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International News

FRENCH PRESIDENT MACRON'S INDIA VISIT: KEY DEALS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS



French President Emmanuel Macron concluded his two-day visit to India, participating as the chief guest in the 75th Republic Day celebrations.

The visit aimed at strengthening strategic ties between India and France, featuring a 40-member delegation and significant diplomatic engagements.

In Science & Technology Department, Framework Cooperation Arrangement was signed between Department of Science and Technology (DST), India, and Institut National de Recherche pour l'Agriculture, l'Alimentation et l'Environnement (INRAE), France. Moreover, Framework Arrangement on Cooperation in Funding Research Projects was signed between DST, India, and Agence Nationale de la Recherche (ANR), France.

COMOROS PRESIDENT AZALI ASSOUMANI SECURES CONTROVERSIAL FOURTH TERM AMID OPPOSITION DISPUTE



In a disputed electoral process, Comoros President Azali Assoumani has claimed victory for a fourth term with 63% of the vote, as announced

by the electoral body Ceni.

The opposition alleges instances of ballot stuffing and premature closure of polls in favor of Assoumani, while international observers maintain the overall fairness of the election despite reported irregularities.

Azali Assoumani, a former military officer who first seized power in 1999, secured his fourth term after a contentious 2018 referendum abolished term limits. Accusations of imprisoning and exiling opponents have marred his rule, with critics raising concerns about democratic principles.

BHUTAN'S TSHERING TOBGAY EMBARKS ON SECOND TERM AS PRIME MINISTER AFTER FOURTH FREE ELECTION



Bhutan's liberal leader, Tshering Tobgay, from the People's Democratic Party (PDP), has commenced his second term as prime minister, following recent elections in the nation.

Bhutan, with a population of less than 800,000, has embraced democracy for 15 years and is renowned for its unique Gross National Happiness (GNH) index, measuring factors like recreation and emotional well-being.

Tobgay, 58, now serving his second non-consecutive term, was previously prime minister from 2013 to 2018 and led the opposition in the first free vote in 2008. A former bureaucrat and advocate for Bhutan's Buddhist culture, he faces the task of revitalizing the \$3 billion economy post-COVID-19 and addressing youth migration abroad.

National News

PM INAUGURATES DIAMOND JUBILEE CELEBRATION AND LAUNCHES TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVES FOR SUPREME COURT



Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Diamond Jubilee celebration of the Supreme Court of India and unveiled key technology initiatives during the event held at the Supreme Court auditorium in Delhi.

The occasion marked the beginning of the Supreme Court's 75th year, coinciding with the 75th year of the Indian Constitution.

PM Modi also launched Digital Supreme Court Reports (Digi SCR), Digital Courts 2.0, and the new bilingual website of the Supreme Court.

Acknowledging the Supreme Court's role, PM Modi emphasized its contribution to strengthening India's vibrant democracy, particularly in upholding freedom of expression, personal freedom, and social justice.

PM MODI UNVEILS INFRASTRUCTURE BOOST IN BULANDSHAHR, UTTAR PRADESH



Prime Minister Modi inaugurated and laid the foundation stone for projects worth over Rs 19,100 crores in Bulandshahr, Uttar Pradesh. The diverse

projects spanned crucial sectors such as rail, road, oil and gas, and urban development.

One significant project is dedication of a 173 Km long double line electrified section between New Khurja – New Rewari on Dedicated Freight Corridor. Moreover, Inauguration of the fourth line connecting Mathura – Palwal section & Chipiyana Buzurg – Dadri section.

Furthermore, dedication of multiple road projects, including four-laning work, widening, and development projects at a cumulative cost exceeding Rs 5000 crores.

TABLEAU ON THEME 'INDIA: MOTHER OF DEMOCRACY' CLINCHES FIRST SPOT AT REPUBLIC DAY PARADE 2024



The Republic Day Parade 2024 witnessed a remarkable tableau that captured the essence of India as the 'Mother of Democracy.'

This stunning representation not only enthralled the audience but also clinched the first spot in the parade, symbolizing India's rich democratic heritage.

The winning tableau was based on the theme 'India: Mother of Democracy,' showcasing the country's long-standing tradition of democratic values and practices.

The tableau highlighted India's journey through the ages as a cradle of democratic principles, reflecting the diverse and inclusive nature of its political system.

THDCIL INAUGURATES INDIA'S LARGEST GREEN HYDROGEN PILOT PROJECT ON 75TH REPUBLIC DAY



On the 75th Republic Day, THDC India Limited (THDCIL), a prominent Power Sector PSU, proudly unveiled India's Largest Electrolyser End Fuel Cell-based Green Hydrogen Pilot Project at its office complex in Rishikesh.

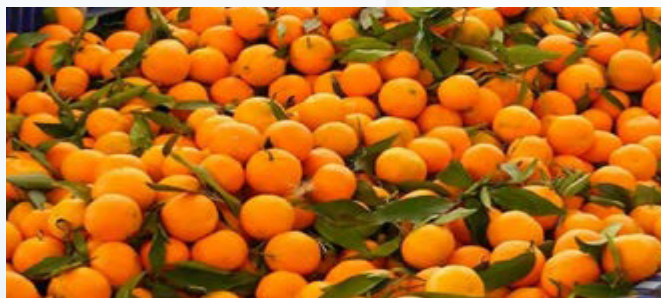
The initiative aligns with the "National Green Hydrogen Mission," showcasing THDCIL's commitment to sustainable energy practices. The pilot project, utilizing a 1MW Rooftop Solar Plant, will produce 50KG of Green Hydrogen daily.

The hydrogen will be stored in two tanks and used during night hours to illuminate the THDCIL office complex through a 70 Kw PEM Fuel Cell.

As India's Largest Electrolyser End Fuel Cell based Pilot Project, THDCIL's achievement demonstrates key technologies in Green Hydrogen Production, H₂ storage, and features a PEM Hydrogen fuel cell-based microgrid system.

State News

4TH RUSOMA ORANGE FESTIVAL 2024 IN NAGALAND



The vibrant hues of oranges and the aroma of citrus filled the air as the 4th edition of the Rüsoma Orange Festival unfolded in the picturesque village of Rüsoma, nestled in the Kohima district in Nagaland.

With approximately 3400 attendees, this year's event showcased the best of organic produce, community spirit, and rural entrepreneurship.

Beyond the festivities and competitions, the Rüsoma Orange Festival embodies a deeper purpose – to uplift rural farmers and promote organic agriculture.

By providing a platform for local farmers to

showcase their produce, the festival stimulates economic opportunities and fosters sustainable livelihoods within the community.

ODISHA HOSTS FOURTH NATIONAL CHILIKA BIRDS FESTIVAL



The National Chilika Birds Festival, a hallmark event in Odisha's calendar, commenced with grandeur on January 26. The festival was inaugurated by Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik. Hosted against the breathtaking backdrop of Chilika Lake, this festival brings together birders and enthusiasts from across India to celebrate the State of India's Birds.

Participants embarked on birding excursions to Mangalajodi and Nalabana, sanctuaries nestled within Chilika's pristine environs. Mangalajodi, dubbed the "Birds Paradise of Asia," offered a

glimpse into the diverse avian species that call this region home.

ODISHA LAUNCHES LABHA: A 100% STATE-FUNDED MSP SCHEME FOR TRIBAL EMPOWERMENT



In a significant move towards the development and empowerment of approximately one crore tribals in Odisha, the state government, led by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, has approved the launch of the 'LABHA' scheme.

LABHA, an acronym for Laghu Bana Jatya Drabya Kraya, is a 100% state-funded Minimum Support Price (MSP) for Minor Forest Produce (MFP).

The state government will annually determine the Minimum Support Price for the minor forest produce. Tribal primary collectors will sell minor forest produce at MSP through procurement centers managed by TDCCOL (Tribal Development Cooperative Corporation of Odisha Limited).

INDIA NOMINATES 'MARATHA MILITARY LANDSCAPES' FOR UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE LIST 2024-25



India has nominated the 'Maratha Military Landscapes' for inclusion in the UNESCO World Heritage List for the 2024-25 cycle.

The 'Maratha Military Landscapes of India' comprise twelve components, including Salher Fort, Shivneri Fort, Lohgad, Khanderi Fort, Raigad, Rajgad, Pratapgad, Suvarnadurg, Panhala Fort, Vijay Durg, Sindhudurg, and Gingee Fort.

These structures, dating back to the 17th and 19th centuries, span across Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, showcasing the strategic military prowess of the Maratha rule.

Defence News

INDIA, SAUDI ARABIA TO START MILITARY EXERCISE SADA TANSEEQ FROM JAN 29-FEB 10



The inaugural joint military exercise, Sada Tanseeq, between the armies of India and Saudi Arabia, is poised to commence in Rajasthan, showcasing

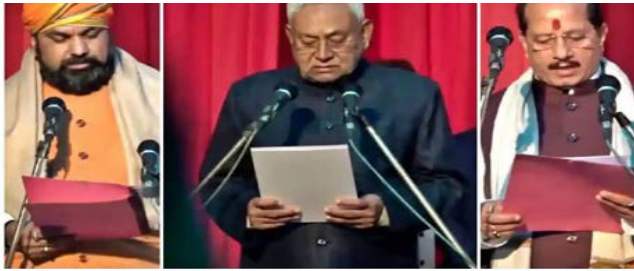
a significant leap in bilateral relations between India and Saudi Arabia.

Scheduled from January 29th to February 10th, 2024, Sada Tanseeq signifies a landmark collaboration, epitomizing the growing strategic partnership between India and Saudi Arabia.

The Saudi Arabian contingent, comprising 45 personnel, is being represented by the esteemed Royal Saudi Land Forces. Simultaneously, the Indian Army contingent, also consisting of 45 personnel, proudly represents a Battalion from the Brigade of the Guards (Mechanised In-

fantry).

NITISH KUMAR SWORN IN AS BIHAR CM FOR RECORD 9TH TIME WITH BJP SUPPORT



In a significant turn of events ahead of the upcoming Lok Sabha polls, Janata Dal-United (JDU) chief Nitish Kumar was sworn in as Bihar Chief Minister for the ninth time, breaking ties with the 'Mahagathbandhan' and securing support from the BJP.

The swearing-in ceremony, held at Raj Bhavan in Patna, saw Bihar Governor Rajendra Arlekar administering the oath of office. Nitish Kumar, after dissolving his Cabinet and severing ties with the 'Mahagathbandhan,' secured the support of the BJP.

INDIAN ARMY IMPLEMENTS NEW FITNESS POLICY



In response to concerns over declining physical standards and the increasing prevalence of lifestyle diseases within the Indian Army, a comprehensive new policy has been implemented.

The new policy introduces stringent measures for addressing physical health concerns among personnel, particularly overweight individuals. It mandates prompt action if no improvement is observed within 30 days.

Additionally, it introduces the Army Physical Fitness Assessment card (APAC), a standardized tool for monitoring and maintaining physical fitness levels.

The primary objective of this policy is to address concerns regarding physical health within the Indian Army. It emphasizes the importance of maintaining physical standards during courses, foreign postings, and in combating lifestyle diseases.

Economy News

UNION BUDGET 2024-25 OVERVIEW: NIRMALA SITHARAMAN'S FOCUS ON ECONOMIC GROWTH



On February 1, 2024, as part of the legislature's budget session, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will deliver the Union Budget 2024 for the fiscal year 2024-2025.

The budget aims to strike a balance between economic development and financial consolidation. The fiscal deficit target for FY24 is 5.9% of GDP, as suggested by CII, with a further reduction to about 5.4% of GDP for FY25.

According to Apurva Sheth of SAMCO Securities,

the government is likely to prioritize sectors such as infrastructure, railroads, and defense in the upcoming interim budget for 2024–2025.

Mobikwik's CEO, Bipin Preet Singh, advocates for government funding in artificial intelligence (AI) to overcome linguistic barriers and enhance accessibility for fintech companies.

UNION BUDGET 2024



Mrs. Nirmala Sitharaman, the Finance Minister, is set to present her 6th budget on this occasion. The

upcoming Union Budget on 1st February 2024 marks the 15th interim budget.

Given the imminent Lok Sabha elections in early 2024, this interim budget will serve to meet expenditures until the new government assumes power.

The infrastructure sector in India is anticipated to achieve a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 9.57 percent from 2024 to 2029.

For the fiscal year 2023-24, the government had allocated INR 1.75 trillion for fertilizer subsidies in the 2023 budget, with 55 percent of the amount expended within the initial five months.

Business News

IREDA UNVEILS ITS VIGILANCE JOURNAL 'PAHAL'



Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA), a Government of India enterprise under the administrative control of the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, has taken a remarkable step towards fostering transparency and promoting renewable energy initiatives.

On January 25, 2024, IREDA unveiled 'Pahal,' the insightful house journal of its Vigilance Department, marking a significant milestone in its commitment to accountability and sustainability.

The launch of 'Pahal' symbolizes IREDA's proactive approach to engage its stakeholders, including employees and their families, in the journey towards renewable energy development. The journal serves as a platform to disseminate insightful information, promote awareness, and encourage active participation in sustainable practices.