

December 24th news:

National:

MEA launches SAMEEP

With an aim to bring foreign policy to the masses the External Affairs Ministry has come up with an initiative - SAMEEP - 'Students and MEA Engagement Programme'. Under this MEA officials will talk to students to help them better understand foreign policy.

The main objective of SAMEEP is to take Indian foreign policy and its global engagements to students across the country. Under this programme, all the ministry officers - under-secretary and above - will be asked to go to their hometowns, particularly their alma maters. They will be expected to interact with the students about the way the MEA works, basic elements of its policies, how diplomacy is conducted, and generally give students an idea of what a career in the MEA would look like.

Lalu Prasad Yadav convicted in Fodder Scam

Rashtriya Janata Dal president Lalu Prasad and 15 others were found guilty of corruption in a second case pertaining to the fodder scam by a special CBI court in Ranchi on 23rd December. Special judge Shivpal Singh pronounced the verdict in a packed courtroom in the case pertaining to the alleged fraudulent withdrawal of ₹84.5 lakh from Deoghar district (now in Jharkhand) treasury between 1994 and 1996 when Mr. Prasad was the Chief Minister of Bihar. The court will pronounce the quantum of sentence on January 3.

Bilateral:

Indian Navy Conducts Exercise Naseem-Al-Bahr with Oman Navy

Indian Naval Ships Trikand and Teg are deployed to Oman for bilateral exercise 'Naseem Al Bahr' or 'Sea Breeze'. This exercise is the 11th edition and has been a biennial feature since 1993.

The bilateral relation between Indian and Oman were formally established with the signing of a 1953 Indo-Oman Treaty of friendship, Navigation and Commerce, a first between India and an Arab country. The first exercise Indian Navy with Royal Navy of Oman was conducted in 1993.

Science and Technology:

QRSAM successfully test fired off Odisha coast

Made-In-India' Surface-to-Air Missile QRSAM was successfully test fired by the Defence Research and Development Organisation from a defense base off Odisha coast.

The homegrown canister-based high-speed weapon system can deceive enemy radars making it difficult to be detected, is capable of destroying aerial targets, tanks, bunkers and short-range missiles.

The short-range weapon system was fired from a canister mounted on a rotatable truck-based launch platform at the Launching Complex-I (LC-I) of the Integrated Test Range (ITR) at Chandipur-on-sea.

It is a highly mobile air defence system which can destroy multiple targets at a distance of 25 km in less than one minute. Considered to be a unique system in its class, the missile is expected to supplement medium-range surface-to-air missile Akash.

Environment:

Ganga Gram Project launched to make 4,470 Ganga Villages Swachh and fully developed

Government on 23rd December formally launched 'Ganga Gram' project at Ganga Gram Swachata Sammelan in New Delhi.

As part of its clean Ganga mission - Namami Gange, Ganga Gram project is an integrated approach for holistic development of villages situated on the banks of the holy river with active participation of villagers. According to Union Minister Uma Bharathi preserving Ganga is responsibility of both government and public. She said, Centre has declared all 4,470 villages on the banks of the Ganges, located in Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal, open defecation-free (ODF).

The minister said, of these villages, the Centre and the state governments have identified 24 villages to be taken up under a pilot project to transform them into Ganga Grams.

The project envisages solid and liquid waste management, renovation of ponds and water resources, water conservation, organic farming, horticulture, and promotion of medicinal plants.