

The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World Report 2024

- The report is prepared by five specialized United Nations agencies: **FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP, and WHO.**
- **Theme of the Report** focuses on **financing to end hunger, food insecurity, and malnutrition in all its forms.**
- **Need for a New Definition**
 - **Lack of Clarity:** There isn't a clear understanding of the financial resources used for food security and nutrition.
 - **Multiple Definitions:** These create issues such as underfunded areas, accountability problems for institutions, and difficulties in tracking progress.
- **New Definition**
 - **The report introduces** a new definition of financing for food security and nutrition.
 - **This includes public and private financial resources**, both domestic and foreign, aimed at eradicating hunger, food insecurity, and all forms of malnutrition.
 - **The goal is to ensure** the availability, access, utilization, and stability of nutritious and safe foods, as well as to strengthen the resilience of agrifood systems.
- **Current Gaps in Financing**
 - **Public Spending:** Per capita spending on agriculture is very low and not steadily growing in low-income countries (LICs) and lower-middle-income countries (LMICs).
 - **Development Assistance:** Less than a quarter of official development assistance and other official flows are directed towards food security and nutrition, indicating it is not a high priority for donors.
- **Status of Food Security and Nutrition**
 - **SDG 2 Goal:** The world is far from achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2, which aims for Zero Hunger.
 - **Hunger Statistics:** In 2023, 1 in 11 people globally faced hunger.
 - **Undernourishment:** An estimated 713 to 757 million people were undernourished in 2023.
 - **Food Insecurity:** About 28.9% of the global population experienced moderate or severe food insecurity in 2023.

India Ranks 82nd On Global Passport Index With Visa-Free Access To 58 Countries

- India is ranked **82nd on the global passport index**, allowing visa-free entry **to 58 countries**, including **Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand.**
- This ranking is provided by the **UK-based Henley Passport Index** and is based on data from the International Air Transport Association (**IATA**).
- Singapore holds the top spot in the index, with its citizens enjoying visa-free access to **195 countries.**
- Japan, which was previously ranked first, has moved to second place, sharing this position with Spain, France, Germany, and Italy.
 - Passports from these five countries allow **visa-free entry to 192 destinations.**
- The Henley Passport Index ranks countries based on the travel freedom their citizens have with their ordinary passports.

Angel Tax

- To strengthen the Indian startup ecosystem, the Budget 2024 announced the removal of the angel tax for all types of investors, **effective April 1, 2025.**
- **What is Angel Tax?**
 - Angel tax was introduced in **2012 under the Finance Act.**
 - It is an income tax imposed on funding received by unlisted companies or startups if their valuation exceeds the company's fair market value. This tax falls under **Section 56(2)(viib)** of the **Income Tax Act.**
 - **Scope:** Initially, angel tax only applied to local investors. However, the Budget for the 2023-24 fiscal year (April 2023 to March 2024) expanded it to include foreign investors as well.
 - **Purpose:** The tax was introduced to curb money laundering and prevent unaccounted funds from entering the economy.
 - **Controversy:** Startups and investors have criticized the angel tax, claiming it hampers innovation and fundraising efforts.

National Mission on Cultural Mapping (NMCM)

➤ The **Ministry of Culture** has launched the **National Mission on Cultural Mapping (NMCM)**.

➤ Objectives of NMCM:

- **Cultural Heritage Awareness:** To raise awareness about the strengths of cultural heritage and its connection to development and cultural identity.
- **Cultural Mapping:** To map 650,000 villages, documenting their geographical and demographic profiles, as well as their creative resources.
- **National Registers:** To create national registers of artists and art practices.
- **Digital Platform:** To develop a web portal and mobile app that will serve as a National Cultural Workplace (NCWP).

Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Unnat Gram Abhiyan

➤ During the Union Budget presentation, the Finance Minister announced the upcoming launch of the **Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Unnat Gram Abhiyan**.

➤ Objectives:

- **Socio-Economic Improvement:** To improve the socio-economic conditions of tribal communities.
- **Saturation Coverage:** The scheme will provide comprehensive coverage for tribal families in tribal-majority villages and aspirational districts.
- **Empowerment Through Interventions:** The saturation approach focuses on enhancing capabilities and empowering people through targeted efforts in education, health, and skill development.
- **Scope:** The initiative aims to cover 63,000 villages and benefit 5 crore tribal people across the country.

Domestic Money Transfer (DMT)

➤ The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has revised the framework for domestic money transfer.

➤ Key Points:

- The **Domestic Money Transfer (DMT)** framework was **originally introduced in 2011**.
- The **RBI** revised the framework under the **Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007**.
 - **Reason for Review:** The review was prompted by a significant increase in banking outlets and advancements in payment systems for funds transfers.
 - **Effective Date:** The revised framework will take effect on November 1, 2024

Artificial Reefs Deployed off Rameshwaram, Tamil Nadu

➤ 300 artificial reefs have been deployed off the coast of **Rameshwaram, Tamil Nadu**.

➤ About Artificial Reefs:

- **Purpose:** Artificial reefs are technology interventions aimed at rehabilitating or improving natural habitats, increasing productivity, and managing aquatic resources through habitat enhancement.
- **Promotion:** The Department of Fisheries is promoting artificial reefs under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana to rejuvenate coastal fisheries.

➤ Advantages:

- **Coastal Protection:** Reduce wave damage on coasts and help regenerate marine ecosystems, acting as a carbon sink.
- **Recreational and Economic Benefits:** Enhance recreational fisheries and eco-tourism, create suitable areas for diving, and reduce conflicts.
- **Environmental Protection:** Restrict bottom trawling in nearshore areas.

Bolivia Joins MERCOSUR as a Full Member

➤ About MERCOSUR:

- MERCOSUR is the **Southern Common Market in Latin America**, known by its **Spanish initials**.
- **Establishment:** Founded by **Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay in 1991**.
 - Venezuela and Bolivia joined later, but Venezuela has been suspended since December 1, 2016.
- **Objective:** To facilitate the free movement of goods, services, capital, and people among its member countries.
- **India has a Preferential Trade Agreement with MERCOSUR.**