015), as well as Malaysia and Singapore, have consistently experienced growth by implementing structural changes to maximize the benefits of their demographic dividend.



GLOBAL HUNGER INDEX 2023

SOURCE: [INDIAN EXPRESS](#),

WHY IN NEWS?

- In the 2023 Global Hunger Index, **India ranks 111th out of the 125 countries** with sufficient data to calculate **2023 GHI scores**.
- With a score of **28.7** in the 2023 Global Hunger Index, India has a level of hunger that is serious.

WHAT IS GLOBAL HUNGER INDEX

- The Global Hunger Index (GHI) is an **annual report** published by **Concern Worldwide and Welthungerhilfe**.
- It is a tool designed to **measure and track hunger globally, regionally, and nationally**.
- The GHI **reflects multiple dimensions of hunger** and changes over time.
- It aims to **raise awareness about the fight against hunger**.
- It helps **compare hunger levels between countries and regions**.
- The **GHI highlights areas with the highest hunger levels** and the need for more efforts to combat hunger.

HOW THE GHI IS CALCULATED

Each country's GHI score is calculated based on a formula that combines **four indicators that together capture the multidimensional nature of hunger**:

- **Undernourishment**
 - ✓ Measures inadequate **food access**, an important indicator of hunger.
 - ✓ Refers to the **entire population, both children and adults**.
 - ✓ Is used as a **lead indicator for international hunger reduction targets, including Sustainable Development Goal 2 (Zero Hunger)**
- **Child stunting & Child wasting**
 - ✓ Go beyond **calorie availability**, consider aspects of **diet quality and utilization**.
 - ✓ **Reflect children's particular vulnerability** to nutritional deficiencies.
 - ✓ Are **sensitive to uneven distribution** of food within the household.
 - ✓ Are **used as nutrition indicators for SDG 2 (Zero Hunger)**.
- **Child mortality**
 - ✓ Reflects that **death is the most serious consequence of hunger**, and children are the most vulnerable.
 - ✓ **Improves the GHI's ability to reflect deficiencies** of essential vitamins and minerals.



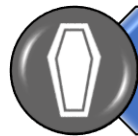
Undernourishment: the share of the population whose caloric intake is insufficient



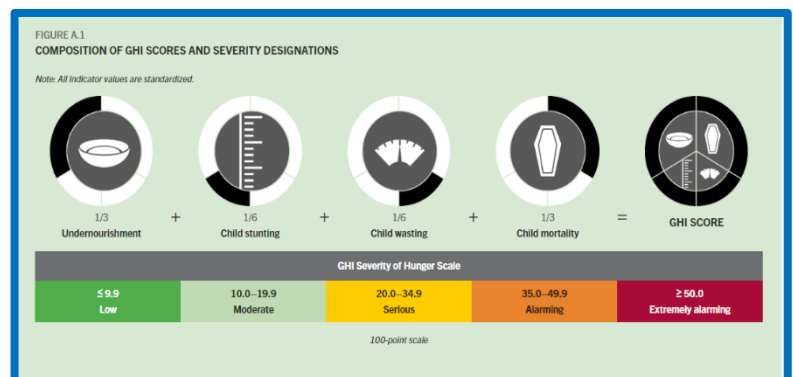
Child stunting: the share of children under the age of five who have low height for their age, reflecting chronic undernutrition



Child wasting: the share of children under the age of five who have low weight for their height, reflecting acute undernutrition



Child mortality: the share of children who die before their fifth birthday, reflecting in part the fatal mix of inadequate nutrition and unhealthy environments.

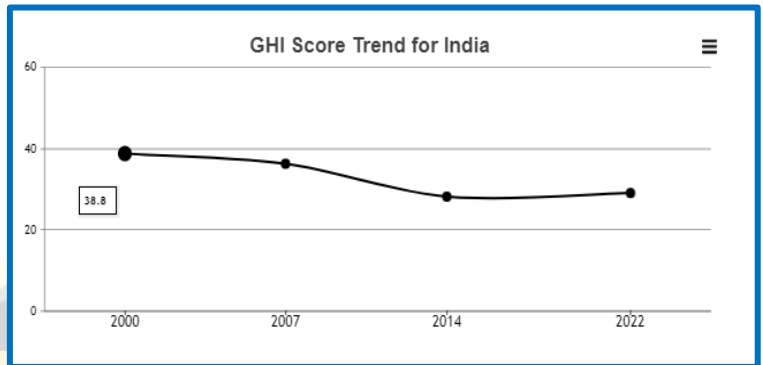
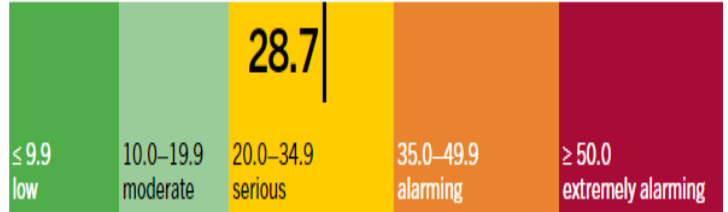




✓ Complements stunting and wasting, which only partially capture the mortality risk of undernutrition

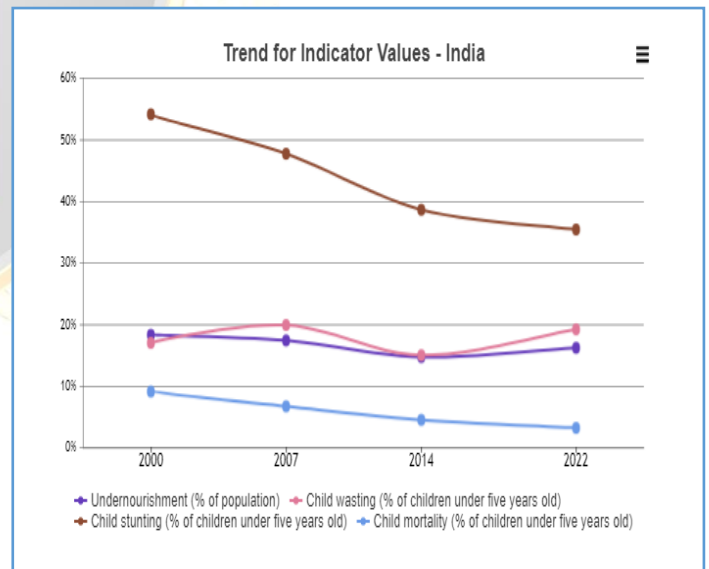
HUNGER SITUATION IN INDIA

- In 2023, India's Global Hunger Index (GHI) score is **28.7**, indicating a serious level of hunger on the GHI Severity of Hunger Scale.
- This score is slightly better than its 2015 GHI score of **29.2**, which was also considered serious.
- It shows significant improvement compared to its alarming GHI scores in 2000 (38.4) and 2008 (35.5).
- In the 2023 GHI report, India is ranked **111th out of 125 countries**.
- India has the highest child wasting rate in the report, at **18.7 percent**.
- The child stunting rate in India is **35.5 percent**.
- The prevalence of undernourishment is **16.6 percent**.
- The under-five mortality rate is **3.1 percent**.



How does India compare with its neighboring countries?

Country	GHI Rank
India	111
Pakistan	102 nd
Bangladesh	81 st
Nepal	69 th
Sri Lanka	60 th
South Asia Average	27 (Score)
Africa South of the Sahara Average	27 (Score)



GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE

Initiative	Objective
<i>Eat Right India Movement</i>	Encourage citizens to make healthier food choices.
<i>POSHAN Abhiyan</i>	Reduce stunting, undernutrition, and anemia among children and women.
<i>Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana</i>	Provide maternity benefits to women during pregnancy and lactation.
<i>Food Fortification</i>	Enhance the nutritional content of staple foods with key vitamins



	and minerals.
<i>National Food Security Act, 2013</i>	Legally entitle a significant portion of the population to receive subsidized food grains.
<i>Mission Indradhanush</i>	Immunize children under 2 years of age and pregnant women against vaccine-preventable diseases.
<i>Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme</i>	Offer a range of services, including nutrition, health education, and immunization, to children, pregnant women, and lactating mothers.

WHAT CHANGES WOULD BE NEEDED TO IMPROVE INDIA'S RANKING?

- India has made efforts to address food and nutrition issues through initiatives like the **National Food Security Act, Poshan Abhiyan (National Nutrition Mission), PM Garib Kalyan Yojna, and National Mission for Natural Farming.**
- However, there is still room for improvement, particularly in **reducing child wasting and child stunting rates.**
- **India's child wasting rate, at 18.7 percent, is the highest globally, and its child stunting rate, at 35.5 percent, is the 15th-highest.**
- To improve its GHI score and ranking, India **needs to make more significant improvements** than other countries in the report.
- It's essential to note that **GHI rankings should not be compared year to year, as they depend on various factors and conditions that can change over time.**

Prelims Specific

Global Nutrition Report (GNR)

The Global Nutrition Report—**published annually by a multistakeholder initiative**—reports on countries' progress toward meeting global **nutrition targets, evaluates the impact of poor diets** on human health and the planet, assesses the nutrition financing landscape, and provides a comprehensive **overview of reporting on past Nutrition for Growth (N4G) commitments.**

Global Food Security Index (GFSI)

- ✓ The annual Global Food Security Index (GFSI) is based on a **model constructed from 58 indicators** that measure drivers of food **security across 113 low-, middle-, and high-income countries.**
- ✓ **The indicators fall into four categories: food affordability, food availability, food quality and safety, and natural resources and resilience.**
- ✓ The index was **designed and constructed by Economist Impact, part of the Economist Group.**



UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q1. Which of the following is/are the indicator/ indicators used by IFPRI to compute the Global Hunger Index Report? (2016)

1. Undernourishment
2. Child stunting
3. Child mortality

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1, 2 and 3
- (d) 1 and 3 only

Q2. Very recently, in which of the following countries have lakhs of people either suffered from severe famine/acute malnutrition or died due to starvation caused by war/ethnic conflicts? (2018)

- (a) Angola and Zambia
- (b) Morocco and Tunisia
- (c) Venezuela and Colombia
- (d) Yemen and South Sudan

Q3. Which of the following are the objectives of 'National Nutrition Mission'? (2017)

To create awareness relating to malnutrition among pregnant women and lactating mothers.

To reduce the incidence of anaemia among young children, adolescent girls and women.

To promote the consumption of millets, coarse cereals and unpolished rice.

To promote the consumption of poultry eggs.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 1, 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1, 2 and 4 only
- (d) 3 and 4 only

Mains

Q. There is a growing divergence in the relationship between poverty and hunger in India. The shrinking of social expenditure by the government is forcing the poor to spend more on non-food essential items squeezing their food-budget. Elucidate. (2019)

Q. Hunger and Poverty are the biggest challenges for good governance in India still today. Evaluate how far successive governments have progressed in dealing with these humongous problems. Suggest measures for improvement. (2017)