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SummitTIMES

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O N T O P O F T H E N E W S

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FALLING DEBRIS AT SETI JHORA BLOCKS NH10 FOR 3 HOURS

KALIMPONG, 19 JUL: National Highway 10 remained closed for about 3 hours this evening when massive amounts of falling debris covered the highway at Seti Jhora. Early this morning, there was some debris falling but it had not affected traffic in the area. However, later in the evening, an uprooted tree followed by massive amount of debris toppled down the hill thus covering the entire stretch of the highway below. Two JCB machines of PWD, NH Division, cleared the debris although debris continued to fall. After about 3 hours, one way traffic was restored. Executive Engineer, PWD NH Div, Uttam Pradhan, said that clearing work has been stopped for the night but will resume early in the morning on 20 Jul.

CBI names P Chidambaram, Karti in Aircel-Maxis case charge sheet

NEW DELHI, JUL 19 (PTI): Congress leader P Chidambaram and his son Karti Chidambaram were today named as accused in a charge sheet filed by the CBI in the Aircel-Maxis deal case in which they have been charged for alleged criminal conspiracy and misconduct.

The agency filed its supplementary charge sheet before special CBI

judge O P Saini who fixed it for consideration on July 31.

Besides Chidambaram and Karti, the CBI named 10 individuals, including public servants, and six companies as accused in the case.

The charge sheet was filed for the alleged offences of criminal conspiracy under the Indian Penal Code (IPC), public servant taking illegal grat-

ification, punishment for abetting this offence and public servant committing criminal misconduct under the Prevention of Corruption Act.

If convicted, the offences entail a maximum punishment of seven years.

According to the sources, the CBI is yet to obtain sanction to prosecute the public servants.

The money alleged to

be given as illegal gratification was taken from a **turn to pg02**



Coffee Table book on Governor unveiled

GANGTOK, 19 JUL (IPR): A coffee table book on the Governor of Sikkim, Shrinivas Patil, titled, "Sikkim and the People's Governor, Shrinivas Dadasaheb Patil" was unveiled by First Lady Rajanidevi Patil and Mrs Tika Maya Chamling at a special function here at Raj Bhavan on 18 July 2018.

The function was also attended by Chief Minister Pawan Chamling, Speaker KN Rai, the Deputy Speaker, Ministers and MLAs among other invitees.

The coffee table book encapsulates the five memorable years of Governor Patil at Raj Bhavan Sikkim and highlights his initiatives and reach among the common people of Sikkim.

The function also saw the presentation of a souvenir and memento by the Chief Minister to the Governor marking the completion of five successful years by the Governor in Sikkim.



SKM presses for LT Assembly seats, lashes out against SILTAC

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 19 JUL:

Sikkim Krantikari Morcha has said that if the SDF Government is really sincere towards Limboo and Tamang communities then it should immediately call an all-party meeting and lead a delegation to the Centre for early reservation of seats for Limboo and Tamang in the State Assembly.

The party alleged that the Centre has not been taking any issue of the State seriously as the State Government itself is not serious or honest about sensitive issues of the State.



Addressing a press conference here today, SKM spokesperson, Jacob Khaling alleged that Sikkim Limboo Tamang Apex Committee [SILT-AC] has been playing politics on this sensitive issue in the name of Lim-

boo and Tamang communities of Sikkim. He added that instead of taking this issue to a logical end, SILTAC has been trying to hide the weaknesses and mistakes of the State Government in the delay of the seat reservation.

Mr Khaling stressed that SDF government should show its political will instead of using SILT-AC as a front.

He mentioned that the ruling party has always said that the case

turn to pg03

E-FILE TDS STATEMENT FOR THE QUARTER ENDING ON 30TH JUNE, 2018 BY 31ST JULY, 2018



Delay in filing of TDS statement shall entail late fee of Rs. 200/- for each day. Penalty up to Rs. 1,00,000/- is also leviable.

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- In Form No. 16A, containing 7 character TDS certificate number, mandatorily from TRACES Portal <https://www.tdscpc.gov.in> (TDS certificate downloaded from TRACES Portal only, is the valid certificate. TDS certificate cannot be downloaded from TRACES Portal in case the PAN is incorrect or not specified in the e-filed TDS statement)
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ISSUE TDS CERTIFICATE

In Form No. 16A (on income other than salary) for the quarter ended 30th June, 2018 by **15th August, 2018**

(Delay in issue of TDS certificate shall result in penalty of Rs.100/- for each day of default not exceeding the amount of tax deductible/collectible)

ALERT

- Deductors who have deducted tax and have not deposited the same by the due date must do so immediately
- All deductors must register themselves at <https://www.tdscpc.gov.in>
- Quote correctly their TAN and also PAN of the deductee so that they get their due tax credit
- Non-quoting of PAN or TAN in TDS statement may lead to levy of penalty
- Quote correctly CIN of the challan to avoid default for short payment
- Deductors may avoid defaults about PAN and challan errors in preliminary screening, by responding to email/SMS from CPC(TDS) within seven days of receipt of email/SMS
- Use PAN-TAN master facility at TRACES Portal to verify correctness of PAN of the deductees
- If there is no transaction liable to TDS/TCS to report for the quarter, do intimate the same at TRACES Portal using "Declaration for Non filing" functionality to avoid notice for non-filing of TDS statement

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Guru Rinpoche's Thunkar Tshechu to be observed in Namchi

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 19 JUL: On the auspicious occasion of Thunkar Tshechu [birth anniversary] of Guru Rinpoche on 22 Jul, a puja is being organized by the puja committee of Namchi Monastery at Samdrupse in Namchi, South Sikkim.

All devotees and public have been requested to be a part of the celebration which will start at 8 a.m. from Shedup Choling Monastery [Allay Gumpa], a press release informs.

The programme will commence with a peaceful procession starting from Shedup Choling Monastery [Allay Gumpa] and will accordingly conclude at the holy statue of Guru Padmasambhava at Samdrupse for a puja to seek blessings.

The celebration will also feature a presentation on the biography of Guru Rinpoche at the Samdrupse premises, the release adds.



Anti-begging campaigner from Delhi reaches Mangan

WANGCHUK BHUTIA

MANGAN, 19 JUL: Ashish Sharma from Delhi, who had started a social campaign on foot from 22 Aug 2017 with the aim to cover different parts of the country to spread a message against begging, reached Mangan in North Sikkim today at 4 p.m.

"India must be free of beggars. Not a single child or anyone should be forced to beg," said Ashish.

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Unicorn FC paves way for recovering addicts, all set for Sikkim Premier Div League

SAGAR CHETTRI

GANGTOK, 19 JUL:

Unicorn Football Club, Gangtok is all set for its debut appearance in the State Premier Division League 2019 which will begin on 21 Jul here at Paljor Stadium. Unicorn FC will be playing against Sikkim Aakraman XI in the inaugural match of the league.

Unicorn FC was established in 2014 by a group of youth recovering from substance abuse with the motive of staying fit and playing in local tournaments. As the team slowly improved their game, they participated in the



State C Division League in 2016 and became the champion in their first appearance at the league which also meant that they got promoted to the State Second Division League 2017.

Continuing their outstanding performance, Unicorn FC finished the Second Division league as the champion last year and got further promoted to the State Premier Division League for this

year.

Besides its impressive performances in the State league so far, the club has lifted the champion's trophy of Serenity Cup football tournament in 2017 and became

runners-up in 2015 and 2018 and has also performed well in other tournaments in and outside the State.

Now to maintain their winning streak in the premier division league of the State, a 22-member squad of Unicorn FC has been undergoing rigorous training at Paljor Stadium under coach, Milan Lepcha. The team is all set to give a tough fight to other teams in the league under its captain, Tenzing D Bhutia.

Speaking to media persons, Unicorn FC manager, Chunku Tshering Lepcha, mentioned that

the team for the premier division mostly has young players supported by few experienced players of the State. He stated that there are nine recovering members in the team which is a great encouragement and motivation for other recovering members of the State to embrace sports and healthy activities.

"Although we are the underdogs in the league, we have taken this as a challenge to give a tough fight to big clubs of the State. We will be playing to sustain in the league but our target is to finish the league on the top," Mr

Lepcha expressed.

He mentioned that Unicorn FC has no sponsors and contributors but the club is being run so far only by its members.

"All clubs in the premier division are tough and experienced but we are confident to give a tough fight to them," he said.

He urged football lovers and people of the State to come forward and support the club during its matches in the league. He expressed confidence that players of the club will not disappoint supporters in the league.



REGU HOREB CHURCH PROMOTES RECYCLING OF WASTE MATERIALS

GANGTOK, 19 JUL: Regu Horeb Church of South Regu, under Chujachen Constituency, East Sikkim organized a training programme on recycling of waste materials on 18 Jul at South Regu Lepcha Tar under the chairmanship of Regu Horeb Church president, Pastor Passang Lepcha [Philip]. Ten Self Help Groups from Regu Dara Ward and Talkharka Ward, under Regu GPU, along with the general public and youth participated in the event with members of Kanchenjunga SHG from Sudunglakha as resource persons, a press release informs. The resource persons demonstrated the use of recyclable waste materials to create usable products like baskets, trays, mugs, etc. The release mentions that Regu Horeb Church has been conducting various social activities including a number of cleanliness drives around the area since its establishment in the year 1994.



It's Sikkim United vs United Brothers in Akkar Cup Football Finals

JORETHANG, 19 JUL [IPR]: In the second semi-final match of the ongoing Akkar Summer Cup Open Football Tournament 2018, Jorethang FC battled it out against Sikkim United, Gangtok at Jorethang playground in South Sikkim today.

Sikkim United, Gangtok defeated Jorethang FC with a score of 2-1 to enter the finals of the tourney. Goal Keeper of Jorethang FC, Nimdup Lepcha, was adjudged as

man of the match.

Organised by Jorethang Football Club, the event today was attended by Tourism Minister, Ugen T Gyatso, as chief guest accompanied by Minister Health & IPR cum Area MLA, AK Ghatani, as guest of honour. Government contractors, RK Walling and Sunil Gupta, also attended the sporting event as special guests.

At the onset of the semi-final football tour-

namment, an exhibition match was played between MLA CLC XI and Employees XI wherein Employees XI thrashed its opponent 4-0.

Now, Sikkim United, Gangtok will take on United Brothers, Kalimpong in the finals of the tourney scheduled to be held on 21 Jul. The winner and runner up of the tournament will receive cash prizes of Rs 1,25,000 and Rs 75,000 respectively.

CBI names P Chidambaram, Karti in Aircel-Maxis case...

contd from pg01

Malaysia-based company and Aircel Televentures Ltd, they said.

The CBI was conducting probe as to how Chidambaram, who was the finance minister in 2006, granted Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) approval to a foreign firm when only the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) was empowered to do it.

The senior Congress leader's role had come under the scanner of investigating agencies in the Aircel-Maxis deal of Rs 3,500 crore and INX Media case involving Rs 305 crore.

In its charge sheet filed earlier in the case against former telecom minister Dayanidhi Maran, his brother Kalanithi Maran and others, the agency had alleged that Chidambaram had granted FIPB approval in March 2006 to Mauritius-based Global Communication Services Holdings Ltd, a subsidiary of Maxis.

The Maran brothers and other accused, who were listed in the

CBI charge sheet earlier, were discharged by the special court which had said that the agency had failed to produce any material against them to proceed with the trial.

The CBI had alleged in the charge sheet against the Marans that Global Communication Services Holdings Ltd had sought FIPB approval for USD 800 million for which only the CCEA was competent, but Chidambaram had given approval to the firm in March 2006.

It had claimed that the finance minister was competent to accord approval on project proposals of up to Rs 600 crore and proposals beyond this required the approval of the CCEA.

The Enforcement Directorate is also probing a separate money laundering case in the Aircel-Maxis deal in which Chidambaram and Karti have been questioned by the agency.

Both Chidambaram and Karti have denied the allegations levelled against them by the CBI and ED.

SDF Panchayats terrorizing public of Lower Maneydara, alleges BJP



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 19 JUL:

Bharatiya Janata Party Sikkim Pradesh has alleged that Sikkim Democratic Front Panchayats and workers are terrorizing the people of Lower Maneydara Ward under Namthang-Rateypani constituency in South Sikkim for raising their voice by blocking the road with trees and other obstacles.

According to BJP Sikkim, people of Lower Maneydara had placed their grievances regarding acute scarcity of drinking water in the area recently to a BJP delegation, which was highlighted by BJP in newspapers.

A BJP press release states that after the problem was highlighted in newspapers, SDF Panchayats and workers have tried to terrorize the people by blocking roads in the area. It is added that local people along with members of BJP registered a report about the same at Marmring Police Station.

Marmring PS suggested that the issue be placed in the office of District Collector, South and following the same, a report on the incident was submitted to the DC office by BJP incharge, LB Chauhan, and general secretary, Damber Gurung, the release mentions.

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Gangtok on Friday, 20 July

Temp: 30°C/18°C
Forecast: Mainly cloudy, a thunder-shower in spots in the afternoon.
Sunrise: 04:52 AM
Sunset: 6:31 PM

Jawan injured in IED blast in Imphal

IMPHAL, JUL 19 (PTI): A jawan of the Assam Rifles was injured in an IED blast in Manipur's Chandel district today, police said.

The incident occurred around 6 am under Molcham police station area, about three kilometer inside Manipur territory of the Indo-Myanmar border.

According to Superintendent of Police Angam Kamei, one rifleman of the 29 Assam Rifles suffered splinter injuries when a powerful improvised explosive device (IED), suspected to have been planted by militants, exploded while a foot patrol party was moving in the thick forest area.

The jawans retaliated with firing, but the militants managed to escape.

The injured jawan, Appu Barma, was air-lifted from the spot in a military chopper, the police said, adding a combing operation was launched in the area to nab the militants.

Remuneration of sport coaches being doubled to Rs 2 lakh

NEW DELHI, JUL 19 (PTI): The remuneration of coaches in various sports disciplines would not be limited to Rs one lakh as the government has increased the cap to Rs two lakh, the Lok Sabha was informed today.

Responding to supplementary questions during Question Hour, Sports Minister Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore said it has been decided to increase the cap of remuneration by 100 per cent as the present cap of Rs one lakh was found to be impractical as foreign coaches were charging much more.

He also said the cash incentive of medal winning players would be distributed among the grassroots, intermediate and apex level coach.

So far, the amount was only given to the apex coach, ignoring the contribution of others who spotted and nurtured the talent at various levels.

There was a brief war of words between members of the opposition and treasury benches when Gaurav Gogoi (Cong) sought Rathore's response to a reported comment made by a sports body on the English-speaking capability of Hima Das, who won a gold in women's 400 meters of World U20 Championship.

On being pressed for a reply, Rathore said he has major responsibilities to shoulder and cannot comment on all issues.

4th batch of pilgrims complete Kailash Mansarovar Yatra

ARPAN PRADHAN

GANGTOK, 19 JUL:

The fourth batch of Kailash Mansarovar Yatra 2018 arrived in Gangtok on 18 Jul after completing their pilgrimage successfully. A special felicitation programme in honour of the KMY pilgrims was organised by Sikkim Tourism Development Corporation [STDC] in coordination with Department of Tourism & Civil Aviation here at a local hotel in the capital on their arrival.

Special Secretary, Tourism & Civil Aviation, Namrata Thapa, attended the function as chief guest in the presence of Chief Executive Officer, STDC, Suman Thapa, Manager, Tejpal Pradhan, and other officials.

Addressing the function, Special Secretary, Ms Thapa, congratulated



all the yatris from the 4th batch for successfully completing the yatra and took the opportunity to thank the Government of India, the State Government and Chief Minister Pawan Chamling for their continuous efforts

and support in opening the KMY via Nathula in Sikkim.

She also said that the KMY has enormously contributed towards boosting tourism in the State and has also provided opportunities to

the yatris to witness the scenic beauty of the State.

The yatris of the 4th batch were felicitated with offering of mementos, books and khadas by the chief guest.

The 5th and 6th batch

of KMY 2018 are still on their pilgrimage. The 6th batch will be crossing Nathula border and entering the Chinese TAR region today while the 5th batch will be arriving in Gangtok in first week of Aug, it is informed.



RSA organize musical gratitude event at Raj Bhavan

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 19 JUL:

Twenty-four students of Remanti Sangeet Academy, Gangtok performed a musical gratitude programme on 18 Jul at Raj Bhawan in the presence of Governor Shrinivas Patil, First Lady, Rajanidevi Patil, Chief Minister Pawan

Chamling, Cabinet members and distinguished guests.

The programme concluded with the offering of a handprints impression memento of RSA's girl students to the Governor and the CM to promote the academy's theme, 'Save Girl Child, Save Her Future'.

Director of the academy, Remanti Rai, stated that these kinds of events are being organized to encourage more youth towards creative and artistic fields.

Also attending the function were faculty members of RSA, Bijay Subba, Amit Pradhan and

Shiva Chettri.

It may be mentioned here, Remanti Sangeet Academy is a music academy based in Gangtok with its art studio in the name of Vibgyor Art Studio focusing on spreading knowledge of music and art in Sikkim and presently has around 200 students.

Changes in RTI Act will make it useless, all Indians must oppose move: Rahul

NEW DELHI, JUL 19

(PTI): The government's move to amend the Right to Information (RTI) Act will render the law "useless", Congress chief Rahul Gandhi said today and advocated that "every Indian" should oppose the proposed changes, which seek government control over the salaries and terms of information commissioners.

The BJP wants to hide the truth, Gandhi alleged. The amendments, if cleared by Parliament, will give the government powers to fix tenures, salaries as well as other terms and conditions of service of information commissioners at the Central Information Commission (CIC).

"Every Indian deserves to know the truth and the BJP wants to hide the truth. The BJP believes the truth must be hidden from the people and they must not question people in power. The changes proposed to the RTI will make it a useless Act," Gandhi said on Twitter. He added that the changes being suggested "must be opposed by every Indian". Gandhi tagged a letter by the National Campaign for People's Right to Information, which has challenged the amendments on the ground that they undermine the independence of information commissions. Under the RTI Act, informa-



tion commissioners have a fixed tenure of five years or till they attain the age of 65, whichever is earlier.

The chief information commissioner gets a salary equivalent to the chief election commissioner while

information commissioners at the CIC are at par with election commissioners.

The government yesterday said it is considering a proposal to amend the Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005, to frame rules on salaries and services of the chief information commissioner and information commissioners.

A notice of intention was given to introduce 'The Right to Information (Amendment) Bill, 2018' in the Rajya Sabha

for consideration and passage during the current session of Parliament, Minister of State for Personnel Jitendra Singh said in a written reply to Lok Sabha yesterday.

Leaders of various political parties yesterday said they are committed to fight any "attempt" by the Centre to "dilute" the act and oppose any amendments to it.

The proposed amendments, circulated among Members of Parliament, seek to do away with the parity given to information commissions with the Election Commission in terms of salary, allowances and conditions of service, RTI activists have said.

The Central Information Commission and State Information Commissions were set up under the RTI Act to facilitate flow of information from government departments, ministries and agencies to the citizens wanting information under the law.



SFA bids farewell to Governor Shrinivas Patil

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 19 JUL:

A delegation from Sikkim Football Association led by its president, Menla Ethenpa, called on Governor Shrinivas Patil at Raj Bhawan in Gangtok on 17 Jul to extend gratitude for all the support rendered by him to SFA throughout his tenure in Sikkim and bid him farewell as well.

The SFA had prepared a citation for the Governor which was read out by Mr Ethenpa before presenting it to the Governor, an SFA press release informs.

Centre mulls idea of bringing law to curb mob lynching

NEW DELHI, JUL 19

(PTI): The Centre is learnt to have begun preliminary discussions on the possibility of bringing a new law to curb mob lynching, and one of the options being mulled is to amend the Indian Penal Code to define 'mob lynching' as a penal offence, a senior government functionary said today.

Another option being considered is to draft a model law that states can adopt to prevent incidents of mob lynching, the functionary said. "Everything is in the preliminary stage as the entire Supreme Court order asking the Centre to come up with a new

law has to be examined," he added. He said it will take several days before the government firms up its stand.

The government may also further strengthen the framework relating to social media to ensure that rumours which may lead to such incidents are checked.

Condemning the rising incidents of lynching in India, the Supreme Court had on Tuesday asked the government to enact a law to deal such cases. A bench headed by Chief Justice Dipak Misra had termed the incidents of lynching "horrendous acts of mobocracy" which cannot be allowed to become a new norm.

SKM presses for LT Assembly seats...

contd from pg01

filed by HR Pradhan is causing the delay in this issue. On the same, he added that Mr Pradhan has never opposed seat reservation for Limboo and Tamang and instead filed the case for early reservation of seats for Limboo and Tamang.

He further said that the failure of the State Government to provide satisfactory reply on the issue is the reason behind the delays.

Mr Khaling stated that in the reply to the Delimitation Commission of India on 09 Mar 2006, a letter of the Chief Secretary of Sikkim Government clearly mentions that, "Once the increase in the number of seats have been improved, the reservation of seats for the Limboo and Tamang communities of Sikkim, who have been included in Scheduled Tribes, would be re-

solved. As such, I would like to request that this matter be kept pending for some more time till this issue is settled by the Government of India".

He added that this letter was also responsible for the delay on the issue but the State Government has still not withdrawn this letter till date.

SKM vice-president, Birendra Tamling, lashed out against SILTAC alleging that the organization is affiliated to SDF and completely under its control.

Responding to media queries, Mr Khaling stated that SKM does not trust the CM's statements and announcements anymore since he is consistently changing his statements. He added that SKM wants LT seat reservation before 2019 election. He also demanded that LT Ministers and MLAs put pressure on the government.

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SummitTIMES

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

For Real Issues, Look Beyond Averages

Focusing too much on “rates” can distract from the real concerns

Sikkim, with a population of barely over 6 lakhs, finds itself elated and despondent at frequent intervals when national report cards on economic and social indices are released. Data is invariably crunched on averages and Sikkim's small size, depending on how the data is worked, invariably delivers the State either effusive accolades or embarrassing brickbats. The projections on school dropouts in Sikkim, crime rate and even suicide numbers, when calculated on formulae worked out for national statistics end up projecting prevalence rates which appear much more distressing than they actually are. Make no mistake, all of these are worries, but probably not of the scale that the “rates” project. That is the trick that percentages and averages can play, and as many times that Sikkim has been flustered by such figures, it has also found size-skewed data provide it with reasons to celebrate. Fact is that Sikkim's entire population is little more than half the average voter strength of a Lok Sabha constituency, but it has the trappings and largesse of a State, data of percentages and averages then becomes a very unreliable yardstick to measure performances by.

To Sikkim's benefit, its size is so small that report cards in the people's eyes do not need complicated figures or bombastic claims; every change, improvement, success and failure is universally palpable and open to immediate public appraisal or ridicule. That should be the yardstick by which the politicians and executive measure performance and delivery instead of awaiting what the number might register.

Unfortunately, the obsession with statistics has infiltrated these sections as well. Some years ago, too much breath was wasted on the school dropout rates, with the Opposition parties haranguing the government about it and the ruling party and concerned department introducing their own calculations which worked down the rate to a third of what the Union Ministry was claiming. Matters had come to such a pass that the entire debate was centred around the numbers, and were no longer about the trend it recorded. When a debate on discussion gets fixated for too long on the numbers, it can end up inuring the people and the policy makers on the actual issue. In a situation where governments are now bound by law to ensure that every child is in school till the age of 14, any dropout should be considered too much. When one debates on averages and rates, the limitations of statistics for a small pool come to the fore. The dropout rate debate was about a staggeringly impossible 80+% claimed by Delhi to a dramatically lower 25% claimed by the Department and this was then reflected against the 56% national average. When so juxtaposed, the still jaw-dropping 26% dropout rate somehow becomes acceptable when presented alongside the national average of around 56%. These are old figures and the numbers are comparatively better and much lower now, or so is being claimed. But to continue with the thought – when these numbers were released in 2009-10, the national figure related to the academic record of more than 13 crore students in class I to V. Sikkim, by comparison, was handling 82,992 students from classes I to V.

In the battle for numbers, what ends up getting sidelined is the fact that as per the HRD Department's own records, a decade ago in 2007-08, between 20 to 25 per cent of the students failed in every class between classes I to VIII. This led to dropouts and also reflected on the efficacy of the classrooms. Since then, the no failure rule has come into play, so the question that needs to be asked is whether the now less than desperate dropout rates are more because the shortcomings of the classrooms are taking longer to sink in since children are moving along from class to class? The board exam results usually attract a lot of media attention and analysis, but such consistently high failure rates in beginner classes itself had not been paid much attention to.

What are the schools imparting by way of education if starting from class-I itself, a quarter of the class manages to fail? Let's accept for now that they would fail because nothing much has improved by way of how the schools are staffed. These are the more important questions which one expects the people's representatives to raise and debate and take the Department and school managements to task for. But that is not happening. And that is because Sikkim continues to refuse to look beyond the averages to notice the real issues.

WRITE US: Readers are invited to comment on, criticise, run down, even appreciate if they like something in this paper. Letters carrying abusive/ indecorous language and personal attacks, except when against people responsible in this newspaper (who are fair game), will have to be ignored. Letters which carry forward a conversation or initiate a dialogue will command immediate attention and receive prominence. Mail us at: letters@summittimes.com

The rescued Thai boys are considering becoming monks — here's why

ANDREW ALAN JOHNSON
theconversation.com

After their dramatic rescue from Nang Non cave, 12 Thai boys and their soccer coach are mourning the loss of a Thai Navy SEAL, Saman Gunan, who died during the rescue efforts. The father of one of the boys said that in order to pay tribute to the Navy SEAL, many boys are considering temporarily becoming monks.

Ordaining as a full monk – known as “bhikkhu” in Pali, the religious language of the Theravada Buddhism – is only available to men over 20. The boys would instead be ordained as novices, or “nen,” who undergo fewer restrictions. Additionally, at least one of the boys is Christian, and would likely not be ordained as a monk.

But in the wake of the rescue efforts, the act of ordaining is not surprising. In Theravada Buddhist practice, ordaining to be a monk and donating the merit thus gained is one of the greatest honors that a person can give to another.

MONASTICISM IN THAI LIFE

Monks in Southeast Asia, with their saffron robes and shaven heads, are iconic. They can be seen on the roadside with alms bowls, accepting handfuls of rice from villagers in early morning processions, or gathered in the evenings chanting Pali scriptures in the Buddhist temples that lie at the heart of most Thai villages. In my own research, I spent hours talking with monks – from abbots of major temples to those who had been ordained for a short period.

I also met monks engaged in “magical” activities such as healing, to those who saw their role as scholars. My first impression, like that of many travelers, was of a group of men seeking enlightenment through isolation from the world.

Indeed, this isolation is at the core of Buddhist teachings. For Buddhists, worldly desires lead to suffering. Therefore, cessation of desires can lead to happiness and eventually enlightenment.

But monks are not a homogeneous group. Buddhists join the monkhood – the sangha – for many different reasons, only some of which are related to achieving transcendence and enlightenment. While some may choose to remain monks for their

entire lives, most Buddhists ordain for a limited period. Thai Buddhists with whom I've worked have ordained for a few months during childhood, for the length of the rainy season, or even just for a day before undertaking a dangerous journey or following the death of a parent.

Buddhism, as it is practiced in Thailand, addresses many worldly needs. It takes into consideration the lives of people who are not necessarily ready to renounce the world quite yet.

MONASTIC EDUCATION

Before the advent of government-run schools in the late 19th century, the Buddhist temple was the key institution for the education of young boys in Thailand. Boys as young as 5 entered the temple to learn to read and write, and to study the basics of Buddhism.

When Theravada came to Southeast Asia from India in the second millennium A.D., replacing local versions of Hinduism and Mahayana Buddhism, this religious focus on promoting education within the village was revolutionary, as it became a central part of village life.

Theravada was focused not on the trappings of kingship and rule, but on serving communities. The temple in the center of the village served as the school, fairgrounds, hostel and welfare office in addition to its role as a religious center.

Today, this role of educating Thai boys has largely been replaced by government-run schools. This transition has allowed for the education of girls.

But some Buddhist schools remain, especially in Thailand's North, that keep a focus on mostly men's religious education. They teach the local Northern Thai script (distinct from Central Thai

and largely fallen out of use) in addition to the religious languages of Pali and Sanskrit. **KARMA AND MERIT** But education is not the only reason to seek to be ordained.

Most Thai men get ordained in order to make merit – known as “tham bun.” Devoting oneself to the study of the Buddha's teachings, the dharma, is one of the most holy acts that one can do. Buddhists who get ordained are believed to acquire a great deal of bun, or merit.

For Buddhists, this life is but one in a cycle of deaths and re-

births, where the good deeds one does in the past determine where and in what form – human, animal, divine being – one is reborn. Eventually, over many lifetimes, enough knowledge and merit will allow for escape from this cycle and transcendence.

But as anthropologist Lucien Hanks described, in Thai religious system, practitioners can donate and receive merit from others. Normally, the recipient of the merit are parents. It is a way to thank them for their sacrifices.

In the case of the 12 boys and their coach, however, they are offering the merit they will make to Officer Saman, in order to ensure a better rebirth in his next life.

THE OBLIGATION OF A DEBT

Like many languages, Thai has certain concepts that do not translate well into English. One of these, “krengjai,” refers to the feeling of obligation toward someone who has given a gift too great to repay. It is a heavy feeling.

For observers, it is easy to imagine the gratitude that the boys must feel to Officer Saman, but it is just as easy to overlook the sense of responsibility that must weigh on the boys as well. As the classic anthropological theorist Marcel Mauss pointed out, gifts come with obligations, and the sacrifice of a life is no different.

In this way, the boys are likely becoming monks not to reflect upon their own fate or experience in the cave. Rather, they are doing this to repay Saman's sacrifice with the greatest gift that they can offer.

[the writer is Assistant Professor of Anthropology, Princeton University]

Why Indonesia should not bar ex-offenders from running for public office

ANUGERAH RIZKI AKBARI
theconversation.com

Gearing up for Indonesia's elections next year, the General Election Commission (KPU) passed the 2019 Legislative Election Regulation. This prohibits people who had been convicted of corruption, drug trafficking and child sexual violence from running in the election.

According to KPU, these crimes are “extraordinary and have damaging effects to the society”.

These crimes are severe. But, under Indonesia's often flawed criminal justice system, taking away ex-offenders' right to run for office by means of regulation could undermine our democracy and preclude a group of people from having a chance to serve the public.

NEVER-ENDING PUNISHMENT

Deprivation of certain rights, including the right to hold public office, is not a new feature in Indonesian criminal law. Under the Criminal Code, a judge can bar a perpetrator of a crime from holding public office as an additional form of punishment.

But, in addition to the Criminal Code, a number of laws also bar ex-offenders from working in the public sector. Several laws in Indonesia bar convicted criminals from serving as police officers, judges, prosecutors, judicial commissioners, or other “government-related” positions, even as legal advocates.

As for legislators, the 2008 Law on Legislative Election requires lawmakers to never have been convicted of a crime that carries a penalty of more than five years in prison.

These laws mean that even though someone has already been sentenced

by a judge for their crime and served that sentence, the state continues to punish the person by taking away certain civil rights. Punishing ex-offenders via legislation disregards due process of law, and is given without objective considerations.

CONSTITUTIONAL COURT RULING

In 2009 the Constitutional Court gave a decision on a review of the Legislative Election Law that was requested by Robertus, who could not run in the 2009 legislative election in West Sumatra because he had been sentenced to nine years and eight months in prison in 1976 for violent theft.

Reviewing Robertus's case, the court ruled that ex-offenders deserved a right to be elected to public office under certain conditions:

- they have to wait five years after their release before running
- they must announce to the public prior to their campaign that they were convicted criminals
- they are not repeat offenders or recidivists.

The court only decided on the right to run for elected positions

(lawmakers, president, local leaders) where the public has the power to vote candidates in or out. Ex-offenders still could not serve in appointed positions such as a cabinet minister, a commissioner, or expert staff.

With this year's legislative election regulation, the KPU is creating exceptions to the Constitutional Court decision for corruption, child sexual violence and drug trafficking.

FLAWED CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

The KPU ruling is problematic because our criminal justice system is imperfect and often carried out unfairly.

Stealing or misappropriating money for personal profit is wrong and can impact the country's development. But a number of people have to bear the status of being a corruptor due to disjointed legislation that conflates state losses and company losses. For instance, a former director of state-owned airline Merpati, Hotsi Nababan, was sentenced to prison for a business judgment that went awry and was deemed to cause state losses.

Child sexual violence sounds irredeemably wrong when we imagine an adult taking advantage of their power over a helpless child. But often in Indonesia those who are convicted of child sexual violence are children themselves. They date and have consensual sex. And the parent, often of the girl, who finds out about the sexual relationship reports the boy to the police. The boy then gets convicted for exploring his sexuality with his girlfriend and carries that with him for the rest of his life.

And, lastly, we have the case of drug trafficking. Many drug users who should be rehabilitated are given a label drug trafficker by a judge because the very vague prohibitions on possession of drugs under the Narcotics Law mean a drug user could be categorised as a drug trafficker.

HELPING EX-OFFENDERS

RE-ENTER SOCIETY

Legal expert Anthony C. Thompson argues that the government and legal community should provide sufficient tools to help ex-offenders re-enter their communities. While the government could provide re-integration programmes, lawyers, courts and law schools could collaborate to offer innovative and non-conventional assistance with such programmes. With these interventions, ex-offenders will have better prospects of not going back to the criminal circles and can reinvent themselves as members of society.

Removing an ex-felon's right to hold public office is the reverse of the intervention that Thompson proposes. And it will result in Indonesia potentially precluding a large number

turn to 05





Former Arunachal MLA's death case handed to CBI

ITANAGAR, JUL 19 (PTI): The Arunachal Pradesh government has handed over the probe into the death of former MLA Ngurang Pinch eight months ago to the CBI, official sources said today.

The government's decision to hand over the case to the central investigating agency was communicated to the CBI director by state Home Commissioner A C Verma yesterday, the sources said.

The letter termed the case as "serious and sensitive" and said despite handing it over the case to crime branches special investigating team (SIT) nothing conclusive emerged from the probe even after seven months since the case was transferred to it.

"Further, there are representations from public to transfer the case to CBI," the letter read.

The body of Pinch, who was the chairman of Arunachal Pradesh Agriculture Marketing Board, was found floating in a river in Papum Pare district on November 18 last year. He was on a rafting expedition along with eight others the previous day and had stayed on the river bank near the confluence of the Popum and the Poma rivers.

The MLA was found missing on that day and on searching his body was found floating in the river between Basar Nallo and Rana Ghat on the Assam side.

Pinch's family members have alleged that his death was a well-planned murder and demanded that the CBI take over the probe from the SIT as the state crime branch failed to act against a few people.

The SIT had arrested three persons in regard to the case, official sources said.

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2 lakh posts of Anganwadi staff lying vacant

NEW DELHI, JUL 19 (PTI): Over two lakh posts of Anganwadi staff are lying vacant in the country with Bihar alone accounting for 53,000, the government informed the Rajya Sabha today.

In a written reply to the Rajya Sabha, Minister of State for the Women and Child Development Ministry Virender Kumar also said that the monthly honourarium of the Anganwadi Workers is Rs 3,000, Anganwadi Workers of mini-Anganwadis is Rs 2,250 and Anganwadi helpers is Rs 1,500.

Anganwadis are government-sponsored mother and child care centres.

Asked whether Anganwadi workers were facing increasing responsibilities and work expectation while they are paid mere honoraria, Kumar said in addition to the monthly honourarium of the Anganwadi staff, they are paid extra for additional work assigned to them.

He said Anganwadi workers and Anganwadi helpers are selected by district level committee in the states and Union territories from time to time.

He also said that the states and Union territories have been asked to delegate powers to district magistrates and district

commissioners in 115 'aspirational districts' to recruit Anganwadi Workers and helpers.

According to the figures provided by the ministry, in 2017-18, there are about 1,06,055 posts of Anganwadi workers lying vacant out of a total of 14 lakh sanctioned positions while about 1,16,293 positions of Anganwadi helpers were lying vacant out of 116,857 posts.

Bihar is reported to have the highest number of vacant posts of Anganwadi workers at 26,835 out of 1,15,009 sanctioned positions and 26,764 of Anganwadi helpers out of 1,07,894 sanctioned posts.

Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Andaman and Nicobar islands, Lakshadweep and Pondicherry have zero vacant posts.

The minister also informed that out of the sanctioned 14 lakh Anganwadi centres to the states and Union territories, 13.63 lakh Anganwadi centres have become operational and 173.35 of pregnant and lactating mothers were receiving supplementary nutrition at the Anganwadi centres.

Kumar also said that about 326.91 lakh children from 3 to 6 years of age attended the Anganwadi centres for pre-school non-formal

education.

The Anganwadi services under the Integrated Child Development Services scheme envisage the Anganwadi Workers and Anganwadi Helpers as "honourary workers" from the local community who come forward to render their services on part time basis in the area of child care and development.

About Rs 15,09,431 was sanctioned for Anganwadi schemes in 2017-18 with Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra being the highest receipts of funds at Rs 215246, Rs 116645 and Rs 102957 respectively.



Bora urges Home Minister to intervene in NRC updating process

GUWAHATI, JUL 19 (PTI): Assam Pradesh Congress Committee president Ripun Bora today urged Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh to intervene in the National Register of Citizenship (NRC) updating process.

Bora, in a letter to Singh, alleged that the NRC Authority is "acting in a partisan" manner to drop the names of lakhs of Indian citizens from the draft NRC.

"We have received inputs from different parts of the state that names of several lakh Indian citizens will find no place in the draft NRC due to political interference by the state government as they wanted to misuse the NRC for their political gain by creating religious polarisation," he said.

Bora, a Rajya Sabha MP, alleged that some people belonging to the minority community had gone to different parts of the state to work as labourers and some local people had lodged complaint against them in police stations that they were foreigners.

"Now, the NRC state Coordinator has forwarded all such cases registered in different police stations long back against those Indian citizens to the verification officers of the concerned NRC Seva Kendra with instruction to delete these names from the Draft NRC without any verification of their records," he claimed.

Apart from keeping on hold the names of 1.25 lakh D-Voters and their descendants, the names of approximately 90,000 declared foreigners and their descendants will not appear in the draft NRC to be published by 30th July 2018, he claimed.

"There is panic on this issue everywhere in Assam and if names of several lakhs genuine Indian citizens are left out, it will not only be an injustice but abuse of Constitutional powers," Bora said.

He urged the Union Home Minister to intervene immediately in the matter before publication of the Draft NRC on 30th July.

Mamata announces ex gratia for three seriously injured in PM's rally

MIDNAPORE (WB) JUL 19 (PTI): West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee today announced ex gratia of Rs one lakh each to the three persons seriously injured in the collapse of a makeshift tent at Prime Minister Narendra Modi's rally in Midnapore on Monday.

Banerjee, who visited the injured at the Midnapore Medical College Hospital, said that the ex gratia would be given from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund.

During her visit, Banerjee spoke to the injured and inquired about their health condition from the hospital superintendent.

She also interacted with other patients admitted there.

"Those who are injured at the prime minister's rally are from lower-middle class families. They are undergoing treat-



ment for their injuries. They told me that they are not getting help. So I have decided to help them. I will give them the money tomorrow," Banerjee told reporters here.

Asked whether the government would help all those who

were injured at Modi's rally, she said "If they seek our help we will consider that."

A makeshift marquee collapsed at the venue of Modi's rally on Monday, injuring 90 people including 50 women, when he was midway through

his speech.

After the accident, Banerjee had said that the state government would provide all medical assistance to those injured in the rally.

Modi had visited the injured in the hospital soon after the incident.

The Centre had sought a report from the state government on the incident and a high-level central team visited the site the next day to assess the circumstances leading to the collapse of the makeshift marquee at Modi's rally.

The venue was sealed and police were trying to go through the CCTV footage from there.

The state CID also assisted in the probe into the incident by carrying out forensic tests at the rally site, official sources said.

Bodies of 8 of 19 missing fishermen recovered from Bay of Bengal

KOLKATA, JUL 19 (PTI): The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) has recovered the bodies of eight of the 19 fishermen, who went missing on Monday after their trawlers capsized in the Bay of Bengal, a top ICG official said here today.

"The bodies have been handed over to the fishermen's associations for identification," ICG Inspector General (North East region) K S Sheoran said.

Six bodies were recovered today, while two were found yesterday, he added.

The bodies were found from an area in the sea, about 35 nautical miles from the Dalhousie island, and a Dornier aircraft and Coast Guard ship "Sujay" were continuing with the search for the remaining missing fishermen, Sheoran said.

A hovercraft was also maintaining vigil close to the coast, he added.

The fishermen had ventured into the sea from Frazerganj in South 24 Parganas district.

Fishing trawler FB Joykishan had capsized amid an extremely rough sea condition and inclement weather on Monday, following which the search-and-rescue operation was launched by the Coast Guard.

The members of fishermen's associations also assisted in the search-and-rescue operation.

"The Coast Guard station at Frazerganj is co-ordinating with the fishermen's associations in the area and is also in touch with the families of the missing persons," Sheoran said.

The search operation would continue till all the missing fishermen were accounted for, he added.

Meanwhile, fishermen have been advised not to venture into the sea due to the prevailing inclement weather, rough sea condition and a fresh depression developing over Northeast Bay of Bengal, Sheoran said.

Six to seven trawlers carrying men from the Namkhana and Kaddwip areas of South 24 Parganas had set sail around 10 am on Monday, Bijan Maity, Secretary, West Bengal United Fishermen Association, said.

Three of the boats -- FB Malleshwar, FB Joykishan and FB Maa Shibani -- capsized in the sea.

Ten fishermen on board FB Joykishan, six on board FB Malleshwar and three more, who were on other trawlers, had gone missing, Maity said.

Why Indonesia should not bar ex-offenders from running for public office

contd from pg04

of people – there are more than 110,000 people in Indonesian prisons – from becoming productive members of society.

Take the example of Frank William Abagnale Jr., an infamous conman in the 1960s who was sentenced to five years for writing a total of US\$2.5 million in fraudulent cheques in 26 countries, and whose life was turned into a film starring Hollywood actor Leonardo DiCaprio.

Instead of alienating him from government-related affairs, the US government offered him a job to advise authorities in fraud-related cases. Later on, he founded

a fraud-consulting firm that was designed to assist stakeholders in security and fraud cases. Abagnale's story is evidence that the state should keep the doors open for ex-offenders to contribute to society.

TOWARDS A JUST AND DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY

The state has power to govern people, including the power to restrict ex-offenders' right to hold public offices.

But, instead of creating laws that restrict the rights of their subjects – in this case, ex-offenders – the best way to put all interests in equal place is by using judicial process. Let the judge examine facts,

connect the dots between theories and cases, and decide whether it is good or not to expunge the offender's right to hold office.

More importantly, the judge also needs to explicitly mention the time limit during which ex-offenders cannot exercise those particular rights. That mechanism perhaps will put justice at its noble table. In the end, the state should show more confidence in its citizens to choose their own representatives, whether they were a criminal or not.

[The writer is Lecturer in Criminal Law, Indonesia Jentera School of Law]



2-time finalist Azarenka misses direct entry for US Open

NEW YORK, JUL 19 (AP): Two-time US Open runner-up Victoria Azarenka is ranked just below the cutoff for direct entry into the year's last Grand Slam tournament.

Azarenka, a former No. 1 and twice the champion at the Australian Open, is No. 108 this week, seven spots outside of an automatic spot in the main draw.

The US Tennis Association announced yesterday that defending champion and top-ranked Rafael Nadal is one of six past male singles champions in the US Open field, along with Roger Federer, Novak Djokovic, Andy Murray, Juan Martin del Potro and Marin Cilic.

Another past title winner at Flushing Meadows, Stan Wawrinka, is ranked 199th this week.

The women's winners with direct entry based on this week's rankings are six-time champion Serena Williams, two-time champ Venus Williams, defending champ Sloane Stephens, Maria Sharapova and Samantha Stosur.

Winning Hong Kong event has given me a boost: Karman

MUMBAI, JUL 19 (PTI): Rising Indian tennis player Karman Kaur Thandi considers winning the 25,000 Hong Kong tournament a morale booster going into next month's Asian Games.

Delhi girl Karman will be playing in the singles category at the Games to be held in Indonesia from August 18.

She won her maiden singles title on the ITF Pro circuit after demolishing Jia-Jing Lu's challenge in straight sets in the final of the USD 25,000 Hong Kong event held last month.

"Yes, winning the 25K



Hong Kong has definitely given me a boost, and beating top-200 player without dropping a set in the whole tournament.

So for sure a belief that I belong there and I can do it," the 20-year-old up and coming player told PTI in an interview.

Karman, however, believes a tough challenge is in the offing at the continental games if all 10 Asian players from the top 100 choose to play.

"Yes, I will be playing singles in the Asian Games, and I will try my best to get the medal for the country. The competition is going to be of a very high quality, at least 10 Asian players in the top 100 if they all play," said Karman, who is currently ranked 216

in singles.

The Delhi youngster is feeling upbeat about her chances in the quadrennial Games.

"I have been playing good matches these last few weeks. I only got beaten by higher ranked players who ended up winning the tournament. Reached semis in two (tournaments) and won one tournament. Going into the Games, I feel good and confident.

"The results may have been not on the expected lines but overall the game (show) was good. In the lat-

ter part of the six months I have made good progress," feels Karman.

Karman, who is supported by the Virat Kohli Foundation, will now play her first WTA 250K tournament which begins this Saturday after which she will start her preparations for the Asian Games.

"When there are people behind you, supporting you and you don't have to worry at least the finance part... that gives you more freedom to play and train better. And Virat Kohli Foundation has been that support to me," she signed off.

England spinners out-bowled Kuldeep and Chahal: Tufnell

LONDON, JULY 19 (PTI): England may have cracked the Kuldeep Yadav code, but former left-arm spinner Phil Tufnell says India will be better off playing him in the Test series as well, having done the good thing by picking the "rare" talent in the five-day squad.

Tufnell was full of praise for Yadav, marking him as a rarity.

"You don't come across too many left-arm wrist spinners. There are a few leg spinners around across all formats. Kuldeep is a rare bowler. When you come across his type of bowling, you need to really work it out because it is something you haven't seen before. It is a special thing, and a rarity really," said Tufnell.

When asked if Yadav should be in the playing eleven for the first Test starting in Birmingham on August 1, he replied, "I would definitely play him."



"It's a good thing India haven't sent Kuldeep home. Just look at the weather we have had. I think it is set to be similarly fair for the next month or so.

So you never know India might even play three spinners depending on pitches and their combinations.

"India have three world class spinners in their Test squad, but I would definitely think of Kuldeep. I would want him hanging close around the English batsmen," he added.

With a 2-1 win in the ODI series, England un-

derlined their status not only as the world's number one ranked ODI side but also the tag of favourites going into the 2019 ODI World Cup.

"This series was a bit about bragging rights. England can raise their neck a bit. You could have said the same about India as well. Beating England here would have given them a bit of upmanship if they meet next year.

"And I think they will, because these two sides are poised to make it far in the World Cup. They would meet in a semi-final or final for sure.

They are two very good sides, batting deep and possessing clever wicket-taking bowlers.

"So I can see these two teams progressing far in the World Cup. If they meet in the final, it will be a cracker jack. It is a game we would all want to see," he said.

Tufnell has said that the hosts won the ODI series because their spinners Adil Rashid and Moeen Ali outperformed Indian spinners.

Kuldeep Yadav took 6-25 in the first ODI at Nottingham, but then returned 3/68 and 0/55 in the next two matches at Lord's and Leeds. Yuzvendra Chahal managed only 2/135 across the three games.

In comparison, Adil Rashid and Moeen Ali shared eight wickets between them to bowl England to victory. Rashid, in particular, was quite impressive with hauls of 2-38 and 3-49 in the last two games where the Indian batting faltered.

He bowled a ripper to Indian skipper Virat Kohli at Headingley, who was bowled and left stunned as the ball turned sharply from leg to take the off stump. That dismissal changed the course of the third ODI as India went on to lose the series 2-1.

"Indian batsmen are very adept at playing spin bowling and have done so all their lives. (But) Rashid and Ali have a very good partnership going at the moment. They are very experienced in one-day cricket and were top of their game with some really dry weather here," Tufnell said.

"Plus, the pitches have been turning. If the pitches are turning, you have always got a chance as a spin bowler and it doesn't matter who you are playing against"

England relied on Joe Root and Eoin Morgan to win the third ODI and clinch the series 2-1.

IOA meet to discuss Ministry's proposal on relaxing Asiad selection criteria

NEW DELHI, JUL 19 (PTI): The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) has called a meeting of its Core and Legal Committees tomorrow to decide its future course of action after the Sports Ministry asked it to relax the Asian Games selection norms for better medal prospects.

The sports ministry yesterday urged the IOA to relax selection norms in specific cases "in the larger interest of the sports and sportspersons" after concerns were raised by various athletes and teams that have missed the cut.

The ministry said the Olympic body in consultation with particular federations may reassess the earlier decision on sending entries if those ineligible

disciplines have performed consistently for six months but not made it due to lack of exposure and at the same time have strong chance of finishing in the top four.

The recent circular has put the IOA in a dilemma and the Olympic body has decided to discuss the matter with its Core and Legal Committee before responding to the sports ministry.

"We have called a meeting of our Core Committee and Legal Committee tomorrow morning at 11 am to discuss the matter and see how to take forward the Ministry's proposal," IOA secretary general Rajeev Mehta told PTI.

"The meeting will also be attended by IOA president (Narinder Batra) and chairman of Preparation Panel (Lalit

Bhanot). We will have to discuss the matter extensively and see what can be done."

The IOA official, however, admitted that it would be tough to convince the Asian Games organisers for late inclusions as the last date of entries by name was June 30.

"We will have to take a decision on the Ministry's proposal. But it has come too late. If we decide on sending more athletes, whether to accept our request or not, rests on the Asian Games Organising Committee," he said.

To make matters worse for the IOA, the draws of some sports, including football, have already been announced and it is highly unlikely that the Indian contingent will be accepted at this

junction.

The IOA had named a 524-member contingent earlier this month leading to a massive controversy as they left out football for low rankings and the entire four-member triathlon team for furnishing "misleading information".

The IOA then dropped 20 athletes from the Pencak Silat team, alleging fake credentials, prompting the national federation to threaten legal action.

The men's handball team was cleared at the expense of Pencak Silat athletes after the federation knocked the doors of Allahabad High Court.

In the original squad announced by IOA, six Sambo athletes - two male and four female - were included but the number was later cut to just one.

IOC adds 7 medal events to 2022 Beijing Winter Games program

LAUSANNE, JUL 19 (AP): Planning for its next three Olympic Games, the IOC has added seven medal events to the 2022 Beijing Winter Games, published a 2020 Tokyo Olympics schedule with no agreement on when to race swimming finals, and set a timetable to add new sports to the 2024 Paris Olympics.

The next Winter Olympics will now include: women's monobob, Big Air freestyle skiing for men and women, plus mixed team events in short track speed skating, ski jumping, ski aerobics and snowboardcross.

The addition of gold medals to a 109-event program was combined with a reduction in how many athletes will compete.

In an attempt to cut organising costs, amid recent failures of potential bidders in Europe for the 2026 Winter Games, there should be no additional venues required and 41 fewer athletes in Beijing than the 2,933 competitors at the Pyeongchang Olympics last February.

IOC sports director Kit McConnell said yesterday that changes for Beijing were "really sending a strong message about controlling the size of the Olympic Winter Games." Sports losing athletes from their Olympic quota include 41 in skiing disciplines, 26 from skating, and 20 fewer in biathlon.

Women's ice hockey will grow by two teams to become a 10-nation lineup instead, adding 46 athletes.

McConnell said an improved gender balance

will see 45.4 percent female athletes in Beijing, rising from 41.1 percent in Pyeongchang.

A women's Nordic combined event mixing cross-country skiing and ski jumping will not join the Olympic program because the overall quality of competition and variety of countries taking part was not "at a level appropriate to being included," the IOC official said.

Two years and one week before the Tokyo Olympics open, the IOC published a detailed schedule Wednesday of when competitions will take place.

It lacked any breakdown of events at the Olympic Aquatics Centre, which hosts swimming, diving, and synchronized swimming.

At the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, in a time zone one hour different to Tokyo, swimming finals and semifinals were raced in morning sessions so they could be broadcast live in the United States late evening. US broadcaster NBC is the single biggest contributor to Olympic revenues.

However, swimming is also a core attraction for the host nation's viewers with Japan winning seven medals, including two gold, at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics.

McConnell said a swimming sessions schedule should be finalised inside two months, with the IOC, Tokyo organizers and swimming governing body FINA seeking a balance to ensure "each of the key time zones have some of their key sports live."

Ahead of China, India to remain fastest growing economy in FY19 & FY20: ADB

NEW DELHI, JULY 19 (PTI): India will continue to be the fastest growing major economy, ahead of China, with 7.3 per cent growth rate in 2018-19 and 7.6 per cent in 2019-20, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) said today.

The growth in India will be driven by increased public spending, higher capacity utilisation rate and uptick in private investment, said its supplement to the Asian Development Outlook (ADO).

While retaining India's growth rate for current fiscal and the next, ADO said economic growth in China will decelerate to 6.6 per cent in 2018 and further to 6.4 per cent in 2019. China's growth rate was 6.9 per cent in 2017.

On India, it said: "In sum, the GDP growth forecast for FY2018 (ending March 2019) is maintained at 7.3 per cent. Growth in FY2019 is expected to rise to 7.6 per cent as measures taken to strengthen the banking system bolster private investment and as benefits kick in from the goods and services tax. Any further increase in oil prices poses a downside risk to growth."

ADB said India is the dominant economy in the South Asia sub-region with its growth gaining momentum at 7.7 per cent in the last quarter ended March of 2017-18, the highest rate of growth since first quarter of 2016-17.

This pushed full-year growth to 6.7 per cent (2017-18), a tad higher than estimated in ADO 2018, largely driven by government spending for both consumption and public administration.

"In the first half of 2018-19, the growth rate is expected to benefit from a low base. Other key drivers of growth include an uptick in public consumption, which is typical before elections, and a recovery in exports following shortages of working capital related to a new goods and services tax," said the ADO supplement.

In India, the private consumption is expected to grow at a healthy rate as disruption caused by demonetisation in 2016 fades. Capacity utilisation rates are at their highest in 4 years and should provide incentives to firms to invest.

Growth in Asia and the Pacific's developing economies for 2018 and 2019 will

remain solid as it continues apace across the region, despite rising tensions between the US and its trading partners.

"South Asia, meanwhile, continues to be the fastest growing sub-region, led by India, whose economy is on track to meet fiscal year 2018 projected growth of 7.3 per cent and further accelerating to 7.6 per cent in 2019, as measures taken to strengthen the banking system and tax reform boost investment," it said further.

Developing Asia is largely on track to meet growth expectations as set out in April in Asian Development Outlook 2018 (ADO 2018), said the report. The regional gross domestic product (GDP) is forecast to expand by 6 per cent in 2018 and 5.9 per cent in 2019, the rate envisaged in April, ADO supplement said.

In April, ADO had said that India's economic growth will rise to 7.3 per cent this fiscal and further to 7.6 per cent in the next financial year, retaining the fastest-growing Asian economy tag, on back of GST and banking reforms.

"Although rising trade tensions remain a concern for the region, protectionist trade

measures implemented so far in 2018 have not significantly dented buoyant trade flows to and from developing Asia, said ADB Chief Economist Yasuyuki Sawada.

"Prudent macroeconomic and fiscal policy-making will help economies across the region prepare to respond to external shocks, ensuring that growth in the region remains robust," he said.

ADO has also retained the combined growth forecast for the major industrial economies -- the US, the Euro zone and Japan -- as growth in the US and the Euro area remains robust. In Japan, though, unanticipated contraction in the first quarter prompts slight revision of the 2018 growth forecast, it added.

However, ADB said that the rise in protectionist trade measures from the US and countermeasures from China and other countries "poses a clear downside risk to the outlook for developing Asia".

The ADO supplement has factored in the tariffs imposed by July 15.

"The risk of further ratcheting up of protectionist measures could undermine consumer and business confidence and

Security concerns over TAPI gas project need to be addressed: Akbaruddin

NEW YORK, JUL 19 (PTI): India has said the ambitious TAPI gas pipeline brings with it both reward and risk and the genuine regional security concerns associated with the USD 10 billion trans-national project should be heeded and addressed sincerely.

The Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline project seeks to build connectivity in the South and Central Asian regions through gas pipelines and will help ease energy shortages in South Asia.

The project is “a dove of peace and hope” that may have to traverse through storms, India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Syed Akbaruddin said, referring to the restive regions in Afghanistan and Pakistan through which the pipeline passes.

He stressed on the responsibility of the nations in protecting it from “turbulence with all our will and capacity”.

“Visionary concepts, at times, also invite great challenges. Large investments demand care and caution. Safety of the transnational pipeline and assured supply of gas is vital,” he said at a side-event on the TAPI gas pipeline held on the margins of the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development yesterday.

The 1,814 kilometre-long brings both reward and risk, he said.

Facebook to take down fake news and misinformation from its platform: Report

NEW YORK, JUL 19 (PTI): Facebook has said it will start removing fake news and misinformation after mounting criticism that the flow of rumours on its platform has sparked violence and led to physical harm to people in countries around the world, including in India, according to media reports.

Presently, Facebook bans content that directly calls for violence but the new policy will cover fake news that has the potential to stir up physical harm which includes both written posts and manipulated images, CNET reported.

Facebook has been accused of helping to spur violence in Myanmar, Sri Lanka



and India. The social network also has drawn intense criticism for its policies surrounding misinformation in general. The social network said last week that it would not ban InfoWars, a right-wing website known for pushing conspiracy theories, the report said.

In India, Facebook-owned messaging service WhatsApp is facing the flak for allowing the circulation of large number of irresponsible messages

filled with rumours and provocation that has led to growing instances of lynching of innocent people.

The company will work with local organisations to help judge which posts fall under that category. If Facebook can't make a definitive call working with one organisation, it might bring in other organizations to help, the report said.

“There are certain forms of misinformation that have contributed to physical harm, and we are making a policy change which will enable us to take that type of content down,” a Facebook spokeswoman was quoted as saying. “We will be begin implement-

ing the policy during the coming months.”

Yesterday, in trying to explain Facebook's stances on fake news, CEO Mark Zuckerberg sparked outrage by saying the company would not ban content from Holocaust deniers from the platform, because, “I don't think that they're intentionally getting it wrong,” he said.

Hours later, he tried to clarify his comments by saying he finds Holocaust denial “deeply offensive,” and Facebook would suppress content like that by making sure fewer people see it on their news feeds.

Facebook has been accused of not doing enough

to remove anti-Muslim posts and fake news that is been linked to violence against the minority Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar.

Such fake news and hate online hate have also added to sectarian violence in Sri Lanka. As for the new policy on removing misinformation that could lead to violence, Facebook said it has already begun trying it out.

Last month, the company removed content that alleged Muslims are poisoning food that is given and sold to Buddhists in Sri Lanka. Facebook worked with a local group that said the post could contribute to potential violence, and removed the post.



MELANIA TRUMP'S 'TERRIFIED' EXPRESSION AS SHE SHAKES HANDS WITH PUTIN IS GOING VIRAL: On Tuesday, Melania Trump joined her husband Donald Trump, during a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Helsinki, Finland. But perhaps, FLOTUS wasn't too happy about it. A glance at her expression after she shakes hands with Putin kind of proves it. Videos of Melania looking absolutely startled and maybe just a little appalled have gone viral on the Twitterverse. Just for a split second in the video, Melania's face was a charade of emotions-none of which suggested any kind of happiness- as she shook hands with Putin.

Indian student Koppu's killer had long criminal record in US

WASHINGTON, JUL 19 (PTI): The man who killed 25-year-old Indian student Sharath Koppu in Kansas City had an extensive criminal background and was just 15 when he was first arrested, according to a media report.

Marlin James Mack, 25, who was shot dead on Sunday after shooting three Kansas City police officers, was first arrested in Tulsa, Oklahoma, when he was 15 for breaking into cars and two years later he was held again for bringing a gun to school, the Kansas City Star reported.

At 17, he was sentenced to prison for five years for robbing a woman at gunpoint in front of her three small children.

Though Mack was once known as one of Tulsa's most wanted robbers, Kansas City police were not aware of him before he became the lead suspect in the killing of Koppu, who hailed from Telangana.

Koppu, a University of Missouri-Kansas City student, was fatally shot on July 6 in the back during a suspected attempted robbery at a restaurant where he worked in Missouri.

At age 17 he (Mack) was pretty much a liar and misfit extraordinaire, David Walker of the Tulsa Police Department, who had interviewed Mack in 2011, told the daily.

For his first arrest, in 2009, Mack was charged with robbery by force.

Despite Mack's young age, he already had a reputation for violence, the daily said quoting the police officer.

He was sentenced to five years in prison for second-degree robbery, possession of a firearm as a juvenile and two counts of assault with a dangerous weapon.

In March, 2015, Mack was released from prison. Just seven months later, he returned to prison for carrying a firearm after a former conviction of a felony. He was released in February, 2017.

Despite his extensive criminal record in Oklahoma, he had never come to the attention of Kansas City police. He became a person of interest in the shooting death of Koppu, a software engineer who had come to the US in January to pursue his master's degree.

Mack's father is serving a life sentence for shooting two people in the head in 2000.

Indian-origin landlord jailed for fire deaths in UK

LONDON, JULY 19 (PTI): An Indian-origin landlord in the UK has been jailed for 12 months over his failure to ensure proper fire safety standards which led to the death of two children in a fire at a property owned and managed by him, the first prosecution of its kind in the country since new smoke alarm regulations were introduced in October 2015.

Kamal Bains, a letting agent responsible for the property in Huddersfield area of West Yorkshire, failed to fit smoke alarms to the house for tenants.

The 51-year-old was sentenced at Leeds Crown Court yesterday in what is believed to be the first prosecution of its kind in the UK since new Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations were introduced in October 2015.

“Failing to adhere to the legislation is a criminal offence and one which can have tragic consequences,” said Senior Investigating Officer Detective Superintendent Steve Thomas, who led the investigation into the deaths of three-year-old Logan Taylor and Jake Casey, aged two, in February 2016.

“During an examination of the property after the incident, there were no signs of smoke alarms having being present prior to the fire. There was also no evidence to suggest a smoke alarm had ever been fixed to the upstairs ceiling and only a fixing bracket was present downstairs,” he said.

Bains had been on trial at Leeds Crown Court after pleading not guilty to charges of manslaughter of the boys, who were overcome by smoke after a fire started in their bedroom. But mid-way through the trial, he pleaded guilty to a lesser charge of failing to discharge an employer's general duty owed under Section 3 (1) of the UK's Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

The letting agent, whose company was in charge of the rented property, had been charged by West Yorkshire Police last year in relation with the fatal fire, arising from his failure to ensure that working smoke alarms were installed at the address where the family were living.

Bains was repeatedly asked by the tenants to carry out repairs to the address, includ-

ing the installation of smoke alarms since they moved into the house in May 2015.

The fire was believed to have started as a consequence of an electrical fault in equipment which was in the young boys' bedroom. The two boys were asleep in their bedroom when devices, including a television set alight, and proved fatal for the two boys who were overcome by smoke.

The boys' parents, Emma Taylor and Jamie Casey, expressed relief at the end of the court proceedings after a “long and painful process”.

White House considering Putin proposal to let Russia interrogate ex-US ambassador, financier

WASHINGTON, JUL 19 (PTI): President Donald Trump will discuss allowing Russian investigators to come to the US to question American citizens, including a former ambassador to Russia, in exchange for assistance in the ongoing US probe into election interference, the White House has said.

President Vladimir Putin during a press conference with Trump in Helsinki on Monday proposed that special counsel Robert Mueller's team could travel to Russia to question 12 Russian intelligence officers charged with interfering in the 2016 presidential election, if Russia is allowed to interrogate some Americans.

The Americans wanted for questioning by Russia include Michael McFaul, who was ambassador to Russia from January 2012 to February 2014, and American-born financier Bill Browder, who lobbied the US government to impose new sanctions on Moscow.

Trump had described Putin's proposal as an “incredible” offer.

White House Press Secretary Sarah



Sanders yesterday indicated that no final decision had been made but that the proposal was under consideration.

“There was some conversation about it, but there wasn't a commitment made on behalf of the US, and the president will work with his team and we'll let you know if there's an announcement on that front, Sanders told reporters.

Russian prosecutors are seeking to interview McFaul and 10 other “U.S. officials and intelligence agents” in connection with their case against Browder.

Russian prosecutors accused the fi-

nancier of laundering USD 1.5 billion through offshore accounts and donating USD 400,000 of that sum to Hillary Clinton's 2016 presidential campaign

Browder, a prominent critic of the Russian president, has denied the claim that he donated to Clinton's campaign.

The FBI, meanwhile, appeared to have dismissed the idea that it would allow a US citizen to be questioned by the Russians.

I never want to say never about anything, but it's certainly not high on our list of investigative techniques, FBI Director Christopher Wray said during an appearance at the Aspen Security Forum.

That's probably even lower on our list of investigative techniques, Wray said in response to a question.

Wray said the intelligence agencies believes that Russia interfered in the American elections in 2016.

He (Trump) has got his view, he's expressed his view, and I'll tell you what my view is. I can tell you what my view is the intelligence community's assessment has

not changed, my view has not changed, which is that Russia attempted to interfere with the last election and that it continues to engage in malign influence operations to this day, he said.

The Russian actions, he alleged, are aimed at sowing discord and divisiveness in the United States.

We haven't seen yet an effort to target specific election infrastructure this time, but certainly other efforts which I would call malign influence efforts are very active and we could be just a moment away from it going to the next level, he said.

To me, it's a threat that we need to take extremely seriously, said Wray who was picked by Trump himself after he fired the then FBI Director James Comey last year.

What they will do is they will identify issues and through a variety of means, some overt, some covert, some through fake news, some through propaganda, will essentially sow divisiveness, spin people up on both sides of the issue and then kind of watch us go at each other, Wray said.

Kim Kardashian makes MILLION DOLLARS A MINUTE on new fragrance line after spending \$0 on advertising!

Kim Kardashian released the latest in her venture into fragrances. And the only thing it smells like is money.

The 37-year-old reality star made a whopping \$5 million in just five minutes when she released her new set of perfumes on Tuesday according to TMZ.

Perhaps the most impressive part of it all is that Kim and company did not spend a single cent on advertising and instead opted to use the power of social media.

Other than promoting the release herself, she also sent candy grams to her celebrity pals including Drew Barrymore and sisters who all posted the gifts on their Instagrams and other apps.

A set of three was released including Kimoji Vibes, Kimoji Cherry, and Kimoji Peach. According to the publication, the total amount of bottles was increased to meet demands as each one retail at \$45 a pop.

This is not the first time Kim made an insane amount of money within minutes as



last year's first launch made \$14million. The good news comes just a day after she left little to the imagination via Instagram on Tuesday.

The reality TV queen showcased her bountiful curves in a skimpy white bikini to plug her new line of Kimoji perfumes. Daring to impress, the natural stunner revealed her ample cleavage in tiny number as she laid back on a white lounge.

Her pert derriere and gorgeous gams were thrust on center stage as the light glistened off her beautiful skin tone.

Earlier in the day, the beauty flashed plenty of bottom and leg as she posed in a bra top and undies while sitting on a kitchen counter.

"KIMOJI Peach, Cherry & Vibes fragrances are available NOW on KKWFRAGRANCE.COM," wrote the mother-of-three in her caption.

The star had on a dark beige Yeezy bra top and matching high-waisted briefs and nothing else. The three new bottles of perfume were in front of her. And behind the Selfish author was a coffee maker and several Nespresso pods in a chrome display.

It is not known if the photo was taken in her newly remodeled Hidden Hills, California mansion or not. The siren had her hair and makeup

perfectly done for the unusually casual photo set up.

The star was last seen at Beautycon in Los Angeles on Sunday in a summery and skin tight ensemble that put her fabulous physique on display. The reality star took to her Instagram stories to share a video of herself heading to the event with her 'date', her daughter North West, five.

The beauty entrepreneur's outing comes after she defended her youngest sister, Kylie Jenner's Forbes magazine cover after backlash she wasn't 'self-made'.

Last week, Forbes proclaimed Kylie Jenner, 20, was on track to become the youngest self-made billionaire. But critics quickly pounced saying Kylie rode the wave of success paved by the Kardashian reality show dynasty.

"I really didn't get it, because she is self-made — we are all self-made," Kim said in a phone interview with Refinery29.



A jury member once thought Priyanka Chopra was too dark to win Miss India...

Actor Priyanka Chopra was not the obvious choice for the Miss India title 18 years ago as one of the jury members felt her complexion was too dark, says a new book on the star who turned 36 on 18 Jul. Then 17, Priyanka took part in the beauty contest from Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh and emerged as the runner-up — Femina Miss India World 2000.

Lara Dutta was crowned Femina Miss India Universe, while the second runner-up Dia Mirza won the Femina Miss India Asia Pacific title. All three women went on to clinch the title in their respective categories — Miss Universe, Miss World and Miss Asia Pacific.

In "Priyanka Chopra: The Incredible Story of a Global Bollywood Star", Pradeep Guha, one of the mentors of the contestants for that year's contest, remembers how one of the jury members was uncertain about Priyanka.

"Not everybody in the jury was initially in favour of her. One person mentioned she's too dark," he recalls, without naming the jury member.

"I said, 'Yaar come on look at South American girls. They keep winning and some of them are pretty dark as are all the girls from Africa. So I said what are you talking about?' I was always very certain about her and as I said this woman never made a mistake twice," Guha is quoted in the biography by Aseem Chhabra.

The contestants faced a range of celebrity judges — actors Shah Rukh Khan, Juhi Chawla and Waheeda Rahman, cricketer Mohammed Azharuddin, media mogul and film producer Prithvi Nandy, painter Anjolie Ela Menon, the then founder-chairman of Zee Media [and now Rajya Sabha MP] Subhash Chandra, fashion designer and perfume queen Carolina Herrera, and Marcus Swarovski, the great-great-grandnephew of the founder of the Austrian

crystal company.

"She kind of always improved on herself day on day, the day on day. I knew that she would give in 200 per cent if she gets in," Guha says in the Rupa Publications' book.

He says he was impressed with Priyanka from the beginning but for some reason she did not come up as the "obvious choice" although she grew through the contest.

"I think she needed a little more confidence. I think she wasn't quite sure initially whether this was the thing she wanted to do. She came in a bit tentatively. By the time the contest started she seemed a lot more collected and definitely more confident of herself."

Part of the reason Priyanka felt unsure was that she was an outsider, as compared to some of the other contestants, including Lara who was already a professional model, Guha says. Another mentor, Sathya Saran, says she remembers Priyanka because they did not notice her in the beginning.

"I noticed her at the talent contest because she sang beautifully. I told Pradeep she is going to win something," Saran says.

When the results were announced, there was a tie between the top contestants Priyanka and Lara. Guha and Saran had experienced a similar situation with Sushmita Sen and Aishwarya Rai in 1994.

"This time, they were better prepared and additional questions were posed to both Priyanka and Lara. The final results were no surprise to anyone. The suave, elegant well-spoken Lara Dutta won the Miss India title," the book says.

Both Lara and Priyanka worked together in one of their initial films "Andaz" alongside Akshay Kumar in 2003. Priyanka has managed to carve an international career and is now one of the most recognisable Indian faces working in Hollywood.



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OUT AND ABOUT! Zayn Malik rocks blue hair as he steps out in New York City after dropping his new single Sour Diesel online.

Brad & Leo's 'Once Upon A Time In Hollywood' preponed to 26 Jul, 2019



Director Quentin Tarantino's upcoming venture 'Once Upon A Time In Hollywood' has been in the news since its inception due to its huge ensemble-cast and classy genre. Now the makers of the film have shared a news which will definitely bring a huge smile on your face if you are a fan of Leonardo DiCaprio or Brad Pitt. The film which was earlier slated to hit the screens on 09 Aug, 2019, has now been preponed by two weeks and will now arrive on 26 Jul.

Talking about the plot of the film, Leonardo DiCaprio plays former TV star Rick Dalton, while Pitt essays Cliff Booth, who is Dalton's close friend and longtime stunt double. Legendary actor Al Pacino plays Rick's agent, on

the other hand, Margot Robbie portrays Dalton's daughter. Apart from the lead cast, the film also features Burt Reynolds, Timothy Olyphant, Damian Lewis, Luke Perry, Emile Hirsch, Dakota Fanning, Clifton Collins, Keith Jefferson, and Nicholas Hammond in pivotal roles.

Known for directing films like Pulp Fiction, Kill Bill, Django Unchained, Inglorious Bastards and many others, Quentin Tarantino describes 'Once Upon A Time In Hollywood' as taking place in "Los Angeles in 1969, at the height of hippie Hollywood".

Produced by David Heyman and Shannon McIntosh, the film marks the first collaboration between Leonardo and Brad, so it'll definitely be a huge treat for their fans.

just the right place at the right time to meet the right person. You're overdue for a lucky break and probably not expecting it. You may start the day in a restless and frustrated state of mind, Libra, but whatever happens will catapult you out of it. Be prepared - this transition may involve vast changes in your life, in the long run if not immediately.

SCORPIO: You might wake up this morning, look in the mirror, and decide that you hate what you see even though you probably look fine. This is a good day to shop for new clothes or get a haircut. Perhaps you feel a little blue. Getting out and indulging yourself is more a necessity than luxury. Don't overindulge in food or drink now, Scorpio. You might not like the consequences tomorrow!

SAGITTARIUS: Today you could find yourself seeking self-knowledge

through relationships, Sagittarius, especially through assisting those you love. Someone is troubled and needs your help. It would be best for all if you gave it, because you're especially sensitive and insightful now. You're especially able to soothe others' anger and mediate arguments. Your optimism is very high, and you have what it takes to pass it on to others.

CAPRICORN: Do you have a romantic evening planned for tonight, Capricorn? If so, it's likely to turn out to be all you'd hoped for. You'll be especially attractive, and your naturally warm and loving nature will be very apparent. Even casual encounters with friends may bring about closer bonding, and new acquaintances are likely to become friends. Your communicative skills are good now, and people will likely respond to you. Go for it!

AQUARIUS: You could feel restless and anxious to get out in the open for a while today, Aquarius, but mundane tasks could force you to postpone it. Someone you care about might ask for a favor, and while you may not want to help this person, you probably will. Don't let your irritation show - just get it done quickly and accept the person's thanks. In the evening, go for a long walk under the stars.

PISCES: At some point during the day you might find yourself involved in a project that piques your interest far more than usual. You could throw yourself more deeply into it than is necessary now. Take care that it doesn't distract you from what needs to be done, Pisces. Your wisdom is especially sharp, and you can use your intuition to gain valuable practical knowledge. Spend the evening meditating.