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India–Nepal Sign 8 MoUs for High-Impact Development Projects

- India and Nepal have signed MoUs for eight High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDPs) worth NRs 803 million in grant assistance from India.
- The projects cover sectors such as health, education and agriculture and will be implemented by local authorities and institutions of the Government of Nepal.
- The latest assistance reflects India's Neighbourhood First policy and its development partnership with Nepal.

The eight projects include:

- Digitalisation of B.P. Koirala Institute of Health Sciences – Sunsari.
- Krishi Utpadan Sankalan Tatha Bikri Kendra – Bhojpur.
- Municipal Agricultural and Livestock Centre – Dhading.
- Belbari Multiple Campus building – Morang.
- 10-bed hospital – Dailekh.
- Agriculture Promotion Centre – Humla.
- Cold storage facility – Syangja.
- 15-bed hospital building – Sunsari.

India–Nepal Relations:

Geographical Significance:

- India and Nepal share an open border, facilitating movement of people and economic interaction.
- Nepal is a landlocked Himalayan country located between India and China, making it strategically important for India's Himalayan and neighbourhood policy.

Q. India recently signed MoUs with Nepal for how many High Impact Community Development Projects? **Eight.**



Dr. Bhooma VG Selected as Vice-Chancellor of Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute in Mauritius

- The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has announced the selection of Dr. Bhooma VG (IRPS, Retd.) as the Vice-Chancellor of the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Public Service and Innovation (AIPSI), Mauritius.

About AIPSI:

- The Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Public Service and Innovation (AIPSI) is the former Civil Service College of Mauritius. It was jointly inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Mauritius Prime Minister Navinchandra Ramgoolam in March 2025. The institute is being developed as a premier training institution and centre of excellence for the African region and is intended to become an awarding body.

Mauritius:

- Mauritius: Island country in the southwestern Indian Ocean, east of Madagascar.
- Capital: Port Louis.
- Currency: Mauritian Rupee.
- India and Mauritius share close ties based on historical, cultural, economic and people-to-people links.
- Mauritius is strategically important for India because of its location in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).
- Cooperation includes maritime security, trade, development assistance, education, digital public infrastructure and capacity building.

Q. Who has been selected as Vice-Chancellor of the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Public Service and Innovation in Mauritius?
Dr. Bhooma VG.



Vande Mataram Gets Same Legal Protection as National Anthem

- President Droupadi Murmu has given assent to the Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Bill, 2026, which amends the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971.
- The amendment extends the Act's existing statutory protection for the National Anthem to Vande Mataram, making intentional prevention of its singing or deliberate disturbance during its rendition punishable by imprisonment up to three years, fine, or both.
- The Bill was passed by Parliament in July 2026 and has now become law.

Historical Significance of Vande Mataram:

- Vande Mataram, composed by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, originally appeared in his novel Anandamath (1882). It became an important symbol of the Indian national movement, particularly during the Swadeshi Movement following the Partition of Bengal in 1905.
- 1896: Rabindranath Tagore sang Vande Mataram at the Indian National Congress session in Calcutta.
- 1905: It became a powerful symbol of the anti-partition and Swadeshi movement.
- 24 January 1950: The Constituent Assembly recognised it as India's National Song.
- Jana Gana Mana: India's National Anthem.

Q. Which Act has been amended to provide statutory protection to Vande Mataram? **Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971.**



NASA Invites ISRO to Join Moon Base Programme

- NASA has invited the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) to participate in its Moon Base programme, aimed at establishing a sustained human presence near the lunar South Pole. The invitation was extended during the 9th India–US Civil Space Joint Working Group meeting, held at ISRO headquarters in Bengaluru on 5–6 August 2026. The initiative builds on cooperation under the Artemis Accords and marks a significant expansion of India–US collaboration in lunar exploration.

What is NASA's Moon Base Programme?

- NASA's Moon Base is a phased programme to establish infrastructure for long-term human activity near the lunar South Pole. Planned infrastructure includes power, communications, navigation, logistics, mobility systems and habitats. The South Pole has been selected because of its scientific and strategic importance, including the presence of water ice in permanently shadowed regions.

Significance for India:

- Participation could provide India with opportunities for advanced lunar science, human-spaceflight technologies, robotics, resource utilisation and international scientific cooperation. It would also deepen the India–US space partnership and complement India's own long-term space objectives, including the Bharatiya Antariksh Station (BAS) and future human lunar exploration.

Q. Which organisation has invited ISRO to participate in its Moon Base programme? **NASA.**



Fitch Affirms India's Sovereign Rating at 'BBB-' with Stable Outlook

- Fitch Ratings has affirmed India's Long-Term Foreign-Currency Issuer Default Rating (IDR) at 'BBB-' with a Stable Outlook.
- Fitch expects India's GDP to grow by 6.4% in FY 2026–27, supported by public capital expenditure, a recovery in private investment, favourable demographics and strong corporate and banking-sector balance sheets.

Key Reasons for the Rating:

- Fitch highlighted India's robust medium-term growth prospects, improving macroeconomic stability and strong external finances. India's projected growth remains substantially above the 2% median growth rate for countries in the 'BBB' rating category. However, Fitch also identified risks from higher energy prices and geopolitical tensions, particularly because India is a large net importer of energy.

What is a Sovereign Credit Rating?

- A sovereign credit rating assesses a government's ability and willingness to meet its debt obligations. A higher rating generally indicates lower perceived sovereign default risk and can improve access to international capital.

Q. What sovereign rating has Fitch affirmed for India in August 2026? **BBB- with a Stable Outlook.**





Commonwealth Fencing Championship 2026: India Wins 9 Medals

- India continued its strong performance at the Commonwealth Fencing Championship in Lagos, Nigeria, winning 9 medals — 2 gold, 3 silver and 4 bronze in the latest round of senior individual events.
- Karan Singh won gold in men's Sabre after defeating Australia's Yoongi Shim 15–12, while Sherjin Shanthimol won gold in men's Epee by defeating South Africa's Pieter Kruger 15–6.
- India also secured medals in women's Epee, women's Sabre and men's Foil.

Key Medal Winners	Medal	Event
Karan Singh	Gold	Men's Sabre
Sherjin Shanthimol	Gold	Men's Epee
Tanishka Khatri	Gold	Women's Epee
Khushi Dabhade	Silver	Women's Epee
Aakhari	Silver	Women's Sabre
Tejas Patil	Bronze	Men's Foil
Prachi Lohan	Bronze	Women's Epee
Shruti Joshi & Jefarlin	Bronze	Women's Sabre

Q. Where is the 2026 Commonwealth Fencing Championship being held? **Lagos, Nigeria.**



András Baka Elected President of Hungary

- The Hungarian Parliament elected former Supreme Court chief András Baka as the country's new President.
- Baka, 73, was the sole candidate and secured 140 votes in the 199-member National Assembly.
- His election is significant because he previously headed Hungary's Supreme Court and was removed from office following judicial reforms under former Prime Minister Viktor Orbán.

Why is András Baka Important?

- Baka served as President of Hungary's Supreme Court from 2009. He criticised several judicial reforms introduced during Hungary's constitutional restructuring. His mandate was terminated prematurely in 2012, after the new constitutional framework replaced the Supreme Court with the Kúria.
- The ECHR's Grand Chamber, in *Baka v. Hungary* (2016), found that Hungary had violated his freedom of expression and his right to an effective remedy. The case became an important European human-rights ruling concerning judicial independence and judges' freedom to comment on reforms affecting the judiciary.

Constitutional Structure of Hungary:

- Hungary follows a parliamentary system. The President is the head of state, while the Prime Minister is the head of government.

Q. Who has been elected as the new President of Hungary in August 2026? **András Baka.**



Lebanon Abolishes Death Penalty, Becomes First Arab Country to Do So

- The Lebanese Parliament has abolished the death penalty, making Lebanon the first Arab country to formally abolish capital punishment.
- The reform replaces death sentences with life imprisonment with hard labour.
- Lebanon had maintained a de facto moratorium on executions since 2004, but courts could still impose death sentences.
- The new law provides a permanent legal abolition of capital punishment.

Significance::

- The decision represents a major human-rights and criminal-justice reform in the Arab world. It transforms Lebanon's earlier practice of not carrying out executions into a formal legal abolition. Human-rights organisations have welcomed the move as strengthening the protection of the right to life.

Death Penalty: International Context:

- The death penalty remains a subject of debate between retributive justice, deterrence and human-rights concerns. Countries differ widely in their approach: some have abolished it completely, some retain it only for exceptional crimes, while others continue to use it.
- The Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) aims at the abolition of the death penalty. States that ratify it undertake to abolish capital punishment, subject to the protocol's provisions.

Q. Which country recently became the first Arab country to abolish the death penalty? **Lebanon.**



N. Chandrasekaran to Step Down as Tata Sons Chairman

- N. Chandrasekaran, Chairman of Tata Sons, has decided not to seek reappointment after his current term ends on 20 February 2027.
- He will continue as chairman until the end of his existing term and has asked the Tata Sons Board to begin the succession process to ensure a smooth transition. His decision follows months of uncertainty over his reappointment.

About N. Chandrasekaran:

- Chandrasekaran began his career with TCS in 1987 and rose to become its CEO in 2009. In 2017, he became the first professional executive and first non-Parsi to head Tata Sons. During his tenure, the group expanded into areas including semiconductors, electronics, electric vehicles, aviation and new-energy businesses.
- He was awarded the Padma Bhushan in 2022 for his contribution to Trade and Industry.

Tata Sons:

- Tata Sons is the principal investment holding company and promoter of Tata operating companies. Tata Trusts are its largest shareholders and hold approximately 66% of its equity. The group follows a distinctive ownership model in which a significant portion of Tata Sons' ownership is held through philanthropic trusts.

Q. Who is the outgoing Chairman of Tata Sons? **N. Chandrasekaran.**





Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowship and Awards 2024–25

- The Ministry of Culture has announced the conferment of the Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowships (Akademi Ratna) and Awards (Akademi Puraskar) for 2024 and 2025.
- The President of India will confer the honours on 115 artists at a special ceremony on 13 August 2026 at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.
- The awardees represent diverse performing-art traditions, including music, dance, theatre, folk and tribal arts, puppetry and allied theatre arts.

Sangeet Natak Akademi:

- The Sangeet Natak Akademi is India's national academy for music, dance and drama. It was established in 1952 as an autonomous body under the Ministry of Culture to promote and preserve India's performing arts traditions.
- The Akademi Awards have been conferred since 1952 and recognise sustained excellence and contribution to India's performing arts.

Akademi Ratna vs Akademi Puraskar:

- Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowship (Akademi Ratna): The highest honour of the Akademi.
- Sangeet Natak Akademi Award (Akademi Puraskar): Recognises outstanding contribution in specified performing-art fields.
- The Fellowship carries a ₹3 lakh cash award, while the Akademi Award carries ₹1 lakh, along with a Tamrapatra and Angavastram.

Q. What is the highest honour of the Sangeet Natak Akademi? **Akademi Ratna (Fellowship).**



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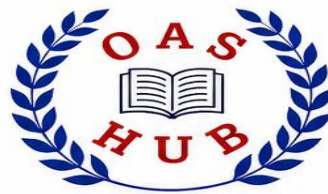
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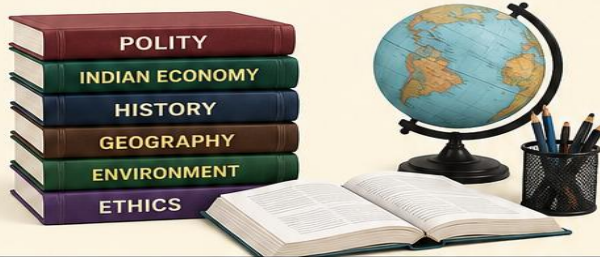
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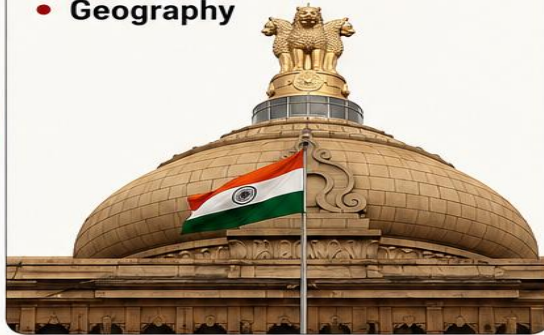
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