

# IACE

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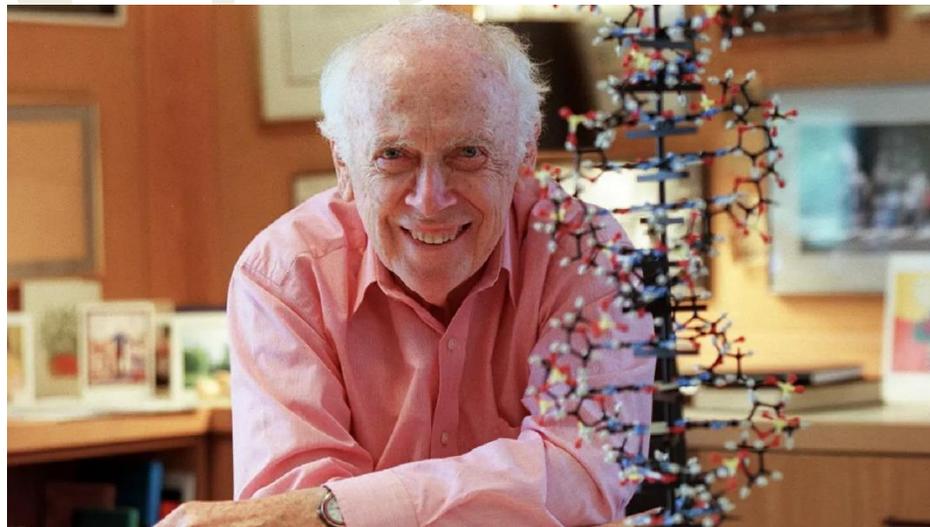
## Four new Vande Bharat Express trains flagged off by the Prime Minister

- On 8 November, four new Vande Bharat Express trains were flagged off by PM Narendra Modi from Varanasi, further expanding India's semi-high-speed rail network.
- The new Vande Bharat services were introduced to enhance connectivity between important cultural, commercial and regional centres.
- The newly launched routes include Banaras–Khajuraho, Lucknow Junction–Saharanpur, Firozpur Cantt–Delhi, and Bengaluru–Ernakulam, connecting key cities in North and South India.
- The Banaras–Khajuraho route will provide a direct link between two major cultural destinations and is expected to benefit pilgrims and tourists, while also reducing travel time by nearly 2 hours and 40 minutes.
- The Lucknow–Saharanpur Vande Bharat will cut journey duration to about 7 hours and 45 minutes, improving accessibility for passengers across central and western Uttar Pradesh and offering a better connection to Haridwar via Roorkee.
- The Firozpur–Delhi Vande Bharat will become the fastest service on that route, strengthening trade, tourism and economic activity in Punjab, including regions like Bathinda and Patiala.
- In the South, the Bengaluru–Ernakulam service will shorten travel time by over 2 hours, providing a faster and more comfortable option for professionals, students and tourists connecting major IT, educational and commercial hubs.



## **James Watson, Nobel laureate and co-discoverer of DNA, has passed away at the age of 97**

- Nobel Prize-winning scientist James Watson, along with Francis Crick, discovered the double-helix structure of DNA in 1953.
- This groundbreaking discovery, which earned Watson, Crick, and Maurice Wilkins the 1962 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, revolutionized the field of molecular biology.
- Watson was born in Chicago in 1928 and pursued advanced studies and research at the University of Chicago and later at Cambridge.
- His collaboration with Francis Crick, supported by Rosalind Franklin's X-ray diffraction images, led to one of the most significant biological discoveries of the 20th century.
- Watson taught at Harvard University and later served as director of Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, helping develop it into a major research center.
- In 2014, Watson sold his Nobel Prize medal for \$4.8 million, citing ostracism from the scientific community.



## Bay of Bengal Nations Meet in Kochi to Advance Blue Economy Research



- The first BIMSTEC-India Ocean Research Network Conference held in Kochi to strengthen blue economy cooperation
- The first biennial BIMSTEC-India Marine Research Network (BIMReN) conference was held in Kochi, marking a major step in advancing blue economy collaboration among BIMSTEC member nations.
- The conference was conducted from 4 to 6 November with participation from scientists, researchers, and policymakers across the Bay of Bengal region.
- The purpose of the event was to review progress and discuss collective approaches to sustainable marine research and ocean governance.
- BIMReN was launched in 2024 by the Ministry of External Affairs to link top Indian research institutions with marine research centers across BIMSTEC countries.
- The initiative was originally announced by PM Narendra Modi at the Colombo BIMSTEC Summit in 2022.
- In its pilot phase, BIMReN has already connected more than 25 research institutions and over 50 scientists for collaborative studies.

- Key research areas include ocean health, marine ecosystem resilience, sustainable fisheries, and coastal resource management.
- The Bay of Bengal region accounts for nearly 6% of the world's total fish catch and supports one-third of the global fishing fleet, making regional cooperation essential.
- The conference also focused on strengthening institutional coordination under the Neighbourhood First, Act East, Indo-Pacific, and MAHASAGAR strategic frameworks.

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## **Mumbai to Host Two-Day Global Media & Entertainment Investor Meet from December 1**

- The Confederation of Indian Industry will organize a two-day Global Media and Entertainment Investor Meet in Mumbai.
- Global Media and Entertainment Investor Meet will begin on December 1.
- Global Media and Entertainment Investor Meet is being held in partnership with WAVES Bazaar. It is part of the 12th CII BIG Picture Summit.
- Ministry of Information and Broadcasting is supporting Global Media and Entertainment Investor Meet.
- The main goal of meet is to attract investment and boost growth in India's media and entertainment sector.
- "The AI Era: Bridging Creativity and Commerce" is the theme of summit.
- Government officials, industry leaders, and investors will participate to design a roadmap for the future of Media and Entertainment sector.
- The discussions will cover film, digital streaming, gaming, animation, VFX, and live entertainment.
- The CII BIG Picture Summit is India's top platform for policy dialogue, promoting innovation exchange and investment opportunities in media and entertainment.

## **Social media for under 15s will be banned by Denmark**

- Plans to ban social media access for children under 15 has been announced by Denmark.
- Teens aged 13 and 14 will be allowed to use social platforms only with their parents' approval.
- The goal of this move is to protect mental health of young people and to reduce excessive time spent online.
- Digitalisation Minister Caroline Stage Olsen said social media harms children's well-being and affects how they manage their time.
- The proposal similar to Australia's earlier decision to limit social media use for those under 16.
- Australia banned social media use for children under 16 years of age last year.



## **Raahul V.S has become India's 91st Grandmaster**

- He secured the title after winning the 6th ASEAN Individual Chess Championship.
- In November 2021, Raahul earned the International Master title.
- He secured his fourth and fifth International Master (IM) norms at that time. He also crossed a live rating of 2400 to qualify.
- A week earlier, Chennai's Ilamparthi AR became India's 90th Grandmaster.
- He achieved his final norm at the Bijeljina Open 2025 in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- S Rohith Krishna became India's 89th Grandmaster in August.
- The Grandmaster title is awarded by FIDE. It is the highest honour in chess.
- The title ranks above International Master, FIDE Master (FM), and Candidate Master (CM).



## India's Forex Reserves Decline by 5.6 Billion USD

- India's total foreign exchange reserves fell by 5.6 billion USD.
- India's total foreign exchange reserves reached at 690 billion USD for the week ending October 31.
- The decline in India's total foreign exchange reserves was chiefly due to a large decline in gold reserves.
- Gold reserves contracted by 3.8 billion USD and stood at 101.7 billion USD.
- Foreign currency assets form the largest component of the reserves.
- Foreign currency assets declined by nearly 2 billion USD to around 564.5 billion USD during the week.
- This decline was partly caused by currency value changes involving the euro, pound, and yen.
- Special Drawing Rights saw a small decline of 19 million USD, and reached 18.64 billion USD.
- India's IMF reserve position increased slightly by 164 million USD to 4.77 billion USD during the same week.



## **TEC-IIT Bombay Sign MoU for Joint Research in Advanced Telecom Technologies**

- An MoU signed between TEC and IIT Bombay for joint research in advanced telecom technologies and standardization.
- An MoU was signed between the Telecommunication Engineering Centre (TEC) and IIT Bombay to collaborate on joint research and technical contributions in telecom technologies.
- The partnership aims to develop India-specific standards and testing infrastructure while exploring future network technologies like 6G, AI, NGN, and VoIP.
- It also seeks to enhance India's participation in ITU-T (International Telecommunication Union - Telecommunication Standardisation Sector) study groups.
- The MoU was signed on 7 November 2025 in the presence of senior officials from TEC and IIT Bombay.
- The collaboration will focus on developing India-specific standards and test frameworks for future communication networks.
- Key research areas include 6G, Core Network, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Satellite Communication Systems, Signalling Requirements and Protocols.
- The partnership supports the Atmanirbhar Bharat vision by boosting domestic R&D, strengthening technological sovereignty, and reducing reliance on imported telecom solutions.



## **SBI Crosses Rs.100 Trillion in Business, Joins USD 100 Billion Market Cap Club**

- SBI Surpasses Rs.100 trillion in Business, Crosses USD 100 billion Market Cap for the First Time.
- State Bank of India (SBI), a Public Sector Bank(PSB), crossed the USD 100 billion market capitalization(market cap) for the first time, after its total business including deposits and advances, surpassed Rs.100 trillion.
- With this , SBI becomes the sixth Indian company, alongside Reliance Industries Limited (RIL), Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, and Infosys, to reach a USD 100 billion valuation.
- As of September 2025, SBI's total business reached Rs.100.12 trillion, comprising Rs.44.20 lakh crore in advances and Rs.55.92 lakh crore in deposits.
- The performance of SBI in the Quarter 2 (Q2) of Financial Year 2025-26 (FY-26), includes a 10% year-on-year rise in net profit to Rs.20,160 crores.
- Its Gross Non-Performing Asset (GNPA) ratio declined to 1.73%, while Net Non-Performing Asset (NNPA) improved to 0.42%.



## **Sheetal Devi becomes the first Indian para archer to secure a place in the able-bodied national team**



- **Sheetal Devi**, an 18-year-old para-archer from **Jammu & Kashmir**, has become the **first Indian para-athlete to be selected for the able-bodied national archery team**.
- She will represent India in the **Asia Cup 2025** (Compound Women's Team event) to be held in **Jeddah, Saudi Arabia** in December 2025.
- Sheetal was born with **phocomelia**, a condition where she has **no arms**, and she shoots using her **legs and shoulder technique**.
- She topped international para events with major wins: **2 Golds at 2023 Asian Para Games**, **Silver at 2023 World Archery Championships**, and **Bronze at Paris 2024 Paralympics**.
- In **2025 World Archery Para Championships (Gwangju)**, she won the **Gold Medal**, proving her dominance at the global level.

- At the **selection trials (Nov 3–6, 2025)** in **Sonipat**, she competed against **60+ able-bodied archers** and finished **3rd with a score of 703**, securing her place in the team.
- She joins **Tejal Rajendra Salve** and **Vaidehi Hirachandra Jadhav** as part of the Indian Women's Compound Team for the Asia Cup.
- Her selection is seen as a **historic milestone**, showcasing **inclusion, merit-based recognition, and breaking stereotypes** in Indian sports.

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## Scindia Launches ₹650 Cr Sohra Tourism Circuit in Meghalaya

- Union Minister Jyotiraditya M. Scindia laid the foundation stone for the Integrated Sohra Circuit Development Project.
- The circuit is located in Sohra, Meghalaya, famously known as Cherrapunji.
- The project has a total investment of over ₹650 crore.
- The project is developed under the PM-DevINE Scheme (Prime Minister's Development Initiative for North East Region).
- The projects are expected to increase tourist spending sixfold and create over 4,600 direct and indirect employment opportunities.
- Supporting Projects: Development of sites like Nohkalikai Falls Complex, Mawsmai Eco Park, and facilities for adventure tourism (like hot-air balloon rides).
- The creation of the Sohra Experience Centre in Kutmadan with an investment of ₹115 crore, featuring a rain experience park, art galleries, and an amphitheater.
- PM-DevINE Scheme: It was announced in the Union Budget 2022-23 as a Central Sector Scheme with 100% Central funding.
- The Cabinet approved the PM-DevINE Scheme on October 12, 2022.

