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Monday, 13 July 2026



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India and New Zealand Sign Five MoUs to Deepen Strategic Partnership

- India and New Zealand have signed five Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) covering defence, animal husbandry and dairy, tourism, sports, and disaster management following delegation-level talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon in Auckland.
- The agreements aim to strengthen bilateral cooperation in strategic, economic, and people-to-people sectors while enhancing collaboration in the Indo-Pacific region.
- The visit marks the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister to New Zealand in nearly 40 years.

Five MoUs Signed:

Defence Cooperation:

- Memorandum of Arrangement between the Ministry of Defence (India) and the New Zealand Defence Force.
- Focus on maritime cooperation, defence exchanges, and Indo-Pacific security.
- Animal Husbandry and Dairy: Cooperation in livestock management, dairy research, innovation, and exchange of best practices.
- Tourism Cooperation: Promotion of tourism, visitor exchanges, and collaboration between tourism stakeholders.
- Joint Action Plan on Sports: Cooperation in sports development, athlete exchanges, coaching, and sports administration.
- Disaster Management: Collaboration in disaster preparedness, emergency response, risk reduction, and resilience building.

Q. How many MoUs were signed between India and New Zealand recently? **Five.**



Centre Amends Drugs Rules, 1945 to Strengthen Regulation of High Alcohol-Containing Drug Formulations

- The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) has amended the Drugs Rules, 1945 to strengthen regulation of medicinal formulations containing high levels of ethyl alcohol.
- Under the amendment, medicinal formulations containing more than 12% v/v ethyl alcohol in pack sizes exceeding 30 mL will no longer be exempt under Schedule K of the Drugs Rules, 1945.
- These products will now require licensing under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 and have been brought under Schedule H1, making them prescription-only medicines with stricter monitoring and record-keeping requirements. The move aims to curb misuse of such formulations while ensuring their availability for genuine therapeutic use.

Key Amendments:

Withdrawal of Schedule K Exemption:

- Medicinal formulations containing more than 12% v/v ethyl alcohol in packs exceeding 30 mL will no longer enjoy licensing exemption under Schedule K.

Inclusion under Schedule H1:

- These formulations will now be classified as Schedule H1 drugs.
- Sale only on the prescription of a Registered Medical Practitioner (RMP).
- Pharmacies must maintain a separate sales register and preserve records.

Q. Which Rules were recently amended to strengthen regulation of high alcohol-containing medicinal formulations? **Drugs Rules, 1945.**



Jharkhand Unveils Draft AI Policy 2026–2031 to Promote AI-Driven Governance

- The Government of Jharkhand has unveiled the Draft Jharkhand AI Policy 2026–2031, proposing an investment of ₹1,150 crore over the next five years to integrate Artificial Intelligence (AI) into governance and public service delivery.
- The policy aims to build AI infrastructure, strengthen digital capabilities, promote innovation, and accelerate AI adoption across government departments.
- Key focus sectors include healthcare, agriculture, mining, education, disaster management, environmental management, and public administration.
- The policy was presented during the National Stakeholders Consultation 2026 in New Delhi.

Key Features of the Draft AI Policy 2026–2031:

- Investment: Proposed investment of ₹1,150 crore over five years.

Objectives:

- Build AI-ready digital infrastructure.
- Improve efficiency, transparency, and citizen-centric governance.
- Promote AI innovation, research, startups, and skill development.
- Develop an ethical and responsible AI ecosystem.

Q. How much investment has Jharkhand proposed under its Draft AI Policy 2026–2031? **₹1,150 crore.**



Delhi Makes 'Pink Saheli Card' Mandatory for Free Bus Travel for Women

- The Delhi Government has made the Pink Saheli Smart Card mandatory for women to avail free travel in Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) and Cluster buses.
- The new system will come into effect from 1 August 2026, replacing the existing paper-based pink ticket system introduced in 2019.
- Women commuters will have to carry and tap the NCMC-enabled Pink Saheli Card while boarding buses to avail the free travel benefit.
- The initiative aims to digitize the scheme, improve transparency, prevent misuse, and streamline beneficiary verification.

Technology Used:

- NCMC-enabled (National Common Mobility Card) smart card.
- Passengers must tap the card on the Electronic Ticketing Machine (ETM) while boarding.

Purpose:

- Replace paper pink tickets.
- Ensure transparency and reduce fraud.
- Digitize beneficiary verification.
- Improve efficiency in public transport service delivery.

Q. Which smart card has been made mandatory for free bus travel for women in Delhi from August 2026? **Pink Saheli Smart Card.**



Federal Bank Receives First International Investment-Grade Issuer Rating from S&P Global Ratings

- Federal Bank has received its first-ever International Investment-Grade Issuer Credit Rating from S&P Global Ratings, becoming one of the Indian private sector banks to secure an international investment-grade rating.
- S&P assigned the bank a 'BBB-' Long-Term Issuer Credit Rating and an 'A-3' Short-Term Issuer Credit Rating, with a Stable Outlook.
- The rating reflects the bank's strong financial profile, sound asset quality, prudent risk management, and adequate capitalization.
- The investment-grade rating is expected to enhance Federal Bank's global credibility, strengthen investor confidence, and improve access to international capital markets.

About Investment-Grade Rating:

- Investment-grade ratings indicate a relatively low risk of default.
- Under S&P Global Ratings, BBB- is the lowest investment-grade long-term rating.
- Ratings of BB+ and below are considered speculative (non-investment grade or junk status).
- Credit ratings help investors assess the repayment capacity of banks, companies, and governments.

Q. Which global credit rating agency awarded Federal Bank its first international investment-grade issuer rating? **S&P Global Ratings.**



India and Kyrgyzstan Launch 'Manas and Mahabharata' Civilizational Studies Centre

- India and Kyrgyzstan have jointly inaugurated the International Centre for Civilizational Studies "Manas and Mahabharata" in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, to strengthen academic, cultural, and civilizational cooperation between the two countries.
- The Centre has been established through a collaboration between the Centre for Studies of International Relations (CSIR), New Delhi, and the Manas National Academy, Kyrgyzstan.
- The initiative aims to promote comparative research on the Indian epic Mahabharata and the Kyrgyz national epic Manas, while deepening people-to-people ties and cultural diplomacy. During the inauguration, the first Hindi translation of the Kyrgyz epic "Manas" was also released.

About the International Centre for Civilizational Studies:

- Location: Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.
- Collaborating Institutions: Centre for Studies of International Relations (CSIR), New Delhi, and Manas National Academy, Kyrgyzstan.

Focus Areas:

- Comparative study of the Mahabharata and Manas epics.
- Civilizational history and cultural heritage.
- Intercultural dialogue and humanitarian diplomacy.
- Academic collaboration and researcher training.

Q. Which two epics are the focus of the International Centre for Civilizational Studies inaugurated jointly by India and Kyrgyzstan? **Mahabharata (India) and Manas (Kyrgyzstan).**



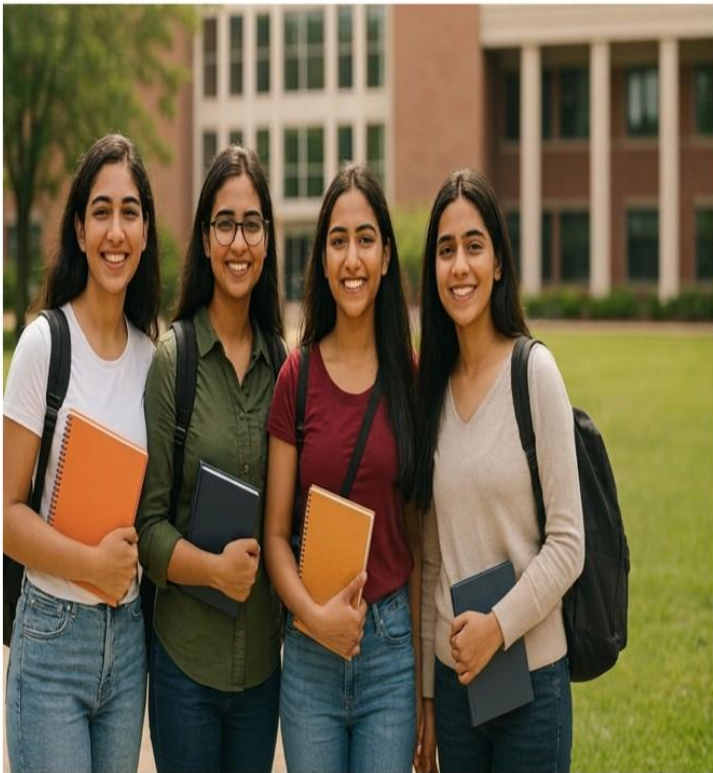
DoT's Samriddh Gram Wins WSIS Prize 2026 for Rural Digital Transformation

- The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has won the prestigious World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Prize 2026 under Action Line C6 – Enabling Environment for its flagship initiative "Samriddh Gram: Integrated Phygital Service Delivery Model Enabled by BharatNet."
- The award was presented during the WSIS Forum 2026 held in Geneva, Switzerland, recognizing India's innovative use of digital public infrastructure to transform rural service delivery.
- The initiative leverages BharatNet to establish Samriddhi Kendras as one-stop digital service centres in villages, providing integrated access to healthcare, education, agriculture, financial inclusion, e-governance, skilling, and e-commerce services. The recognition highlights India's leadership in inclusive digital governance and rural digital transformation.

Technology Used:

- BharatNet high-speed broadband network.
- Integrated Phygital (Physical + Digital) service delivery model.
- Village-level Samriddhi Kendras as digital service hubs.
- FTTH (Fiber-to-the-Home) connectivity and Public Wi-Fi.

Q. Which flagship initiative of the Department of Telecommunications won the WSIS Prize 2026 under Action Line C6 – Enabling Environment? **Samriddh Gram: Integrated Phygital Service Delivery Model Enabled by BharatNet.**



AISHE 2023–24: Female Enrolment in Higher Education Surpasses Male Enrolment for Seventh Consecutive Year

- The Ministry of Education has released the All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2023–24, highlighting significant progress in India's higher education sector.
- The report shows that female enrolment has exceeded male enrolment for the seventh consecutive year, with the Female Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) reaching 31.2%, compared to 28.9% for males.
- Overall enrolment in higher education has reached a record 4.50 crore students, while female enrolment has increased to 2.24 crore, registering a 42.2% growth since 2014–15.
- The findings reflect improving gender parity and greater access to higher education across the country.

About AISHE (All India Survey on Higher Education):

- Launched in 2010–11 by the Ministry of Education.
- Conducted annually by the Department of Higher Education.
- Collects data from all higher education institutions in India.

Provides statistics on:

- Student enrolment
- Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)
- Faculty
- Infrastructure
- Research
- Financial indicators
- Gender and social category-wise participation.

Q. According to the AISHE 2023–24 report, what was India's Female Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education? **31.2%**.





Sourav Ganguly Inducted into ICC Hall of Fame

- Former Indian cricket captain Sourav Ganguly has been inducted into the prestigious ICC Hall of Fame, becoming the 12th Indian cricketer to receive this honour.
- The recognition celebrates Ganguly's outstanding contribution to international cricket, particularly his transformative leadership of the Indian cricket team during the early 2000s.
- Widely regarded as one of India's most successful captains, Ganguly played a key role in rebuilding Indian cricket after the match-fixing crisis, nurturing young talent, and making India a strong overseas competitor.

About ICC Hall of Fame:

- Launched in 2009 by the International Cricket Council (ICC) as part of its centenary celebrations.
- Recognises legendary cricketers for their outstanding achievements and lasting impact on the game.
- New inductees are announced periodically by the ICC.
- The Hall of Fame includes both men's and women's cricketers from across the world.

Major Achievements of Sourav Ganguly:

- Made his Test debut at Lord's in 1996 with a century.
- Led India to the 2003 ICC Cricket World Cup Final.
- Played a key role in building a fearless and competitive Indian team.
- Scored over 18,000 international runs across all formats.
- One of India's most successful ODI captains.

Q. Who became the 12th Indian cricketer to be inducted into the ICC Hall of Fame? **Sourav Ganguly.**



Uttar Pradesh Expands Nishulk Boring Yojana to Strengthen Irrigation for Small and Marginal Farmers

- The Government of Uttar Pradesh has continued the implementation of the Nishulk Boring Yojana (Free Boring Scheme) to provide free borewell drilling facilities to eligible farmers, aiming to improve irrigation coverage and enhance agricultural productivity.
- The scheme primarily benefits small and marginal farmers by reducing the cost of installing private tube wells and ensuring access to reliable irrigation facilities. It is implemented through the Minor Irrigation Department of Uttar Pradesh and supports the state's efforts to improve water availability for agriculture.

Benefits:

- Provides free boring (drilling) for private tube wells to eligible farmers.
- Financial assistance is also available for pump sets and HDPE pipes under prescribed norms.
- Improves irrigation facilities in rain-fed and water-scarce areas.
- Reduces dependence on monsoon rainfall.
- Enhances crop productivity and farmers' income.

Q. Which Uttar Pradesh government scheme provides free borewell drilling facilities to eligible small and marginal farmers to improve irrigation? **Nishulk Boring Yojana (Free Boring Scheme).**

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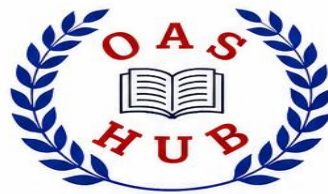
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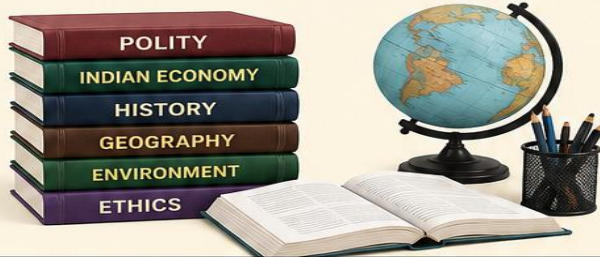
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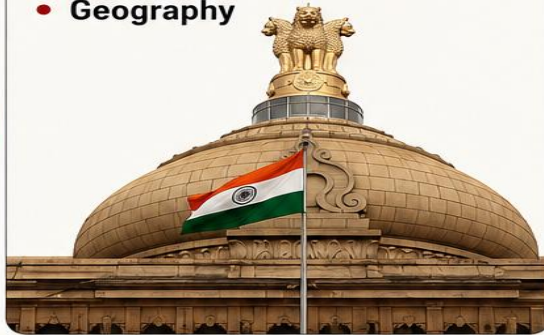
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