

Current Affairs: December 22, 2024

1. Udaan Yatri Cafe Initiative:



The Ministry of Civil Aviation has launched the "Udaan Yatri Cafe" at Kolkata's Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport. The initiative aims to provide essential items like water, tea, coffee, and snacks to air travelers at affordable prices. If successful, it will be expanded to other airports, enhancing passenger services.

2. India's First Bio-Bitumen National Highway:



The Union Transport Minister inaugurated India's first bio-bitumen national highway, constructed under the Nagpur-Mansar bypass project. Bio-bitumen, made from crop residue, is eco-friendly and 40% stronger than traditional asphalt, reducing pollution from stubble burning.

3. Decline in Malaria Cases in India:



According to the World Health Organization's "World Malaria Report 2024," India has significantly reduced malaria cases and deaths, particularly in high-risk areas. Malaria cases dropped from 6.4 million in 2017 to 2 million in 2023, and deaths have decreased by 68%.

4. Visa Ban on Pakistanis by Gulf Countries:



Several Gulf countries, including the UAE and Saudi Arabia, have imposed an indefinite visa ban on citizens from at least 30 Pakistani cities due to rising cases of crimes such as smuggling, human trafficking, and drug-related offenses. As a result, the Pakistani passport has been downgraded to the fourth-worst in the world.

5. Appointment of Justice Madan Lokur:



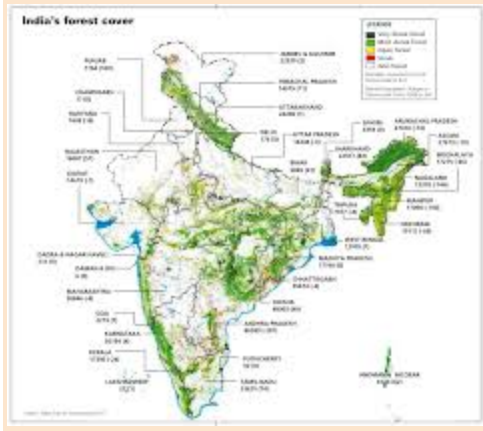
Former Supreme Court Judge Madan Lokur has been appointed as the Chairman of the United Nations Internal Justice Council (IJC), a position he will hold until November 2028. The IJC ensures the independence and professionalism of the UN's internal justice system.

6. Rodrigo Rato Sentenced for Corruption:



Former IMF Managing Director and Spain's former Deputy Prime Minister Rodrigo Rato was sentenced to 4 years and 9 months in prison for tax fraud, money laundering, and corruption. He hid assets in multiple countries and deceived Spain's tax office. This is his second jail sentence, having previously been convicted in 2017 for unauthorized expenses.

7. India's Forest Area:



The Environment, Forest, and Climate Change Minister Bhupender Yadav released the "India State of Forest Report 2023," revealing that India's total forest and tree cover is 25.17% of its geographical area. The report shows a positive growth of 1,445 square kilometers in forest cover from 2021.

8. Phewa Dialogue 2024:



Nepal and China have launched the "Phewa Dialogue" series in Pokhara, Nepal. The initiative aims to discuss regional prosperity and peace, focusing on industrial changes and regional needs. The dialogue is being organized by Sichuan University's China Center and Tribhuvan University's Department of International Relations.

9. India Wins U-19 Women's Asia Cup:



India's U-19 women's cricket team won the inaugural ACC Women's T20 Asia Cup in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. India scored 117/7 in 20 overs, with Gongadi Trisha making a stellar 52. Bangladesh was restricted to 76 runs, and India won by 41 runs.

10. ISSF Junior World Cup 2025 in India:



India will host the 2025 ISSF Junior World Cup in the latter half of the year. The National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) has secured the rights to host the prestigious event, strengthening India's position in international shooting competitions.