World Food Day 2026 (16 October) – 'Innovate today. Nourish tomorrow.'

Important Days · 15 October 2026 · https://www.shanmugamiasacademy.in/current-affairs-english/2026/10/15



News

16 October, the day the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) was founded, is World Food Day. The 2026 theme is 'Innovate today. Nourish tomorrow.' – with events in about 150 countries and the main event at FAO headquarters in Rome. FAO's State of Food Security and Nutrition (SOFI 2026) report says about 645 million people (7.8%) faced hunger in 2025 – 14 million fewer than in 2024.

Key facts

2026 theme	Innovate today. Nourish tomorrow.
FAO	16 Oct 1945, Quebec City (Canada); HQ Rome; 194 Member Nations + the EU; Director-General Qu Dongyu (China)
Origin	Proposed by Hungary at the 1979 FAO Conference; first World Food Day – 1981 ('Food comes first')
Hunger (SOFI 2026)	About 645 million (7.8%) in 2025; 1 in 5 in Africa
Earlier themes	2025 – Hand in Hand for Better Foods and a Better Future; 2024 – Right to foods for a better life and a better future

Background

- India: National Food Security Act 2013; PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana – free foodgrain for about 81.35 crore people for 5 years from 1 Jan 2024. SDG 2 – 'Zero Hunger'.
- FAO's only Indian Director-General was B.R. Sen (1956–67). The UN's Rome-based food agencies are FAO, the World Food Programme (WFP – 2020 Peace Nobel) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).
- The World Food Prize was founded by Norman Borlaug in 1986 – the 'Nobel for food'. Borlaug won the 1970 Peace Nobel ('father of the Green Revolution').

Tamil Nadu link: Kumbakonam-born Dr M.S. Swaminathan, father of India's Green Revolution, was the first World Food Prize laureate (1987) – he used the prize to found the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation in Chennai; Bharat Ratna (posthumous) in 2024. Tamil Nadu runs a universal Public Distribution System.

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