

Daily Current Affairs

23 December 2024

India, Kuwait

- Kuwait has bestowed its highest honour, the Order of Mubarak Al Kabeer, to **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**. The External Affairs Ministry said, this is the **20th international honour given** to Prime Minister Modi by a country.
- The **Order of Mubarak Al Kabeer is a knighthood order of Kuwait**. It is awarded to **Heads of State and foreign Sovereigns** and to members of foreign royal families in sign of friendship. The Ministry said, the award has been previously awarded to foreign leaders like former **US Presidents Bill Clinton and George Bush** and **United Kingdoms Prince Charles**.



- Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a **meeting with Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al Sabah**. They discussed cooperation in key sectors like **pharmaceuticals, IT, FinTech, Infrastructure and security**.



- The leaders **recalled the strong historical and friendly ties between** the two countries and re-affirmed their full commitment to further expanding and deepening bilateral cooperation. In this context, they agreed to elevate the bilateral relationship to a 'Strategic Partnership'.
- Prime Minister thanked His Highness the Amir for ensuring the well-being of over one million strong Indian community in Kuwait. His Highness the Amir expressed **appreciation for the contribution of the large and vibrant Indian** community in Kuwait's development.



- Prime Minister appreciated the new initiatives being undertaken by Kuwait to fulfill its **Vision 2035** and **congratulated** His Highness the Amir for successful holding of the GCC Summit earlier this month.
- Amir **reciprocated Prime Minister's sentiments and expressed** appreciation for India's role as a valued partner in Kuwait and the Gulf region.

‘Udaan Yatri Cafe’ Initiative

- In a major relief for fliers and air passengers, the Ministry of Civil Aviation has announced the launch of “Udaan Yatri Cafe”, an eatery outlet at the airport for providing basic essentials like food and water at affordable and reasonable rates.



- The one-of-its kind initiative is being launched at **Kolkata airport on a pilot basis and if it turns successful**, it will be replicated at other airports across the country, managed by the Airports Authority of India.
- With the launch of first “Udaan Yatri Cafe” at Kolkata’s **Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport**, **air passengers will have** access to essential items like water bottles, tea, coffee, and snacks at reasonable prices.

India’s First Bio- Bitumen National Highway

- Union Transport Minister inaugurated **India’s First National Highway constructed using Bio- Bitumen material** in Nagpur-Mansar Bypass project of National Highway 44 in Nagpur District.
- Mr. Gadkari said that this **eco-friendly road construction will reduce the cost** of road construction, generate employment and curb pollution due to stubble burning.
- This is the **first national highway in the country** built using bitumen made from **crop residues -lignin**. This road made from bio-bitumen is **40 percent stronger than a traditional asphalt road**, and by **mixing 15 percent bio-bitumen** in the

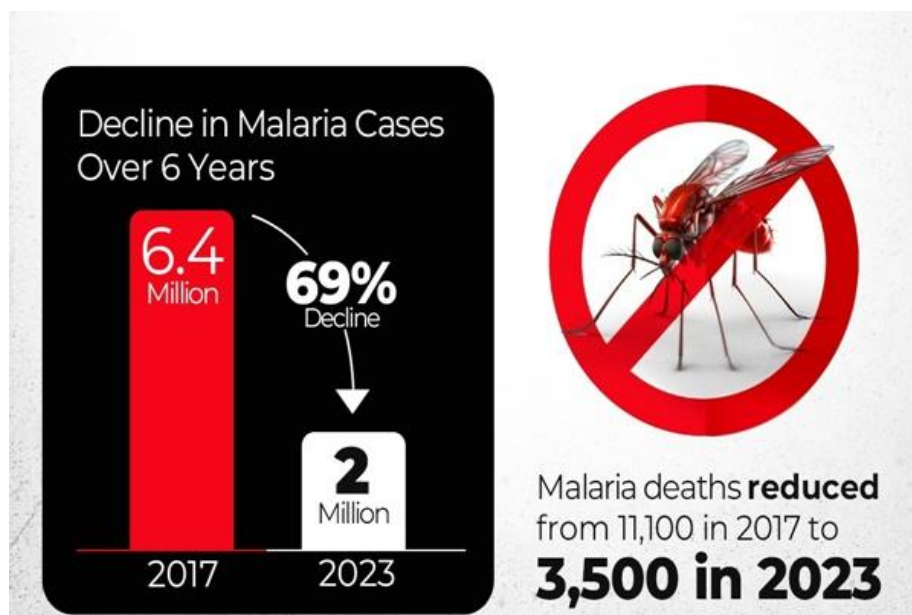
asphalt, a 1-kilometre-long stretch has been constructed in the Nagpur-Mansar National Highway project.



- This road is constructed by joint collaboration of **Central Road Research Institute -CRRI and Pune-based biotech firm- Praj Industries**. While stressing upon the usage of unconventional sources of energy like bio-CNG Mr. Gadkari urged **farmers to produce Bio-CNG from agricultural waste and bamboo**.
- The Minister also said this **biomass-to-bio CNG conversion technology** can give a new direction to industries in paddy cultivation districts like Bhandara-Gondia in eastern Vidarbha.

Malaria Reduction: WHO

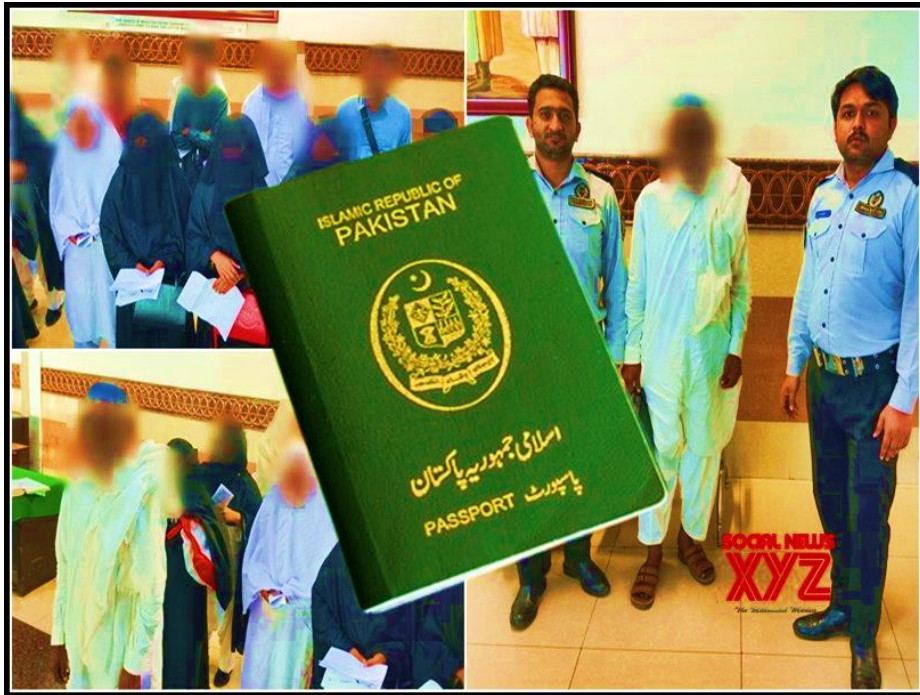
- **World Health Organisation (WHO)** has stated that India has demonstrated remarkable progress in **reducing malaria cases and** associated mortality in the country, particularly in its high-endemic states.
- This was highlighted in the **WHO's World Malaria Report 2024**.
- During the meeting, the stakeholders **praised the contributions of India's community health workers**, mostly women, who are effectively reducing malaria in remote areas. It was noted how **community health workers in India**, comprising **mainly women, are reaching remote populations** and significantly driving down malaria cases and deaths.



- According to the report, nationwide, the number of estimated malaria cases in India has reduced **from 6.4 million in 2017 to around 2 million cases in 2023**, which is a remarkable **69 per cent decrease**.
- Similarly, the estimated malaria deaths decreased **from 11,100 to 3,500 during the same period which is a 68 per cent decrease**.
- The report observed that India exited the **high burden to high impact HBHI group officially this year** due to significant progress in reducing the malaria incidence and mortality observed in its high-endemic states.
- The **HBHI Initiative targets regions heavily impacted by malaria**, mainly in Africa and parts of Asia, as **Africa accounts for 95 per cent of global malaria deaths**, with children being the most vulnerable.

Ban On Granting Visas To Pakistan

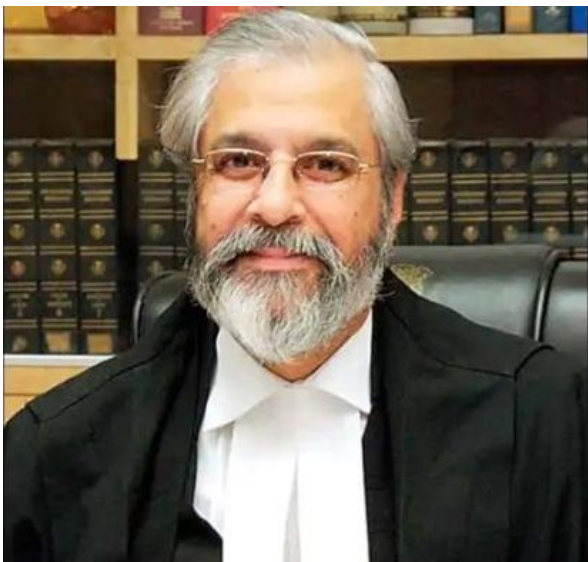
- **United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia And Several Other Gulf Countries** Have Imposed An Indefinite Ban On Granting Visas To People From At Least 30 Different Cities Of Pakistan.
- This Follows An Alarming Rise In **Number Of Cases Where Pakistani Nationals** Have Been Caught Begging Or Being Involved In Smuggling, Drug Trafficking, Human Trafficking **And Other Criminal Offences** Abroad.



- Gulf Countries And Cities, Especially **Dubai And Abu Dhabi, Remain The Most Preferred Destinations For Millions Of Pakistani Travellers And Job Seekers.**
- However, Following The **Ban And Increasing Visa Rejections**, The Already Dented Image Of **Pakistani Passport – Ranked Fourth Worst In The World For The Third Consecutive Year – Will Suffer Further Irreparable Damage.**

United Nations IJC Chairperson

- **Former Supreme Court judge Madan B Lokur has been appointed as chairperson of the United Nations Internal Justice Council (IJC).**



19 December 2024

Dear Justice Lokur,

I have the pleasure to appoint you, with immediate effect, as a member of the Internal Justice Council, in the capacity of chairperson, for a term ending on 12 November 2028.

The other members of the Council (in alphabetical order) are: Ms. Carmen Artigas (Uruguay), distinguished external jurist nominated by staff; Ms. Rosalie Balkin (Australia), distinguished external jurist nominated by management; Mr. Stefan Brezina (Austria), staff representative; and Mr. Jay Pozesel (United States of America), management representative.

In this regard, please find enclosed copies of General Assembly resolutions 62/228 (paragraphs 35-38), 63/253 (paragraph 57), 66/237 (paragraph 45) and 75/248 (paragraphs 34 and 35), which set out the mandate of the Council, and the conditions of service and appointment requirements of its members, as adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 75/248 (paragraph 36).

Pursuant to resolution 62/228, the Council is to be supported, as appropriate, by the Office of Administration of Justice. A member of that office will contact you shortly to assist with your induction/orientation and the commencement of the work of the Council.

Please accept my congratulations on your appointment to the Council, a key pillar of the system of administration of justice at the United Nations.

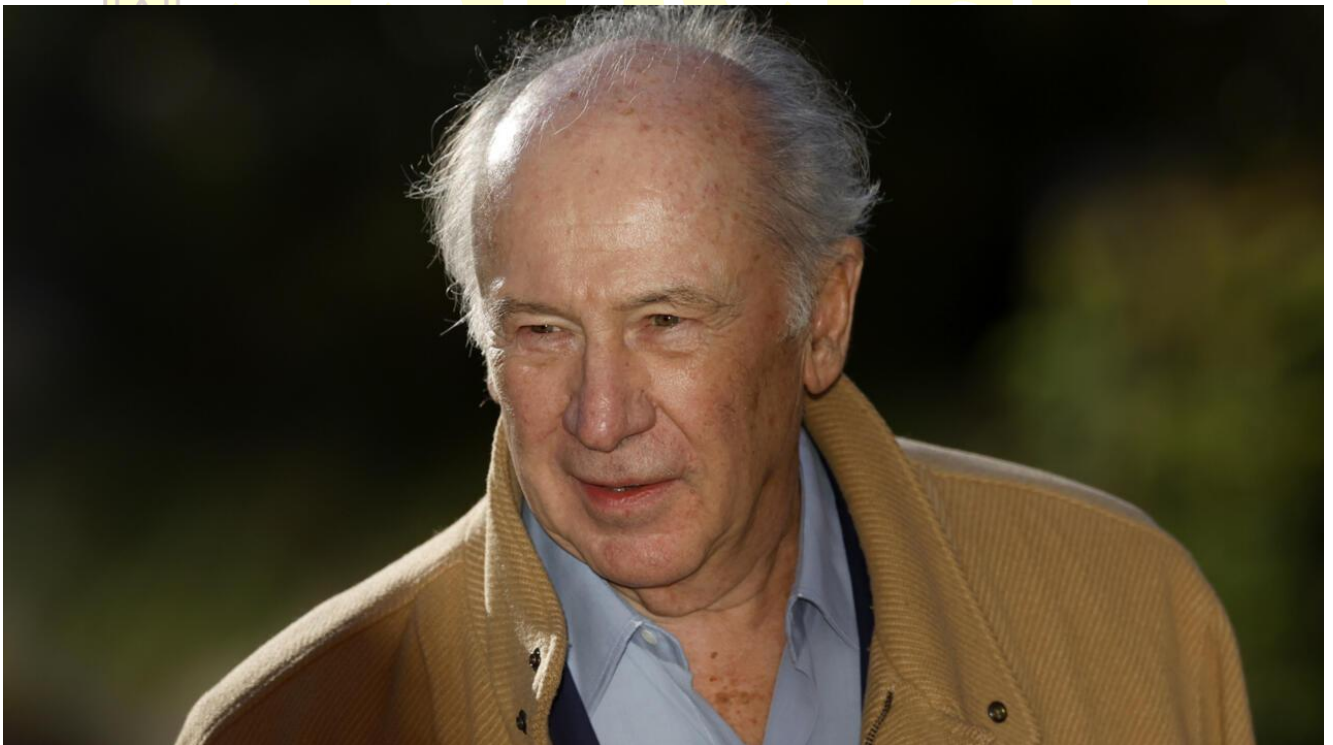
I would be grateful if you could confirm your acceptance of this appointment at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,
with my warmest regards
António Guterres
António Guterres

- Lokur has been appointed for a **4-year-tenure ending on 12th November 2028**. In a communication to Justice Lokur, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said, it's a pleasure to appoint Lokur, with immediate effect, as the Chairperson of IJC.
- **General Assembly of the UN established the IJC as part of the new internal justice system** to help ensure independence, professionalism and accountability in the administration of the UN's justice system.
- **Justice Madan Lokur retired as a judge** of the Supreme Court on 31 December, 2018, after a tenure of more than 6 years.

Former IMF Chief Rato Sentenced

- **Former Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Spain's Former Deputy Prime Minister, Rodrigo Rato**, was sentenced to **four years and nine months** in prison by the Madrid Provincial Court.
- The 75-year-old was found **guilty of tax fraud, money laundering, and corruption**. Investigators revealed that Rato had **concealed assets across multiple jurisdictions**, including the Bahamas, Switzerland, Monaco, Luxembourg, and the United Kingdom.



- Investigators also **uncovered over 15 million Euros in undeclared funds** and capital gains. Prosecutors alleged that in the decade **between 2005 and 2015, Rato defrauded the Spanish tax office** and lined his own pockets to the tune of **8.5 million Euros**.



- The court also found that **Rato exploited a 2012 tax amnesty** introduced by **Mariano Rajoy's People's Party (PP) government**, but failed to declare any of the companies he owned.
- This marks **Rato's second prison sentence**. In February 2017, he was sentenced to **four years and six months** for using a secret corporate credit card for over 500 undeclared purchases and cash withdrawals while serving as CEO of the **failed Bankia savings bank**.
- He served **two years in prison from October 2018 to October 2020**. Rato served as deputy prime minister and minister of the economy during Jose Maria Aznar's **People's Party (PP) government from 1996 to 2004**.

India's Forest Cover

- Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Bhupender Yadav released the 'India State of Forest Report 2023' (ISFR 2023) at the Forest Research Institute in Dehradun .
- According to the latest assessment, the total forest and tree cover in India stands at 8 lakh 27 thousand 357 square kilometers, representing 25.17 percent of the country's total geographical area.



- Of this, 7 lakh 15 thousand 343 square kilometers is classified as forest cover, while 1 lakh 12 thousand 14 square kilometers is tree cover. Mr. Yadav expressed satisfaction over the increase in the country's forest and tree cover, which has grown by 1,445 square kilometers since the 2021 assessment.
- This includes an increase of 156 square kilometers in forest cover and 1,289 square kilometers in tree cover. He also emphasized the advanced technology used by the Forest Survey of India (FSI) for real-time fire alerts and forest fire services, which help in better forest management.
- This report, published biennially by the Forest Survey of India, offers a comprehensive assessment of India's forest and tree resources, based on satellite data and field-based surveys.

Phewa Dialogue 2024

- **Phewa Dialogue series commenced** recently, marking **collaboration between Nepal and China**, in Pokhara, a city renowned for its picturesque lake. The dialogue **aims to encourage policies that promote regional prosperity** and peace.
- Participants will **discuss critical issues affecting South Asia**, including industrial changes and emerging needs. The **initiative reflects a commitment** to enhance economic integration within the region.



- **Sichuan University's China Center for South Asian Studies and Tribhuvan University's Department of International Relations and Diplomacy** are hosting the event.
- Their collaboration signifies a unified approach to addressing South Asian challenges. This partnership also puts stress on the **role of academic institutions** in shaping policy discussions.
- Phewa Dialogue follows an earlier initiative by the K P Sharma Oli government to launch the **Sagarmatha Dialogue series**. This previous effort was inspired by the Raisina Dialogue but **faced delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic**. The current dialogue represents a renewed commitment to regional dialogue and cooperation.

Indian U19 Team Lifts Inaugural T20 Asia Cup Title

- In Women's Cricket, India clinched the inaugural Under-19 ACC Women's T20 Asia Cup title at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, after defeating Bangladesh by 41 runs in the final.
- Chasing a target of 118, Bangladesh were bowled out for a modest 76 runs in just 18.3 overs. For India, **Aayushi Shukla** claimed three wickets, while **Parunika Sisodia** and **Sonam Yadav** took two wickets each.



- Earlier, India, batting first, scored 117 for seven in their allotted 20 overs. Gongadi Trisha was the top scorer with a solid 52 runs off 47 balls.
- For Bangladesh, Farjana Easmin shone with the ball, picking up four wickets. The tournament, which began on 15th December, featured six of the best teams from the continent vying for the title. India, led by Niki Prasad, remained unbeaten throughout the competition.

ISSF Junior Shooting World

- India will be hosting the **International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) Junior World Cup** for the **first time in the second half of 2025**. The ISSF awarded the hosting rights for the top junior international shooting competition for Rifle/Pistol/Shotgun to the **National Rifle Association of India (NRAI)**, making it another achievement for the country in shooting sport.
- This will be the **third top ISSF-level event to be held in India** after the senior World Cup in Bhopal in 2023 and the season-ending ISSF World Cup Final earlier this year, reinforcing India's stature as one of the sport's top destinations in the world.



- This will be the **ninth top-level shooting championship to be held in India** over the past decade, and it will be the first ISSF Junior World Cup. Before this India had hosted continental championships and six ISSF competitions, including two World Cup Final competitions besides four senior ISSF World Cups.

Anahat Singh

- **Indian sensation Anahat Singh** picked up her **ninth PSA Challenger title** of the year after winning the **Western India Slam 2024 Women's Singles crown** at the Cricket Club of India courts in Mumbai.



- The **16-year-old Anahat Singh**, seeded second in the tournament, defeated top seed and fellow Indian squash player **Akanksha Salunkhe** 3-0 (11-8, 11-8, 11-8) in the final to add another triumph to her sensational run this season.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. **Phewa Dialogue Series Commenced Marking Collaboration Between**

- A. Nepal & India
- B. India & Bangladesh
- C. Nepal & China
- D. Bangladesh & Nepal

ANSWER: C

2. **Till Date How Many International Honour Given To PM Modi**

- A. 15
- B. 18
- C. 24
- D. 20

ANSWER: D

3. **India's First Bio- Bitumen National Highway Built In**

- A. Nagpur
- B. Chennai
- C. Bangalore
- D. Panipat

ANSWER: A

4. High Burden To High Impact HBHI Group Seen In News Related To

- A. Road Accidents
- B. Cholera
- C. Economy
- D. Malaria

ANSWER: D

5. Which Country Set A New Global Record For The Longest Spacewalk

- A. Russia
- B. China
- C. USA
- D. India

ANSWER: B

6. Who Has Been Appointed As The Brand Ambassador For The Inaugural Kho Kho World Cup In 2025

- A. Pakistan
- B. India
- C. Sri Lanka
- D. Bangladesh

ANSWER: B

7. On Which Day SSB Celebrates Its Raising Day

- A. 18th December
- B. 19th December
- C. 20th December
- D. 21st December

ANSWER: C

8. Who Was Crowned Miss India USA 2024

- A. Priya Sharma
- B. Caitlin Sandra Neil
- C. Aishwarya Rao
- D. Neha Gupta

ANSWER: B

9. Which Ministry Partnered With France Museums Développement To Develop The Yuga Yugeen Bharat National Museum

- A. Ministry of External Affairs
- B. Ministry of Culture
- C. Ministry of Tourism
- D. Ministry of Education

ANSWER: B

10. Who Authored Hindi Poetry Book “Main Jab Tak Aai Bahar” Which Was Recently Honoured At Sahitya Akademi Award 2024

- A. Gagan Gill
- B. Sameer Tanti
- C. K.V. Narayana
- D. Aron Raja

ANSWER: A

11. Where Will The Yuga Yugeen Bharat National Museum Be Located

- A. Chennai
- B. Mumbai
- C. New Delhi
- D. Bengaluru

ANSWER: C

12. Which Country Has Developed An mRNA Vaccine For Cancer Patients

- A. Australia
- B. France
- C. Russia
- D. India

ANSWER: C

13. Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary Is Located In Which State

- A. Assam
- B. Uttar Pradesh
- C. Telangana
- D. Madhya Pradesh

ANSWER: D

14. Nodal Ministry For The Directorate General Of Commercial Intelligence And Statistics

- A. Ministry of Commerce and Industry
- B. Ministry of Finance
- C. Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation
- D. Ministry of Home Affairs

ANSWER: A

15. Which Country Is Host Of 12th Para Athletics World Championships In 2025

- A. Myanmar
- B. Russia
- C. India
- D. China

ANSWER: D

16. Orans Are Traditional Sacred Groves Found In Which State

- A. Rajasthan
- B. Gujarat
- C. Bihar
- D. Odisha

ANSWER: A

17. International Human Solidarity Day Is Observed Annually On Which Day

- A. December 19
- B. December 20
- C. December 21
- D. December 22

ANSWER: B

18. Rank Of India In Travel And Tourism Development Index 2024

- A. 37th
- B. 38th
- C. 39th
- D. 42nd

ANSWER: C

19. Eastern Maritime Corridor (EMC) Connects Which Two Cities Of India And Russia

- A. Mumbai and Moscow
- B. Chennai and Vladivostok
- C. Cuttack and St. Petersburg
- D. Bhubaneswar and Moscow

ANSWER: B

20. Adnyapatra Was Written By Which Of The Following Peshwa

- A. Moropant Trimbak Pingle
- B. Ramchandra Pant Amatya
- C. Santaji Ghorpade
- D. Moreshwar Pingale

ANSWER: B

