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WORLD WILDLIFE DAY 2026



World
Wildlife
Day 2026

- It is observed every year on **March 3** to celebrate wild animals and plants and recognize the unique roles and contributions of wildlife to people and the planet.
- **History:**
 - It was **established by the United Nations in 2013** after Thailand proposed to dedicate a day to raise awareness about wildlife conservation.
 - On December 20, 2013, the UN General Assembly officially declared March 3 as World Wildlife Day, with the **first celebration taking place in 2014**.
 - This date was chosen because, **in 1973**, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (**CITES**) was **signed on the same day**.
 - CITES is a global agreement to **ensure that international wildlife trade does not threaten the survival of animal and plant species**.
- **WWD 2026 Theme: “Medicinal and Aromatic Plants: Conserving Health, Heritage and Livelihoods”**
 - It highlights the importance of plants used for medicine, their role in preserving cultural traditions, and the income they provide to local communities.
 - Across the world, **70–95% of people in developing countries depend on traditional medicine** for basic healthcare, much of it derived from plant-based resources.
 - Medicinal and aromatic plants form the foundation of traditional systems of medicine and also contribute significantly to modern pharmaceuticals.
 - **India is one of 17 megabiodiversity-rich countries** with around **15,000 medicinal plant species**, of which 8,000 are used in Indian medicine, making it one of the world's most important hubs for medicinal and aromatic plants.

CHILDHOOD OBESITY IN INDIA - GLOBAL RANKING AND HEALTH RISKS

- India now ranks **second globally after China** in the number of children living with overweight and obesity.
- According to the World Obesity Atlas 2026:
 - Around 41 million children in India have high Body Mass Index (BMI).
 - Approximately 14 million children are living with obesity.
- Data from 2025 shows that:
 - Nearly 14.9 million children aged 5-9 years were overweight or obese.
 - More than 26 million adolescents aged 10-19 years were overweight or obese.
- These figures place India ahead of the United States in terms of the number of children affected by obesity.

Future Projections for India

- The World Obesity Atlas provides projections for the period 2025-2040, indicating a worrying rise in childhood obesity in India.
- Key projections include:
 - Around 20 million children in India are expected to be living with obesity by 2040.
 - Nearly 56 million children are projected to be overweight or obese by the same period.

Health Implications of Childhood Obesity

- Childhood obesity exposes young individuals to several health risks typically associated with adulthood. These include Hypertension, Cardiovascular diseases, Type 2 diabetes and Metabolic disorders
- The report estimates that over 57 million children may show early signs of cardiovascular disease by 2040, while more than 43 million may show symptoms of hypertension.
- Additionally, childhood obesity increases the likelihood of obesity persisting into adulthood, leading to long-term health and economic consequences.

Key Factors Contributing to Childhood Obesity

- **Low physical activity:** About 74% of adolescents aged 11-17 fail to meet recommended physical activity levels.
 - **Poor dietary patterns:** Children increasingly consume processed foods and sugary beverages, contributing to higher calorie intake.
 - **Limited school nutrition coverage:** Only 35.5% of school-age children receive school meals, indicating gaps in nutrition programmes.
 - **Early-life nutrition challenges:** Around 32.6% of infants experience sub-optimal breastfeeding, which may increase the risk of obesity later in life.
 - **Maternal health risks:** About 13.4% of women aged 15-49 have high BMI, while 4.2% live with Type 2 diabetes, which may influence childhood obesity risk.
- These factors highlight that childhood obesity is influenced by a combination of lifestyle, nutrition, and social determinants.

Policy Measures and Prevention Strategies

- The World Obesity Federation has emphasised the need for coordinated policy responses to address childhood obesity.
- Recommended measures include:
 - Healthier school food environments
 - Restrictions on marketing unhealthy foods to children
 - Taxes on sugar-sweetened beverages
 - Promotion of physical activity among children
 - Protection and promotion of breastfeeding
 - Integration of obesity prevention into primary healthcare systems
- Experts also emphasise early screening and intervention to identify at-risk children and provide appropriate healthcare support. Implementing these measures can help slow the rise of childhood obesity and improve long-term health outcomes.

MAPPING INDIA'S SOCIAL AND LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY

- India's social and cultural landscape is marked by extraordinary diversity, reflected in its caste communities, Denotified and Nomadic Tribes (DNTs), and languages.
- Yet, paradoxically, the country **lacks precise data** on several of these categories. Historical processes, colonial classifications, and post-Independence administrative choices have left significant gaps in understanding India's social composition.
- With the **delayed Census** (originally scheduled for 2021, now expected to conclude by 2027), questions regarding the enumeration of Other Backward Classes (OBCs), DNTs, and languages remain contentious and unresolved.

Language Diversity in India:

- **Early linguistic survey:**
 - The first comprehensive attempt to map India's linguistic diversity was the Linguistic Survey of India, proposed by George Abraham Grierson in **1886**.
 - Conducted over three decades, it documented 179 languages, and 544 dialects.
- **Post-independence developments:**
 - Despite India being organised into linguistic states, there has been no independent linguistic survey since independence. Instead, language data is derived from the Census.
 - **Census language data:**
 - **1961 Census:** 1,652 mother tongues
 - **1971 Census:** 108 languages (plus "others")
 - **2011 Census:** 1,369 mother tongues and 121 languages
 - This shows the disappearance of 283 mother tongues between 1961 and 2011, raising questions about classification methods and data processing.

Issues with Census Language Classification:

- **Arbitrary criteria:**
 - Census reports often exclude languages spoken by fewer than 10,000 people.

Current Affairs - 05 March 2026

- Linguistically, this criterion has no scientific basis, as language identity is not determined by the number of speakers.
- **Mother tongue vs language:**
 - The Census distinction between “mother tongue” and “language” is widely criticised as **methodologically inconsistent**.
 - Such classifications risk undermining India’s linguistic diversity.

Key Challenges and Way Forward:

- **Absence of comprehensive social enumeration:** No accurate count of caste communities, OBCs, or DNTs.
 - Conduct caste and community-based data collection, including OBCs and DNTs, to enable evidence-based policymaking.
 - **Data gaps in linguistic diversity:** Lack of a post-Independence Linguistic Survey of India.
 - Revive the Linguistic Survey of India - Undertake a modern linguistic survey using digital and field-based methodologies.
 - **Methodological flaws in Census data:** Arbitrary thresholds for language recognition, confusing distinction between mother tongue and language.
 - Scientific census methodology - Remove arbitrary thresholds for language recognition. Adopt internationally accepted linguistic classification standards.
 - **Policy implications:** Inadequate data affects welfare policies, representation, and social justice measures.
 - Focused policy for DNTs - Prepare an official registry and socio-economic survey of Denotified and Nomadic Tribes to address historical marginalisation.
 - **Politicisation of linguistic history:** Attempts to homogenise linguistic origins risk ignoring established linguistic scholarship.
 - Evidence-based linguistic research - Encourage independent academic research free from ideological influence.
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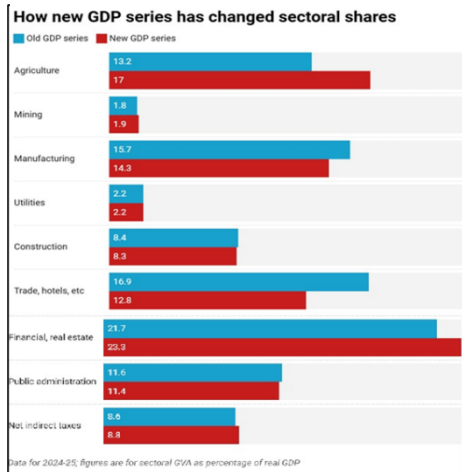
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NEW GDP SERIES REVEALS STRONGER FARM SECTOR AND INFORMAL



MANUFACTURING

- The new GDP series released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) shows that the agriculture, livestock, forestry and fishing sector is about 5% larger than previously estimated for the years starting 2022–23 in nominal terms.

- Since the overall size of the economy has been revised downward by 3–4%, agriculture’s share in GDP has increased.

- The sector’s share rose to 18.2% in 2022–23, compared with 16.5% in the earlier GDP series.

Reasons for the Higher Estimate

- Inclusion of More Cash Crops** - The new GDP series better captures the shift toward cash crops such as fruits and vegetables. These crops generate higher profits for farmers, increasing the value added in agriculture and raising the sector’s estimated size.
- Reduced Input Costs for Farmers** - The new estimates also reflect a decline in fuel costs in agriculture. Diesel use has reduced and is increasingly being replaced by electricity and solar power for irrigation. Lower input costs increase the value added generated by farmers.
- Role of the PM-KUSUM Scheme**
 - A major factor behind this shift is the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyaan (PM-KUSUM) scheme launched in 2019. The scheme provides subsidies for installing solar irrigation pumps, helping farmers reduce dependence on diesel and lower energy costs.
 - This transition contributes to higher value added in the agricultural sector.

Stronger Manufacturing Growth in the New GDP Series

- Under the old GDP series, manufacturing grew at an average rate of about 8% between 2023–24 and 2025–26, with a sharp 12.3% growth in 2023–24 largely due to a favourable base effect.
- In contrast, the new GDP series estimates manufacturing growth at an average of 11.2% annually during the same period, indicating a stronger and more consistent expansion of the sector.

Informal Economy in the New GDP Series

- One major criticism of India's earlier GDP estimates was the inaccurate measurement of the informal sector.
- The new GDP series attempts to correct this by using data from the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) and the Annual Survey of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (ASUSE).
- These surveys reduce the earlier dependence on formal-sector proxies and provide a more realistic picture of informal economic activity.

Impact on Different Sectors

- The improved measurement of the informal economy has contributed to stronger estimates of manufacturing growth, as informal manufacturing activities are now better captured in the data.
- **Decline in Estimated Size of Some Service Activities**
 - However, data for some service-sector activities suggest that the size of the unorganised sector may have been overestimated earlier.
 - For example, the sector comprising trade, repair, hotels and restaurants, transport, storage, communication, and broadcasting-related services has seen its Gross Value Added (GVA) fall by nearly 25% annually between 2022–23 and 2025–26 in the revised estimates.



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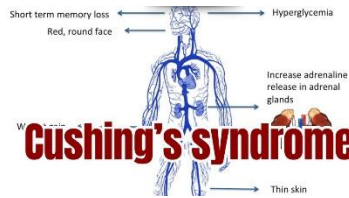
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CUSHING'S SYNDROME



- It is a disorder that occurs when the body makes **too much of the hormone cortisol** over a long period of time.

- Cortisol is **produced by the adrenal glands** and helps control blood pressure, metabolism, immunity, and the body's response to stress.

- **Cause:**

- The most common cause is **long-term use of steroid medicines** prescribed for asthma, autoimmune diseases, arthritis, or after organ transplants.
- The **body produces excess cortisol** on its own. This is usually due to a non-cancerous tumour in the pituitary gland (called Cushing's disease).

- **Signs and Symptoms:**

- **Weight gain** especially around the **abdomen and face** and develop fat buildup between the shoulders.
- Acne and increased **facial or body hair** (especially in women) can also occur.
- Women may notice irregular or absent periods, while men may experience reduced libido or fertility issues.
- **Bone loss** can lead to osteoporosis and fractures.
- Anxiety, irritability, depression, mood swings, sleeps problems and memory problems.

- **Risks: Women are more commonly affected** than men in naturally occurring (endogenous) cases, especially between ages 30 and 50.

- **Treatment:**

- Treatment depends on the cause and aims to bring cortisol levels back to normal.
- If **steroid medicines** are the cause, doctors **slowly reduce the dose under supervision**.
- If a tumour is causing excess cortisol, surgery is usually the first treatment.



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NEW EARTHWORM SPECIES



Moniligaster girishi:

- It is **endemic to Western Ghats** and belongs to the **family Moniligastridae**.
- It is **named after P. Girish Kumar**, a scientist at the Zoological Survey of India's Western Ghats Regional Centre, Kozhikode.
- It was collected from the **tropical wet evergreen forest**.

Characteristics of Moniligaster girishi:

- It is of the **gravelyi species-group**.
- It is distinguished by a **single undivided spermathecal atrial gland** on each side of the anterior body, particularly by the condition of its prostate and prostatic capsule.

About Drawida reynoldsi

- It was collected from the **montane grassland**.
- It is named after **John Warren Reynolds**, an eminent **Canadian earthworm specialist**.
- It belongs to the **robusta species-group** characterised by glandular prostates and bilobed spermathecal atria.

Key Facts about Earthworms

- They are **terrestrial worms of the class Oligochaeta** (phylum Annelida)—in particular, members of the genus Lumbricus.
- Earthworms are harmless, often beneficial residents of the soil.
- **Benefits:**
- They **breakdown dead and decaying organic matter** into rich humus soil, thereby supporting plant growth.
- Earthworm releases waste from their bodies called castings. Castings contain many **nutrients that the plant can use**.
- They also dig tiny channels and make holes that aerate soil and improve drainage.