

More of the same model would fail us even more on SDG goals and targets

SHOBHA SHUKLA - CNS

More of the same model would fail us even more on sustainable development goals and targets. With 58 months left to deliver on SDG goals and targets for 2030, the pledge of "leave no one behind" would become even more unfulfilled if we do not make tectonic, transformative, equitable, innovative and coordinated shifts and actions, said noted feminist leader Sai Jyothirmal Racherla while delivering the keynote address at Asia Pacific Youth Forum on Sustainable Development, ahead of the intergovernmental meeting to review progress on specific goals and targets in Asia and the Pacific region.

Asia Pacific region is not on track to deliver on any of the 17 SDGs by 2030, said Sai, who leads the Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW) as its Deputy Executive Director. Asia Pacific youth forum before governments meet next week served as an important lens of young people in all their diversities. Over 705 youth scholars from 38 countries participated in the regional APFSD youth forum 2026 review process organised by ARROW and partners.



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the environment dimensions negatively impacting the realisation of all SDGs. Goal 13 on climate action, along with biodiversity loss, emissions and increasing frequency of disasters, is continuously on the reversal for years now in the region, negatively impacting the realisation of other social and economic dimensions of SDGs," added Sai.

Corporate capture and its sinister link with patriarchy

If we look at SDGs overall or specific goals under review this year (SDG 5, 7, 9, 11 and 17), it is important to recognise, expose and dismantle the sinister link between patriarchy and its deadly allies like capitalism, religious fundamentalism and/or militarisation.

Be it the targets related to clean water, sanitation and hygiene; affordable and clean energy; industry, innovation and infrastructure; sustainable cities and communities; or partnerships and means for implementation of SDGs; we need to firewall SDGs from industry interference as well as broader corporate

capture of public policy and SDG agenda.

Reality check

"SDG-6 on water and sanitation calls for the need to accelerate progress on all the SDG-6 targets - including access to safe drinking water, water quality, sanitation and hygiene, water use efficiency - all of which have direct impacts especially on women and young people's health and well-being. Access to clean water and sanitation, is intrinsically linked to aspects of menstrual hygiene, and realising sexual and reproductive health and rights. Access to water and sanitation is also a key enabler for other SDGs, whether it is realising SDG-11 (industry, innovation and infrastructure) or SDG-9 (sustainable cities and communities)," said Sai.

"SDG-7 on clean energy points to the need to accelerate progress towards access to energy services, energy efficiency and energy infrastructure. Progress on the share of renewable energy is on the reversal with the region's significantly reliant on fossil fuels, making affordable,

reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all a farfetched goal," she added.

Think: Who is being impacted most?

"This has impact - especially on indigenous communities, women and young people. Gender inequalities in energy access - for example lack of safe cooking fuel options - put women and girls at risk of illness due to indoor house pollution. Data suggests that women in many developing countries spend on average 1.4 hours a day collecting fuelwood and 4 hours cooking, in addition to other household tasks that could be supported by energy access. This limits their access to education and employment," said Sai Racherla.

Gender-blind targets

"Further to this, SDG-7 targets and indicators, are inherently gender-blind resulting in poor gender-responsive energy access policies, regulations or programmes. It is urgent that we integrate universal access to energy with the lenses of gender equality and human rights, and enable the full participation of women,

young people, indigenous communities in gender-just energy transition contributing to climate crises mitigation and adaptation strategies in the region," she said.

Firewall SDGs from corporate capture

"The SDG-9 on industry, innovation and infrastructure, remains off-track with accelerated progress required to achieve infrastructure development, sustainable and inclusive industrialisation and clean industries. For young entrepreneurs, access to finance for small and medium enterprises will serve as a great catalyst contributing to economic sustainable development. The region also needs to accelerate progress towards domestic technology development including overall research and development around industry and infrastructure. Access to information, communication, technology and internet is on track to achieve progress, but equity in access is still a question - also this progress is uneven, impacting vulnerable and marginalised groups. It is urgent to also assess the extractive and environmental impacts of digital technologies, infrastructure and industry," rightly pointed out Sai.

Sustainable cities and communities: distant reality?

"SDG-11 on sustainable cities and communities is also off-track on progress. Asia Pacific region hosts 54% of world urban population, experiencing rapid urbanisation and being off-track on this goal call for urgent actions. Although there has been progress towards housing and basic services, the region continues to account for a significant share of its population living in slums and informal settlements.

The region needs to accelerate progress towards urban air quality and waste management in many cities. Disaster risk management policies and the resilience to disasters are seeing a reversal in progress with increasing number of people in the region affected by disasters. Safe and inclusive cities for women and girls, young people and persons with disabilities continues to remain a farfetched goal," she added.

Ramadan Information: Understanding its Significance and Importance

Introduction

Ramadan is considered one of the holiest months of the year for Muslims. In Ramadan, Muslims commemorate the revelation of the Qur'an, and fast from food and drink during the sunlit hours as a means of drawing closer to God and cultivating self-control, gratitude, and compassion for those less fortunate. Ramadan is a month of intense spiritual rejuvenation with a heightened focus on devotion, during which Muslims spend extra time reading the Qur'an and performing special prayers. Those unable to fast, such as pregnant or nursing women, the sick, or elderly people & children, are exempt from fasting.

When does Ramadan take place?

Ramadan is the 9th month of the Islamic calendar, which is based on a 12-month lunar year of approximately 354 days. Because the lunar year is 11 days shorter than the solar year, each lunar month moves 11 days earlier each year. It takes 33 solar years for the lunar months to complete a full cycle and return to the same season. The month traditionally begins and ends based on the sighting of the new moon. In recent years, however, many Muslims follow a pre-determined date based on astronomical calculations. For the start and end dates of Ramadan this year, see our Calendar of Important Islamic Dates.

The Length and Purpose of Fasting

Muslims fast from pre-dawn to sunset, a fast of between 11-16 hours depending on the time of year for a period of 29-30 days. Ramadan entails forgoing food and drink, and if married, abstaining from sex during sunlit



hours. For Muslims, Ramadan is a time to train themselves both physically and spiritually by avoiding any negative acts such as gossiping, backbiting, lying, or arguing. Muslims welcome Ramadan as an opportunity for self-reflection and spiritual improvement, and as a means to grow in moral excellence. Ramadan is also a highly social time as Muslims invite each other to breakfast together and meet for prayers at the mosque.

The ultimate goal of fasting is gaining greater God-consciousness, known in Arabic as taqwa, signifying a state of constant awareness of God. From this awareness, a person should gain discipline, self-restraint, and a greater incentive to do good and avoid wrong. In commemoration of the revelation of the Qur'an, which began in the month of Ramadan, Muslims attempt to read the entire book during Ramadan. The entire Qur'an is also recited during special nightly prayers.

Who Fasts

All Muslims who have reached pu-

erty are obligated to fast. However, people for whom fasting would be a hardship are exempted from fasting. This includes anyone who is sick or traveling; women who are pregnant, nursing, or on their menses; or older people who are too weak or ill to fast. They should make up the fast later, except for those who cannot fast due to age or chronic illness. Instead, they can feed a poor person for every day of fasting which they miss.

Children

While children are not required to fast until they reach puberty, it is customary for children beginning around seven years of age to perform limited or symbolic fasting such as fasting half days or on weekends. This trains them gradually and helps to engender a sense of inclusion during the month-long observance. Mosques often give special recognition to children who are fasting their first full day or first Ramadan.

Family Routines

A Muslim family usually rises before dawn and eats a modest, breakfast-like meal called suhur. After the meal, the family performs the morning prayer, and depending on the circumstances, goes back to bed or begins the day. Particularly during the long summer months, people often take a nap in the late afternoon after work or school. At sunset, family members break the fast with a few dates and water, and depending on the culture, other light foods such as soup, appetizers or fruit. This is referred to as iftar which means "breaking the fast." After performing the sunset prayers, the family eats dinner. Inviting guests to break the fast or going to someone else's house for iftar is very common in Ramadan. Many families then go to the mosque for the night prayer and a special Ramadan prayer called Taraweeh. After completing their prayers, families return home often quite late in the evening depending on the time of year. All of these times vary depending on the time of year, with shorter days in the winter and longer days in the summer.

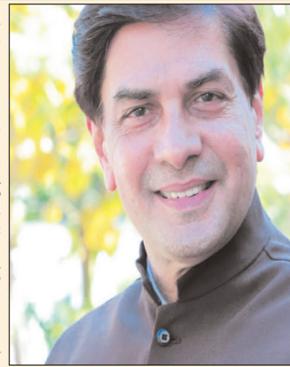
Special Activities

Many mosques host daily community dinners where Muslims can break their fast together. This is a great service for students, the poor, and anyone who desires a break from cooking. Many mosques also host a community dinner on the weekends. Special Ramadan prayers called Taraweeh are held in most mosques after the night prayer. During Taraweeh, the prayer leader recites at least one thirtieth of the Qur'an so that by the end of the month the entire Qur'an will have been recited.

Dr Vinay Mishra's Corner...

Question-At what age should children be encouraged to sleep in a separate bedroom? JS

Answer- In India, there is no strict universal age for children to sleep in a separate bedroom, as cultural norms like joint families and co-sleeping prioritize family closeness and emotional security. Pediatric experts and Indian sources often recommend transitioning gradually around age 7+ years for a separate room, depending on the child's readiness, space availability, and family dynamics.



Transition Tips

Prepare gradually: Spend daytime in their room first, use nightlights for fears, maintain routines, and involve them in set-up. In joint families, coordinate with elders using gentle communication on child development benefits. Monitor for readiness—avoid forcing if anxiety persists.

Preparation Steps

Make the room inviting and familiar to build excitement. Let the child personalize their space with favorite colors, bed-sheets, posters, or toys. Spend daytime hours there first—reading, playing, or napping—to create positive associations

Install a nightlight, keep the door slightly ajar, and ensure parents can hear them easily.?

Bedtime Routine

Establish a calming ritual 30-60 minutes before sleep to signal wind-down time.

Include story-time, prayers or sharing "best/worst" description of the day.

Use white noise like fan sounds or lullabies to drown household noises if in joint families.?

Maintain consistency even on weekends for quicker adjustment?

Praise successes daily and validate fears without giving in and reassure with hugs or quick visits.?

Monitoring Progress

Track sleep with a simple chart; full transition often takes a week for adaptable kids.

Ramadan Energy Guide: Staying Active Through the Fast

By Ritika Samaddar, Regional Head of Dietetics, Max Healthcare

The holy month of Ramadan is a time of spirituality, reflection, and community. Fasting from dawn until dusk for 30 days can feel physically demanding, especially for mothers, college students, and professionals balancing daily responsibilities. The key to maintaining steady energy throughout the day is a thoughtfully planned Sehri.

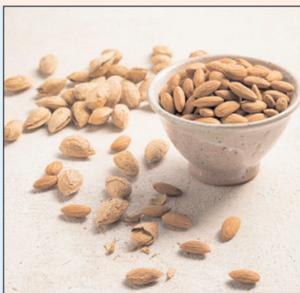
The focus at Sehri should be on balanced, slow-releasing foods that help sustain energy

and prevent fatigue. Nutrient-dense options help provide steady fuel and prolonged satiety. On the other hand, starting the day with fried or overly sweet foods can lead to a rapid spike and drop in energy, often leaving one feeling tired and dehydrated as the day progresses.

Making mindful, nutritious choices at Sehri can make the fasting experience more comfortable and energised. Here are five foods to include for sustained energy through the day:

California Almonds

Almonds are loaded with Vitamin B2, Vitamin E, magne-



sium, and phosphorus, which contribute to energy release from foods. They provide a healthy source of energy that

helps you stay active. Incorporating California Almonds into your Sehri, whether soaked overnight or mixed into smoothies, can help maintain consistent energy levels during extended fasting periods.

Oats

A bowl of oats prepared with milk or plant-based alternatives provides complex carbohydrates and fibre. This promotes a slow release of energy, helping you feel full longer and preventing afternoon fatigue.

Eggs

Eggs are loaded with high-

quality protein and vital amino acids. Whether boiled, scrambled, or incorporated into an omelette with vegetables, they offer lasting satiety and support for muscle health.

Greek yoghurt with seeds

Greek yoghurt is abundant in protein and probiotics. By adding chia or flaxseeds, you enhance the fibre and healthy fats, which support digestion and an active body all day.

Bananas

Bananas are rich in natural sugars, potassium, and fibre, providing rapid yet balanced

energy and assisting in maintaining electrolyte levels during fasting.

A balanced Sehri that combines complex carbohydrates, high-quality protein, healthy fats, and essential micronutrients can significantly enhance the fasting experience.

By choosing nutrient-rich foods such as California Almonds, eggs, oats, and bananas alongside wholesome staples, you can support sustained energy, remain active throughout Ramadan.

