

# Obesity, under-nutrition, climate change are inter-related pandemics: *Lancet* report

## INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, January 28

The pandemics of obesity, under-nutrition, and climate change are inter-linked and represent the paramount challenges for humans, the environment and our planet, says a Lancet report, that presses the need for urgent action.

The report of the 'Lancet Commission on Obesity', based on 14 countries including India, demonstrates the need to take a hard line against powerful commercial interests and rethink global economic incentives within the food system in order to tackle these joint pandemics termed as 'The Global Syndemic.'

"We are already late, sitting at the pinnacle and action is needed at the national level as well as ground level," Shifalika

Goenka, Professor at Public Health Foundation of India. "We need our own national monitoring framework with specific indicators which help monitor the targets at ground level for drivers of under-nutrition, over-nutrition and climate change," added Goenka, who is also the Commissioner on the Lancet Obesity Commission.

### Polar opposites

Malnutrition in all its forms, including under-nutrition and obesity, is by far the biggest cause of ill health and premature death globally. Both under-nutrition and obesity are expected to be made significantly worse by climate change.

"Until now, under-nutrition



and obesity have been seen as polar opposites of either too few or too many calories," said Professor Boyd Swinburn of the University of Auckland.

The report explained that obesity, under-nutrition, and cli-

mate change also interact with each other. For example, climate change will increase under nutrition through increased food insecurity from extreme weather events, droughts, and shifts in agriculture.

Climate change may also affect prices of basic food commodities, especially fruit and vegetables, potentially increasing consumption of processed foods.

The report calls to establish a Framework Convention on Food Systems (FCFS) – similar to global conventions for tobacco control and climate change – to restrict the influence of the food industry in policy making and to mobilise national action for healthy, equitable and sustainable food systems.