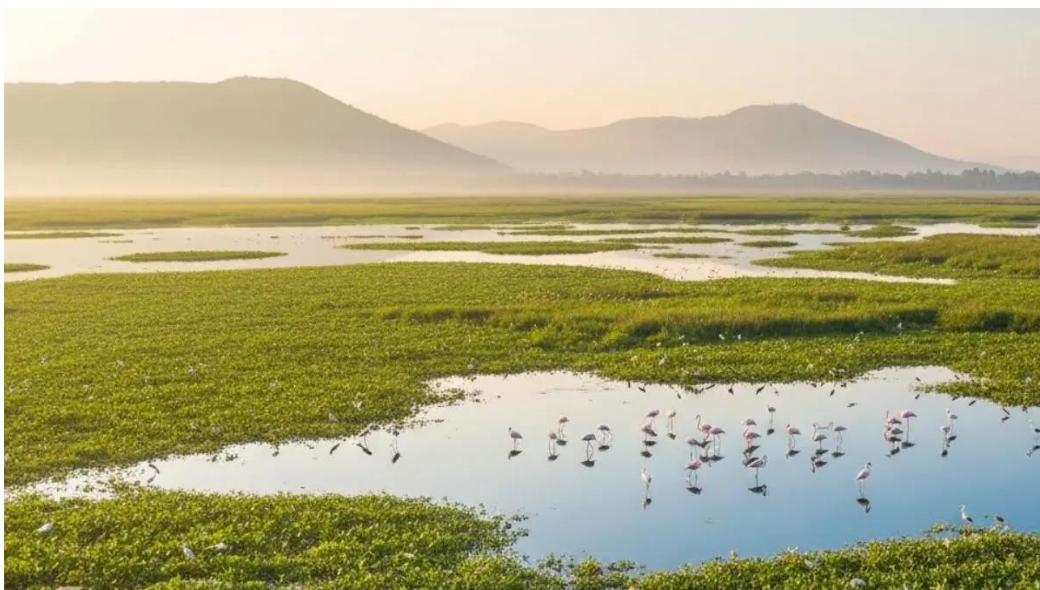


Daily Defence Current Affairs

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Gogabeel Lake Declared Newest Ramsar Site

- Gogabeel Lake, located in the Katihar district of Bihar, has been officially designated a Ramsar site, gaining global recognition as a wetland of international importance.
- With this, India adds yet another name to its growing list of protected wetlands under the Ramsar Convention, strengthening its commitment to wetland conservation and biodiversity protection.
- Situated in the trans-Gangetic plains, Gogabeel is a unique ox-bow lake—a naturally formed wetland created by the meandering course of rivers.
- Geographical highlights,
- Flanked by River Mahananda in the northeast and River Ganga in the south
- Lies in the Katihar district of Bihar
- First declared as Bihar's Community Reserve, reflecting strong community involvement in its preservation



China Achieves First-Ever Thorium-Uranium Fuel

- In a groundbreaking achievement in nuclear energy, China has successfully carried out the first-ever thorium-to-uranium fuel conversion within a Thorium Molten Salt Reactor (TMSR)—the world's only operational reactor of its kind.
- A Thorium Molten Salt Reactor is an advanced nuclear system that uses molten salt instead of water as a coolant, and thorium as a fertile fuel source. The high-temperature salt mixture enables better efficiency and passive safety features.
- Operates at atmospheric pressure, reducing explosion risk
- Does not require water for cooling—ideal for arid regions
- Provides high thermal output for electricity or industrial heat
- Built-in passive safety systems—if overheated, the reactor shuts down automatically
- Thorium-232, the naturally abundant isotope, is not directly fissile—it must be converted into **Uranium-233 (U-233)** through neutron absorption inside a reactor. China's success in achieving this conversion inside a TMSR marks a crucial proof of concept for the thorium fuel cycle.
- **Why is this a milestone?**
- It validates thorium's role as a next-gen nuclear fuel
- Demonstrates in-reactor breeding of U-233, enabling sustained energy generation
- Opens the path for cleaner, longer-lasting, and safer nuclear energy systems



India to Receive First Taliban Diplomat Since Kabul Takeover

- For the first time since the Taliban's return to power in August 2021, Afghanistan is set to appoint its first official diplomat to India, marking a significant—though unofficial—step forward in India-Taliban diplomatic engagement.
- This move follows the October 2025 visit of Afghanistan's acting Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi to New Delhi and reflects a gradual warming of ties between the two sides despite India's non-recognition of the Taliban regime.
- The decision to send a Taliban-appointed diplomat to New Delhi represents the first formal diplomatic exchange since the Taliban's controversial return to power.
- While India has not officially recognised the Taliban-led government, it has maintained humanitarian engagement, primarily through aid, medical supplies, and the re-establishment of a technical mission in Kabul.
- According to reports, another Afghan diplomat is also expected to be appointed in late December 2025 or early January 2026, indicating a deliberate step-by-step resumption of bilateral representation.



Maldives Enacts World's First Generational Smoking Ban

- In a globally unprecedented move, the Maldives has implemented a generational smoking ban, prohibiting anyone born after 1 January 2007 from buying, using, or being sold any form of tobacco.
- Effective 1 November 2025, this policy makes the Indian Ocean island nation the first and only country with such a law in place, reflecting a radical push toward public health protection and youth well-being.
- The law covers all forms of tobacco and applies to both citizens and tourists in the Maldives, a country famous for its luxury island resorts.
- Anyone born on or after 1 January 2007 is permanently barred from purchasing or using tobacco products.
- Retailers must verify age before sale; failure to comply attracts a fine of 50,000 Maldivian rufiyaa (approximately \$3,200).
- The Maldives also bans all vaping and e-cigarette products, regardless of age, with possession or use carrying a 5,000 rufiyaa (\$320) fine.



Scindia Confers Bhupen Hazarika Awards Celebrating Northeast Icons

- Dr. Bhupen Hazarika, also known as Bhupen Da, was not only a celebrated musician and poet but also a towering cultural icon who gave voice to the dreams and struggles of India's diverse communities, especially those in the Northeast.
- Union Minister Scindia described Hazarika as someone whose songs and writings transcended linguistic and regional barriers.
- By establishing national awards in his name, India is celebrating "an era of empathy and cultural synthesis", not just an individual artist.



UPI Transactions Hit Record ₹27.28 Lakh Crore in October 2025

- India's digital economy reached a significant milestone in October 2025, with Unified Payments Interface (UPI) transactions hitting a record ₹27.28 lakh crore in value, according to data from the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI).
- The October 2025 figures reflect remarkable growth across all metrics.
- Transaction Value: ₹27.28 lakh crore
- Up 16% YoY from ₹23.49 lakh crore in October 2024
- Up 9.5% MoM from ₹24.90 lakh crore in September 2025
- Transaction Volume: 20.7 billion
- Previous high: 19.47 billion (July 2025)
- As of 2025, UPI accounts for 85% of all digital transactions in India, reflecting its wide adoption and usability.
- Developed by NPCI, an initiative of the RBI and Indian Banks' Association, UPI enables seamless peer-to-peer and merchant payments.
- It offers real-time transfers, zero fees for users, and is integrated across banking apps and fintech platforms.
- India's UPI model is being hailed globally as a public digital infrastructure success story.
- **UPI is operational in,**
 - UAE
 - Singapore
 - Bhutan
 - Nepal
 - Sri Lanka, France (First European country)
 - Mauritius



REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. In October 2025, India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) transactions reached a record value of—

- A) ₹21.45 lakh crore
- B) ₹25.89 lakh crore
- C) ₹27.28 lakh crore
- D) ₹29.10 lakh crore

Answer: ☒ C) ₹27.28 lakh crore

2. Which organization released the data showing UPI transactions hitting a record value in October 2025?

- A) Reserve Bank of India (RBI)
- B) National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)
- C) Ministry of Finance
- D) NITI Aayog

Answer: ☒ B) National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)

3. Maldives implemented a generational smoking ban for individuals born after which date?

- A) 1 January 2005
- B) 1 January 2006
- C) 1 January 2007
- D) 1 January 2008

Answer: ☒ C) 1 January 2007

4. When did the Maldives' generational smoking ban come into effect?

- A) 1 October 2025
- B) 1 November 2025

C) 1 December 2025

D) 1 January 2026

Answer: ☒ B) 1 November 2025

5. Afghanistan's decision to appoint its first official diplomat to India marks a significant step since—

A) 2019

B) 2020

C) 2021

D) 2022

Answer: ☒ C) 2021

6. Which lake in Bihar has been recently declared a Ramsar site?

A) Kanwar Lake

B) Gogabeel Lake

C) Baraila Lake

D) Udaypur Lake

Answer: ☒ B) Gogabeel Lake

7. Where was the International Salinity Conference 3.0, WE-CARE 2025, inaugurated?

A. Kerala

B. Goa

C. Maharashtra

D. Gujarat

Answer: ☒ B) GOA

8. Which state's police launched the 'Cyber Jago' programme to promote internet safety among school students?

A. A) Haryana

B. Gujarat

- C. Punjab
- D. Rajasthan

Answer: ☒ C) Punjab

9. Which country received India's first-ever GI-tagged Indi and Puliyankudi Limes under the APEDA-facilitated air shipment?

- A. A) United Kingdom
- B. United States
- C. Australia
- D. Canada

Answer: ☒ A) UK

10. In which country did India and the United States sign a landmark 10-year Defence Framework Agreement?

- A. A) Malaysia
- B. Singapore
- C. Indonesia
- D. Thailand

Answer: ☒ A) Malaysia
