

What does the Global Hunger Index 2024 state about India?

Why has the Ministry of Women and Child Development raised concerns over the data collection method?

Saptaparno Ghosh

The story so far:

The Global Hunger Index for 2024 states that a 'serious' level of hunger is prevalent in India. It ranks India 105th among 127 countries, giving it a score of 27.3. A score below 9.9 indicates low levels of hunger, 10-19.9 moderate, 35-49.9 alarming and above 50 extremely alarming.

What does it state about India?

The score is based on four broad parameters, that is, child stunting (share of children under five with lower height proportional to their age, reflecting chronic undernutrition), undernourishment (share of population with insufficient caloric intake), child wasting (share of children under five with lower weight proportional to their height) and child mortality (share of children who die before their fifth birthday). The report traced 13.7% of the population to be undernourished, 35.5% of children as

stunted, 18.7% of children wasted and 2.9% of children dying before their fifth birthday. As per the survey, India has the highest child wasting rate globally.

However, the analysis states that India has demonstrated "significant political will" to transform the food and nutrition landscape – pointing to the National Food Security Act, Poshan Abhiyan (National Nutrition Mission), PM Garib Kalyan Yojna (PMGKAY) and National Mission for Natural Farming. But the report argues there exists room for improvement. To illustrate a solution, the report points to the co-relation between the poor nutritional status of mothers being transferred onto their children. There exists an 'intergenerational pattern of undernutrition' where the factors driving India's high child wasting rate entail mothers inflicted with insufficient weight gain during pregnancy and low birth weight among infants.

What about India's GDP growth?

The report states that the relationship

between per capita GDP growth and low levels of hunger is "not always direct or guaranteed". In other words, GDP growth alone does not result in improved food and nutritional security for the entire populace. Thus, the report puts forth the imperative for policies to emphasise pro-poor development alongside addressing social/economic inequalities.

What solutions does it propose?

Broadly, the report proposes a multifaceted approach such as improved access to social safety nets, addressing complementary factors relating to well-being and nutrition, alongside dedicated approaches to assessing and provisioning nutritional needs. The first of the proposed measures entail improved access to safety nets and cash transfers. These, the report states, involve improving access to programs such as the Public Distribution Scheme (PDS), PMGKAY and Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS). Other than this, it proposes investments in

India, Pak. avoid blaming each other at SCO meeting

Jaishankar and Ishaq Dar interact 'informally' during the first visit by an Indian Foreign Minister to Pakistan in nine years; atmosphere of exchanges more positive than in previous encounters'

Suhasini Haidar
ISLAMABAD

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and his Pakistani counterpart Ishaq Dar held an "informal interaction" at the conclusion lunch for the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Council of Heads of Government meeting in Islamabad on Wednesday.

Officials confirmed the interaction even as a short video clip that appeared online showed the Ministers of the two countries speaking at a table seated next to each other.

The lunch was hosted by Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif who chaired the SCO session where, unlike on past occasions, both India's and Pakistan's national statements avoided contentious



Key meeting: External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar with Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad on Wednesday. PTI

language on sensitive issues.

According to sources, Mr. Jaishankar had also held a brief discussion with Mr. Dar at the SCO dinner on Tuesday evening as well, where they were joined by Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, who is also Chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board. Pakistan

has been keen to host the Indian team as part of the Champions Trophy due to be held in Pakistan in early 2025, but the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has not confirmed their participation.

Officials stressed that the conversation was part of normal diplomatic discourse, given that Mr.

Jaishankar was attending the lunch along with dignitaries from all 10 SCO nations including Russia, China, Iran, Belarus, and the central Asian states, and that "all leaders talked to each other during lunch and in the waiting lounge".

The exchange reflected a much warmer note than similar previous encounters, including at the SCO Foreign Ministers' meeting in Goa in 2023, and the UN General Assembly meet last month.

Leaving Islamabad at the end of what had been the first visit by an Indian External Affairs Minister to Pakistan in nine years, Mr. Jaishankar thanked Mr. Sharif and Mr. Dar, commending them for a "productive" meet.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 12

Army to commemorate 62 years of the Battle of Walong with China

Dinakar Peri
NEW DELHI

To mark the 62nd anniversary of the iconic Battle of Walong during the 1962 war with China, the Army is planning a month-long series of commemorative events beginning on Thursday. They will continue till November 14. In addition to a series of activities, the newly renovated Walong War Memorial, Shaurya Sthal at Lama Spur, and some key infrastructure projects in the border areas are also set to be inaugurated.

In 1962, the Indian Army halted the advancing People's Liberation Army soldiers for 27 days which forced them to commit their reserve Division from Tawang Sector to Walong as fierce battles unfolded in the unforgiving terrain



Last stand: The Walong War Memorial commemorating the iconic battle of 1962 in Arunachal Pradesh. DINAKAR PERI

of Kibithu, Namti Tri Junction (famously known as Tiger's Mouth), Walong, and adjoining features.

In October 1962, as Chinese forces advanced into the eastern most parts of Arunachal Pradesh, the task of defending it fell on the 11 Infantry Brigade under the Second Infantry Division. The Brigade had 6 Kumaon regiment, 4 Sikh

regiment, third battalion of 3 Gorkha Rifles, in addition to second battalion of 8 Gorkha Rifles and 4 Dogra.

The Chinese offensive with more than 4,000 soldiers could not breach the forward defences held with 800 men for over 27 days and the Chinese Army was subsequently forced to employ additional division size force of approximately

15,000 soldiers. Vastly outnumbered and with little ammunition and no resources, the Indian soldiers fought till the last man, last round. Capturing this, the *Time* magazine wrote in January 1963, "At Walong, Indian troops lacked everything. The only thing they did not lack was guts."

This year's commemoration promises a vibrant mix of activities aimed at engaging the local communities and honouring the memory of the fallen heroes, one Army official said. "The events include white water rafting, motor-cycle rallies, bicycle rallies, battlefield treks, adventure treks and a half marathon, all designed to reflect the adventurous spirit of the Indian Army in the rugged terrain of Arunachal Pradesh."

Centre increases MSP for wheat, five other rabi crops

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Better support



The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs on Wednesday increased the minimum support price (MSP) for rabi crops for the next marketing season of 2025-26 with the MSP for wheat going up by ₹150 a quintal. The new MSP for a quintal of wheat is ₹2,425 in comparison to ₹2,275 per quintal, which was in place for the 2024-25 season.

The Cabinet increased the minimum support prices for rabi crops

Crop	MSP for rabi 2025-26*	MSP for rabi 2024-25*	Increase in MSP
Wheat	₹2,425	₹2,275	₹150
Barley	₹1,980	₹1,850	₹130
Gram	₹5,650	₹5,440	₹210
Lentil (masoor)	₹6,700	₹6,425	₹275
Rapeseed & mustard	₹5,950	₹5,650	₹300
Safflower	₹5,940	₹5,800	₹140

(*per quintal)

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 12
DA HIKE APPROVED
» PAGE 13

Omar Abdullah sworn-in as J&K CM

SRINAGAR, Oct 16 (PTI)

NATIONAL Conference leader Omar Abdullah took oath as the Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday, heading the first elected Government in the Union Territory since 2019 when Article 370 was abrogated and one the Congress is staying away from for now.

As Jammu and Kashmir turned another page in its troubled history, Lt Governor Manoj Sinha administered the oath of office and secrecy to Abdullah and five ministers, including Surinder Choudhary from Jammu who is Deputy Chief Minister.

Abdullah, who takes over as Chief Minister for a second term, is the third generation of the influential Abdullah fami-

Jammu's Surinder Choudhary is Dy CM



Jammu and Kashmir Lt. Governor Manoj Sinha, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and other leaders at the swearing-in ceremony of new J&K Government in Srinagar on Wednesday. (PTI)

Congress not to join the Council of Ministers in newly-formed J&K Government

ly to occupy the office -- after his grandfather Sheikh Abdullah and father Farooq Abdullah. His first term as Chief Minister was from 2009 to 2014 when Jammu and Kashmir was a full-fledged State.

The five Ministers sworn in were Choudhary, Sakina Masood (Itoo), Javed Dar, Javed Rana and Satish Sharma -- three from Jammu and two from the Kashmir Valley, a clear effort to assuage some of the

Centre will work closely with CM Omar: PM Modi

NEW DELHI, Oct 16 (PTI)

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday congratulated Omar Abdullah on being sworn in as the Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, and said the Centre will work closely with him and his team for J&K's progress.

In a post on X, Modi said, "Congratulations to Shri Omar Abdullah Ji on taking oath as the Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir. Wishing him the very best in his efforts to serve the people." "The Centre will work closely with him and his team for J&K's progress," PM said.

apprehensions of people in (Contd on page 5)

OVER 140 KILLED as fuel tanker explodes in Nigeria

ABUJA (Nigeria), Oct 16 (AP)

MORE than 140 people were killed and 50 others injured in north-western Nigeria as they tried to scoop up fuel from an overturned petrol tanker causing the vehicle to explode in flames, the emergency services said on Wednesday.

The accident occurred at midnight in Jigawa State's Majiya town after the tanker driver lost control of the vehicle while travelling on a highway, local police spokesperson Lawan Adam said.

Ninety-seven people were "burned to ashes" at the scene while eight others died at the hospital, Dr. Haruna Mairiga, head of the Jigawa State Emergency Management Agency, told The Associated



Press. Deadly tanker accidents are common in Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, where traffic regulations are not strictly enforced in many places and there is a lack of alternatives such as an efficient railway system to transport cargo. It is also common for people to salvage fuel with cups and buckets to take home after such accidents. The practice has become more common amid Nigeria's

soaring fuel prices, which have tripled since the start of last year as Nigeria ended costly gas subsidies. The driver involved in the latest accident had travelled about 110 kilometres (68 miles) from the neighbouring Kano state, police said.

Residents who heard about the accident rushed to the scene and were scooping up fuel, "sparking a massive inferno", police spokesman Lawan

Adam said. Videos that appeared to be from the scene showed a massive fire stretching across the entire area, with what appeared to be bodies littered at the scene.

Residents in Majiya town were in mourning on Wednesday morning as locals held a mass burial for the victims. Most of the bodies were unrecognisable, the emergency services said.

"If they knew (about the danger), they wouldn't have gone to fetch (the fuel)," said Mairiga, head of the emergency services. He said emergency services only arrived at the scene several hours after the accident. "But the incident had already happened ... Those caught up (in the fire) were burned to ashes," Mairiga said.