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SummitTIMES

Vol 03 | Issue 234 | Gangtok | Tuesday| 04 September 2018

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

RNI No. SIKENG/2016/69420

Pages 8 | ₹ 5

RBI employees' 2-day mass leave programme deferred

KOLKATA, SEP 3 (PTI): The two-day mass casual leave on September 4 and 5 called by the United Forum of Reserve Bank Officers and Employees (UFRBOE) has been deferred after discussion with the bank management, the union said Monday.

"Consequent to series of meeting between top management of Reserve Bank of India with unions, the forum has decided to defer the programme of mass casual leave scheduled on September 4 and 5 to first week of January, 2019 in response to the bank's request to give some more time to resolve the demands," a UFRBOE statement said.

The mass casual leave programme was likely to have paralysed operations of the central bank and other major lenders across the country.

UFRBOE had called the mass casual leave on September 4 and 5 demanding an option for contributory provident fund (CPF) retainers to switch over to pension scheme, and grant of additional provident fund (APF) to those recruited in the bank from 2012.

The forum had threatened that if the issue lingers then they would resort to flash strike for two days.

West Sikkim all set to host World Tourism Day 2018

**SAGAR CHETTRI
GANGTOK, 03 SEPT:**

West Sikkim is all set to host the State level World Tourism Day 2018 celebration on the theme 'Tourism and the Digital Transformation' this month. Although the World Tourism Day falls on 27 Sept, a series of activities will be starting this week itself. The main function of the World Tourism Day will be held on 26-27 Sept at Pelling Senior Secondary School ground in West Sikkim.

The celebration is being organised jointly by Tourism & Civil Aviation Department, West District Administration and West District Tourism Society [WDTS] with the support of tourism stakeholders of West Sikkim.

A state-level celebration committee has been constituted headed by Tourism Minister, Ugen T Gyatso Bhutia, and UDHD



Minister, NK Subba, as the chief patron and other MLAs of West district as patrons. The committee has District Collector [West], Dr AB Karki, as chairperson, WDTS president, Karma Chuki Bhutia, as vice-chairperson, and

WDTS general secretary, Sushil Tamang, as working president.

Addressing a press conference here today, celebration committee vice-chairperson, Ms Bhutia, stated that it is a big opportunity for tourism stake-

holders of West Sikkim to host the State-level World Tourism Day for the first time in West district. She mentioned that West Sikkim has been naturally blessed having world heritage

turn to pg02

Editors Guild condemns jailing of journalists in Myanmar

NEW DELHI, SEP 3 (PTI): The Editors Guild of India Monday condemned the jailing of two journalists of an international news agency in Myanmar and demanded their immediate release.

Two Reuters journalists - Wa Lone, 32, and Kyaw Soe Oo, 28, - accused of breaching Myanmar's state secrets law while reporting on alleged killings of Rohingya Muslims were jailed for seven years by a court in

the country, fuelling international outrage.

The Editors Guild, in a statement, said it was opposed to the use of provisions under the Official Secrets Act in any country to "throttle the voice of the media".

"The Guild believes that the arrest and imprisonment of journalists are a big blow to democracy and demands their release from jail at the earliest," the statement said.



RAKTACHE NATE CHARITABLE TRUST FELICITATES VBDAS

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 03 SEPT:

Voluntary Blood Donor Association of Sikkim [VBDAS] has received national felicitation from Raktache Nate Charitable Trust, Pune in a ceremony held at Pune in Maharashtra on 02 Sept. On behalf of VBDAS, Kul Prasad Chettri accepted the felicitation in the presence of National Secretary, Federation of Indian Blood Donors Organisations [FIBDO], Dr Biswaroop Biswas, and other guests. In a press release, VBDAS has dedicated the achievement to all voluntary blood donors of the State.



Veron Gurung sets new State record at Open Swimming C'ship

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 03 SEPT:

The 14th Sikkim State Open Swimming Championship 2018 organised by Sikkim Amateur Swimming Association [SASA] was held at Tashi Namgyal Academy in Gangtok on 01-02 Sept, a press release informs.

Veron Gurung [15] of Delhi Public School has created a new State record during the heats of the 50 mtrs free style. He clocked a timing of 00:28:75 beating the record created earlier by Sidharth Rabden who had set the record at 00:29:19.

Over 150 participants from Tashi Namgyal Academy, Manjusri Public School, Nim Valley School, Water Garden Swimming Club, Taktse International School, Institute of Hotel Management [Sajong], Paljor Namgyal Girls Senior Secondary School, Sikkim Manipal Institute of Medical Sciences, GD Goenka School [Siligu-

ri], Delhi Public School [Siliguri], Assam Valley School [Tezpur], and others from the open category battled in the pool for the two days.

Ninety-five swimming events under various categories like sub junior boys & girls [group III & IV], junior boys & girls [group I & II] and men & women [Open] were held as per rules and regulations of Swimming Federation of India and International Swimming Federation [FINA].

Promotional events of 25 mts were also held in all categories to encourage amateur swimmers.

Adhyaksha, East, SS Bokhim, who attended the finals of the championship as chief guest, handed over medals and certificates to the winners under different categories.

The organisers of the championship have extended gratitude to all for making the event a success.



Sikkimese footballers under rigorous training for Goa Pro League

**REBYNA RANA
GANGTOK, 03 SEPT:**

Five Sikkimese footballers namely Mobin Rai, Ugen Pintsho Sherpa, Sonam Zangpo Bhutia, Ong Tshering Lepcha and Bhaichung Bhutia have been undergoing rigorous training at Duler Stadium in Mapusa, Goa since 25 Aug for the upcoming Goa Pro League 2018-19 scheduled to commence this month. These players will be representing FC Bardaz Goa for seven months as per their contract.

"We have been practicing day and night with maximum effort and dedication. Every match is crucial. We are confident that triumph will be ours. We are also extremely grateful to our supporters and well wishers for their constant faith in us," says Mobin, who plays for centre and side back positions in the team, while speaking to SummitTimes.

Organised by Goa Football Association, the Goa Pro League 2018-19 will conclude on Feb next year.

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'Sahaj Geeta' book released on Janmashtami eve

GANGTOK, 03 SEPT:

On the eve of Shri Krishna Janmashtami, Sanskar Bharati, Sikkim Chapter in collaboration with Tadong Durga Mandhir Committee organized a programme at Tadong Durga Mandir on 01 Sept featuring Shri Krishna Rupsajja competition and release of Sahaj Geeta, a press release informs.

President of Sikkim Nepali Sahitya Parisad, Rudhra Poudyal, attended the function as chief guest in the presence of president of Bishwa Hindu Parisad, Sikkim Chapter, CP Giri, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, Sikkim Pramukh, DC Nepal, and president of Bidhya Bharati, Sikkim, Chulthim Bhutia.

Mr Poudyal was felicitated by the organizing committee for his contribution towards Nepali literature and other fields.

'Sahaj Geeta', book published by Joint Secretary, Sanskar Bharati, Sikkim Chapter, Khushen Timshina, was also released on the occasion through hand of the chief guest.

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West Sikkim all set to host World...

contd from pg01

site, Kanchenjunga National Park, along with wide variety of flora and fauna. She added that other historical sites and monuments and important monasteries of Sikkim are also there in the district which depict the history of Sikkim.

"So this is a golden opportunity for us to promote tourism interest places of West Sikkim nationally and internationally. We are all set to further develop and promote our tourism globally through different activities throughout this month," she said.

She stated that the initiative will also encourage local youth to enter the field of tourism to take full benefit of opportunities present in this sector.

A member of the committee, Nosang Limboo, who is also the president of Sikkim Ornithological Society, mentioned that the celebration has included a unique activity of mountain biking blended with bird and butterfly watching this time mainly to promote eco-tourism of the State.

He stated that this two-week event will start from Pelling and after touching all tourism interest places of West Sikkim, will finally conclude at Soreng. The celebration also includes a study trek in Kanchenjunga National Park. Likewise, it also includes hiking, trekking, helicopter joyride, marathons, paragliding and other

activities throughout this month, he added.

Likewise, the main venue of the celebration at Pelling SSS ground will also provide space for stalls of local entrepreneurs of Sikkim to showcase their items along with stalls for photographs and painting exhibition.

The committee working president, Mr Tamang, informed that a sensitization workshop on responsible tourism for stakeholders of West Sikkim and another workshop for tourism entrepreneurs are some other highlights of the celebration. While stressing upon the digital promotion of tourism, he informed that country head and representatives of reputed online travel portals have been invited for the celebration to train local stakeholders to promote their products globally.

Mr Tamang informed that recommendations of the panel discussion in the State-level stakeholders' workshop will be submitted to the State Government.

Deputy Director, Tourism Department, Lee Pandi Targain, mentioned that tourism awards will also be conferred during the main function of the celebration. She informed that earlier the department had felicitated local stakeholders but this time it has decided to felicitate those who have been helping the State from outside in promoting Sikkim Tourism.



FINAL AUDITION FOR INDRAJATRA TALENT HUNT CONCLUDES IN SINGTAM

SINGTAM, 03 SEPT: Sikkim Newark Guthi Youth Affairs [SNGYA] in coordination with Inspire Academy, Gangtok conducted the final audition for Indrajatra 2018 Talent Hunt here at Singtam Nagar Panchayat hall in East Sikkim. Out of 88 participants who auditioned, 56 have been selected for the quarter final of the talent hunt scheduled to be held at Manan Bhawan in Gangtok on 08 Sept. The finale of the talent hunt show will be held on 22 Sept at MG Marg in Gangtok. [Yogen Thatal]



Awareness on organic farming in Kalimpong

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 03 SEPT:

Himalayan Bio Organic Society (HBOS), an NGO based in Kalimpong, organized awareness programme at Pochok village in Kalimpong district with chief coordinators from Pochok, Margeret Lepcha & Pema T Tamang, and HBOS president, Mahendra Chhetri, as resource persons, a press release informs.

Mr Tamang emphasized on integrated farming system and medium and small industry projects at Pochok village through HBOS comprising of all income generating schemes in order to strengthen the economic condition of the farmers.

He urged NGOs, Self Help Groups, communi-

ty based organisations, Farmers' Interest Groups, clubs and the society as a whole to come forward and work together for the development of the entire Pochok and its surrounding villages.

"Public participation is most important for various projects. We should not fully depend on our local Government body. There are various schemes and projects under Central Government also which can be brought here through HBOS and other agencies," said Mr Tamang.

President, HBOS, Mr Chhetri, briefed about the aims and objectives of HBOS and its future activities. He stressed on the deteriorating condition of Large Cardamom

due to diseases and frost in the valley. He encouraged the participants to start eco-tourism and dairy schemes for organic farming in the villages.

Further, he informed that under the guidance of Block Development Officer [Block II], Algarah, HBOS will be setting up a Multipurpose Cooperative Society in the valley for the benefit of the people of Pochok village, Gitbeyong and Git Dabbling.

In her address, resource person Ms Lepcha, said, "We have started growing ginger in our village and now we should try growing turmeric and other crops and seasonal vegetables as well that can be sold in the market through the upcoming MPCs."

Shyari MLA begins two-week Jan Sampark Abhiyan

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 03 SEPT:

Shyari MLA, Kunga Nima Lepcha, started a twelve-day Jan Sampark Abhiyan in his constituency on Monday in order to have direct interaction with the people and to take their issues and grievances to the government. On the first day of the tour, he interacted with the people of Shyari, Maneygaon and Dhakal Gaon and took note of their issues and grievances. He expressed his sadness on the ignorance of the government to the constituency, informs an SKM press release. The release further states that the area MLA also expressed his sadness on the incompleteness of roads from Jalipool to Lower Shyari which had



started in 2004. Mr Lepcha has warned the government not to console

the people with false assurances but to carry out works on the ground.

TMC to keep a close watch on performance of panchayat chiefs



KOLKATA, SEP 3 (PTI): The Trinamool Congress has decided to keep a tab on the performance of the chiefs of gram panchayats and zilla parishads in the state, a senior party leader said Monday.

Senior party leaders have come up with an idea of keeping a close tab on activities and performance of the zilla parishad sabhadipatis, panchayat and gram sabha pradhans and if their performance is not found upto the mark necessary action would be taken against him or her, he said.

The decision has been taken in the backdrop of party's 'poor' performance in the districts of Janglemahal, where despite various developmental work BJP has made steady inroads.

"In areas where BJP has made steady inroads it is due to our poor performance of our local leaders. So from now on we will keep a close tab that how the benefit of various develop-

mental policies are going down to the masses. There will be a regular review and if something is not found in order then the concerned leaders would be held accountable," the senior TMC leader said.

Taking a cue from party's decision Birbhum Trinamool Congress president Anubrata Mondal had said new gram panchayat chiefs and deputy chiefs would be given a year to prove their efficiency.

"If in our district it is found that the pradhans (gram panchayat chiefs) and upa-pradhan (gram panchayat deputy chief) were not performing well and faced corruption charges, they would be removed with the approval of the state leadership," he had recently said.

The party has already started the process of finalizing the names of pradhans and upa-pradhans of all gram panchayats in every districts of the state.

Odisha Governor felicitates Dutee Chand

BHUBANESWAR, SEP 3 (PTI): Odisha-born sprinter and double silver medalist in Asian Game 2018 Dutee Chand was felicitated by Governor Ganeshi Lal at function here Monday.

"Strong will power and determination bring success to anybody. Dutee has got the success due to her will power, determination and hard labour," the Odisha governor said.

Through her hard work and determination, the star athlete would be able to bring more laurels to the state and the country, Lal said.

A host of other distinguished persons and dignitaries felicitated Chand at the function for her achievements.

Presiding over the programme, Achyuta Samanta, Founder of KIIT and KISS said Chand succeeded in achieving her goal through hard labour and determination.

Chand secured silver medal in both 100 metre and 200 metre in the Jakarta Asian Games.

Chand said, "I got this success due



to all of your love affection and good wishes. The success is not only of mine, but credit for it goes to the people of

Odisha."

She also expressed gratitude to the Centre as well as Odisha Govern-

ment for their support and cooperation which acted as an inspiration for her.

**Gangtok on
Tuesday,
04 Sept**

Temp: 27°C/16°C
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cloudy; a couple
of morning thun-
dershowers, then a
thundershower in
parts of the area..
Sunrise: 05:16 AM
Sunset: 5:53 PM

Sikkim BJP helpless says SDF

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 03 SEPT:**

Sikkim Democratic Front has asserted that all allegations of BJP Sikkim executive members published in newspapers are fabricated and baseless. The ruling party has strongly condemned and refuted all allegations of the State BJP.

An SDF press release issued by its publicity secretary, Chudamani Mishra alleges that after failing to expand its organisation, the State BJP is helpless and is now giving amusing statements.

The party has alleged that some executive members of the State BJP have been giving statements against the government on social media without any proof.

Antique items stolen from Nizam's museum

HYDERABAD, SEPT 3 (PTI): Antique items, including a gold tiffin box and a cup studded with rubies, diamonds and emeralds, were found stolen from the Nizam's Museum at Purani Haveli here, police said Monday.

The theft took place last night from the third gallery of the museum, a senior police official said, based on a complaint lodged by the museum authorities.

The antique items belong to the seventh Nizam, he said, adding they were examining CCTV footage.

A security official said guards opened the room in the third gallery Monday morning and noticed that the gold tiffin box was missing along with the cup, a saucer and a spoon, following which they informed police.

"The ventilator on the first floor was broken open and the burglars gained entry using a rope. They made away with a gold tiffin box, a cup studded with rubies, diamonds and emeralds, a saucer and a spoon," he said.

The Nizam's Museum showcases the collection of Nizam Osman Ali Khan, the seventh and last Nizam and also his father's (sixth Nizams) wardrobe.

The galleries at the museum stock silver and gold artefacts and replicas of landmark constructions. Hyderabad Police Commissioner Anjani Kumar and other senior officials visited the museum following the incident.

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SCA ties up with CricHeroes as online scoring partner

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 03 SEPT:**

Sikkim Cricket Association [SCA] has tied up with CricHeroes, a cricket scoring app, as their online scoring partner today in Gangtok.

CricHeroes App will be used to score local cricket matches and tournaments live ball-to-ball like international matches. The app also allows adding preferred teams, keeping statistics of individual players and teams, analyzing scores, sharing achievements, etc, an SCA press release informs.

Co-founder of CricHeroes, Meet Shah, took a session on using the app and updating the scores. The workshop was conducted in the presence of SCA president, Lobzang Tenzing, vice presidents, Karma Gelek and Namgyal Kazi, and members of SCA and senior players.

President, SCA, Mr Tenzing, said that the tie-up will be helpful not only to SCA but also to all the

players in keeping their playing records online.

"We are planning to have regular tournaments both at school level and State league in the coming days. The individual records of the players will be maintained through CricHeroes. It will be easier for us to select the best for the State team. We look forward to work together for the betterment of cricket in Sikkim," expressed Mr Tenzing.



Audition for NE Got Talent S4 held in Gangtok

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 03 SEPT:**

Around 50 talented artists and groups from different parts of the State attended the audition of North East

Got Talent Season 4 here at Nepali Sahitya Parishad Bhawan in Development Area today. This multi talent reality show has been presented by Sanchita Production. The

audition had renowned singer, Remanti Rai, filmmaker and actress, Sanchita Talukdar, who is also the director of the show, and concept and project head of the show,

Jyoti Kakati, as judges. It is informed that the shortlisted candidates from the audition will be invited to Guwahati for the next round.

73,000 Biharis living in Assam submitted documents for NRC: Sushil Modi



PATNA, SEP 3 (PTI): About 73,000 people from Bihar, currently living in Assam, have sent their documents for verification to get included in the NRC being prepared in the northeastern state, Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Modi said here Monday.

The National Register of Citizens (NRC) is being prepared under the supervision of the Supreme Court with a view to enlisting Indian citizens living in the north eastern state.

"About 73,000 people from Bihar have sent documents like certificates of birth and caste, Aadhar cards, voter identity cards, certificates of educational qualifications, land records and driving licenses etc. to the Bihar government for verification through the government of Assam," Modi said in a release.

"So far, 52,110 documents have been sent to concerned districts, departments, or concerned bodies for verification. Of these, 5418 have been duly verified and 3264 have been sent back to Assam," he added.

Modi said the Bihar School Exam-

ination Board has verified 4218 such documents, the maximum so far for any institution in the state.

He also said the maximum number of documents have been received from natives of Saran district (8716), followed by Muzaffarpur (8022), Siwan (3874), Vaishali (3936), East Champaran (2951) and Darbhanga (1763).

"All District Magistrates have been instructed to do the needful at the earliest so that Biharis living in Assam do not face any hardships," Modi said.

The NRC includes the names of all citizens who have been residing in Assam before March 25, 1971.

The exclusion of 40 lakh names in the complete draft of the NRC released by the Assam government in July had drawn sharp criticism from leaders like Trinamool Congress president Mamata Banerjee.

The West Bengal chief minister had alleged that "Indian citizens have become refugees" in their home state on account of vote-bank politics of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which is in power at the Centre and Assam.

Fb accounts of border area residents hacked: Cops

JAISALMER, SEP 3 (PTI):

The hacking of Facebook accounts of some residents of the border areas in Jaisalmer district has prompted police to advise people here not to use their mobile numbers as their ID or password.

The police issued the directive, suspecting that the social media accounts might have been hacked by the Pakistan-based hackers.

Jaisalmer Superintendent of Police Jagdish Chandra Sharma told PTI Monday that the cases of hacking have been

reported from Nachna area in Pokhara which is close to the Indo-Pak border.

Most of the complaints had used their mobile numbers as their passwords, said Sharma.

The accounts were hacked and their password, profile pictures as well as names were changed, he said, adding that miscreants from across the border are suspected to be behind it.

Sharma said the Cyber Cell of the state police has been asked to probe into the matter.

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SBI, LIC Housing offer concessional home loan for flood-affected Kerala

NEW DELHI, SEP 3 (PTI):

SBI, LIC Housing Finance and Muthoot Home Monday offered loans at concessional rate for repairing and renovation of homes to help people in flood-affected Kerala.

State Bank of India (SBI) said it will offer the special term loan at 8.45 per cent for borrowings up to Rs 10 lakh for repair and renovation of homes for flood-affected victims in Kerala.

The bank will levy no processing fee on such loans.

The special rate will be applicable for home loan applications for repair and renovation submitted on or before November 30, 2018, SBI said.

LIC Housing Finance will offer loans up to Rs 15 lakh at a concessional rate of 8.5 per cent under Kerala Flood Scheme.



Under the scheme loan up to Rs 15 lakhs will be extended for properties located in the flood affected areas of Kerala for the purpose of reconstruction, repair, renovation or up-gradation of dwelling units, LIC Housing Finance said in a statement.

Customers can apply for loan till October 31.

Also as a relief for its existing customers, the company has decided not to levy any additional charges arising due to late pay-

ment of EMI for the month of August and September 2018, it said further.

All ancillary charges resulting from such late payments and recovery charges also have been waived till September 2018.

Muthoot HomeFin, subsidiary of Muthoot Finance, under its Punarnirman Kerala, will offer special loans for the renovation and reconstruction of houses in the flood affected areas.

The loans up to Rs 10 lakh will be processed with easy documentation and for longer tenure, the company said.

The scheme is valid till December 31, 2018. The maximum loan term shall be for a period of 20 years, Muthoot HomeFin said.

PMAY (Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana) subsidy is also available for eligible cases, it added.

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SummitTIMES

Education to Connect, Not Alienate

*Make space for the traditional
in modern education*

The generation that grew up in the seventies and eighties, even the sixties, went through an education of alienation from their roots. The generation before them received Western education, but also had a strong sense of purpose in desiring to use their learning and education to help in the nation-building process, or, for the generation of the twenties and thirties, securing a free nation for themselves and a future worth looking forward to. By the time the seventies rolled out, although a nation had been acquired, the idealism of nation-building had been jaded by the business of surviving and nepotism. With nothing left to reconnect them to their roots, this generation was deeply indoctrinated by modern education. They learned the subjects well, but lost the perspective and worse still, because they grew up at school, as against also learning at home like the previous generations, they lost cultural nuances and even developed a bias against everything “desi”. The generations that have come since have tried to reclaim their roots, but the challenge is stiff because we have lost an entire generation to disinterest. The communication gap is now being bridged with shallow nationalism and palpably aggressive identity politics. We see this in varying degrees all over the world, across India and among the various communities which call Sikkim home or have made the neighbouring regions home. But it need not be so. A slight tweaking of how and what we teach in schools could undo the damage wrecked by the superficiality.

Cultural heritage and traditional knowledge and values are best imbibed in the formative years when the pursuit of knowledge becomes instinctive. And yet, the moment a toddler steps into school, we begin the process of getting them to unlearn everything they have inherited at home and replace it with alphabets, words and numbers which they are made to learn by rote. It is ironic that where monolingual societies are trying to get their young conversant in at least two languages because of its obvious benefits, we, with children who grow up in homes where at least two languages are spoken and can pick up a third at school, begin classes by penalizing multilingual skills!

And from there begins the subconscious alienation from their self.

With their language somehow made to appear inferior, because speaking in it attracts punishment and fines, the children subconsciously begin believing everything local/ rural/ unlettered as somehow being unworthy. This is not a debate over whether local cultures are superior or whether western models are better. What this is setting out to argue is that sidelining of local references and traditional knowledge base is ill-informed and dangerous because it has been grooming generations which don't fit well anywhere – neither at home nor in the global ranks. As the cliché goes, strengthen their roots, and they will weather through life well. As mentioned earlier, since early childhood education draws most of its influences from Western education and curriculum, it alienates children from their own culture and traditions. The morals, values and life-lessons that the story-reading sessions in schools seek to deliver definitely has many examples in the local languages and cultures. If these were included into the curriculum, children would grow up with a more confident idea of self and less suspicious of outside influences because they will have reference points from their own homes and cultures to distil and explain the world. A good place to begin will be to set aside one section at least every week where local elders are invited to narrate local folktales to children and also explain proverbs from local languages. This will make the elders feel required, make the young appreciate the depth of their cultural heritage, and will also be fun. Over time, these could be worked into the formal curriculum and expanded to cover stories of local places of interest, practices and rituals. One could also consider reworking the school timings so that the students can participate in local economies and practices more meaningfully. The current timings are too strict to allow for this. The school in a village dependent on dairy farming could adjust timings to allow children to help with livestock chores, and elsewhere, timetables could be adjusted to allow for kids to help at paddy fields or with cardamom harvests... and the options could go on. Connect them so and the children will receive an education which connects them better to their roots. Don't do it, and education continues alienating.

Formal education has its benefits and one of its strongest aspects is its adaptability. Unfortunately, in the hands of uninspired school managements, this fluidity of learning is compromised, even sacrificed. Where classrooms should celebrate learning, they end up force-feeding lessons. Where local communities should be invited to participate in how their children are taught and educated, they are made passive recipients of a centrally dictated, Department driven model of education.

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Trans Mountain ruling: Victory for environmentalists, but a setback for action on climate change

DAVID TINDALL
theconversation

The court ruling that has halted the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion has seismic implications to the Canadian socio-political and environmental landscape.

One of the many potential implications of the court's decision is the potential impact on climate change — and specifically the federal government's carbon pricing plan, which is now in serious trouble after Alberta's decision to withdraw its support as a result of the Trans Mountain delay.

The ruling by the Federal Court of Appeal quashed the National Energy Board's (NEB) approval permit of the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project because First Nations had not been adequately consulted and because the implications of increased tanker traffic on the precarious orca whale populations on the West Coast had not been taken into account.

While environmentalists can claim a victory in delaying the construction of a pipeline that would ship a further 500,000 barrels of oil each day to the Pacific Coast, the court ruling also threatens Canada's plan to deal adequately with its greenhouse gas emissions.

FOCUS ON OIL SPILLS, TANKERS

I do research and teach on social aspects of climate change. For most environmentalists, climate change is a central concern. But when taking on the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion, opponents have focused on oil spills and increase tanker traffic because those issues are easier for the general public to understand.

In assessing the Trans Mountain expansion, the NEB was not allowed to consider downstream effects on climate change. Pipeline proponents often point to the notion that Canada's emissions are a small part of worldwide greenhouse gas emissions (about two per cent according to some estimates). This is misleading spin — and masks Canada's true climate record in a number of ways.

For instance, Canada has only about 0.5 per cent of the world's population, which means its domestic emissions are four times the proportion warranted by its population. Canada's domestic emissions are also more than double the global average on a per capita basis.

CANADA WON'T MEET PARIS COMMITMENTS

Canada is on track to miss its commitments under

the Paris climate agreement — and that's after Ottawa fudged the targets by changing the baseline for emissions reductions from 1990 (as spelled out in the Kyoto Agreement) to 2005.

According to the latest Climate Change Performance Index, Canada ranks a woeful 51 of 60 countries (the United States under Donald Trump's administration is ranked 56th). The Index's 2018 report described Canada “as one of the largest producers of absolute greenhouse gases as well as per capita emissions.” And when we consider the context of the Trans Mountain pipeline extension, it gets worse.

Because of its mandate, the National Energy Board did not consider the emissions that would go into the atmosphere from fossil fuel that is exported to other jurisdictions, nor does Canada count these emissions in its calculations.

Climate experts, myself included, were denied the opportunity to discuss the consequences of the Trans Mountain project because the National Energy Board claimed that it was prevented from considering downstream consequences on climate change from the pipeline expansion.

WHAT ARE THE LONG TERM CONSEQUENCES?

So how does the new court decision change all this?

First Nations (those who oppose the project), environmentalists, coastal civic leaders and others are celebrating — and deservedly so, given their efforts. But the longer term consequences from a climate change perspective are uncertain.

The project will almost certainly be delayed



several years as the federal government pursues the remedies described by the court or launches an appeal (or perhaps both).

Justin Trudeau's government deserves some credit for initiating a federal carbon pricing scheme. This is a significant step beyond what other federal governments have done. Trudeau used the pipeline expansion project as a bargaining chip to get a national carbon pricing plan established.

However, as economist and policy expert Mark Jaccard has argued, the federal government has overestimated the likely decrease in green house gas emissions that will result from the carbon pricing scheme.

Regardless of whether the carbon pricing plan in theory is likely to enable Canada to meet its targets, the scheme is now in serious political jeopardy.

Newly elected Ontario Premier Doug Ford has promised to fight federal climate change emission initiatives. And the Federal Court ruling was quite possibly the final nail in the coffin of Rachel Notley's aspirations to be re-elected as premier of Alberta.

A few hours after the ruling, Notley announced Alberta will withdraw its support for the carbon pricing scheme. Notley's likely replacement, Jason Kenney, has also promised to oppose it.

So while the quashing of NEB approval of the pipeline is a victory for environmentalists in one sense, it puts carbon pricing in serious jeopardy — a classic “glass half full” scenario for environmentalists like me.

[The writer is a Professor of Sociology, University of British Columbia]

How parents could revolutionize education and boost results

DEBBIE PUSHOR
theconversation

Repeated efforts to improve public school education across Canada — curricular enhancements, increased accountability, intensified literacy and numeracy initiatives — are failing to improve student achievement.

In the province of Saskatchewan, student achievement results have flatlined and only 43.2 per cent of Indigenous students are graduating on time.

Saskatchewan's results are not atypical. In her analysis of Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results, Man-Wai Chu, assistant professor of education at the University of Calgary, said Canadian students have shown no improvements in science, mathematics or reading over the past decade.

So what can we do differently? We can engage parents — in ways that enable students to do better, like school more and stay in school longer.

Five decades of research evidence attest to the benefit of parent engagement. The educational and moral imperative is clear: to shift the existing student achievement trajectory, educators must intentionally and systematically use parents' untapped knowledge to enhance student learning.

As educator and family-engagement expert, Dr. Steven Constantino said in his book *Engage every Family,*

“If we as educators could successfully teach all children by ourselves, then it seems to me we would have already done so.”

WALKING ALONGSIDE CHILDREN

During more than 20 years of research into parent engagement, I have come to understand it as a philosophy and a pedagogy of “walking alongside.”

This is both a belief system about parents and their meaningful and authentic voice in their children's schooling and education and a way of enacting those beliefs in practice.

When parents are seen to be holders of knowledge, as capable and

as possessing gifts and strengths, then this can be leveraged alongside teacher knowledge to enrich programming.

Engaging parents entails assuming a new worldview in schools — in which parents are seen to be central to the work of the school, not separate or apart from it.

ELEMENTARY MATH BINS

A former graduate student of mine, Kirsten Kobylak, is now a Grade 1 teacher at Willowgrove School in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. As part of my research on the impact of graduate teacher education, she shared with me how she wanted to engage

parents in their math theme, “Math is Everywhere.”

In an email home to parents, she explained how important language and culture are to children's learning. She posed the question, “Where does math live in your culture?” and asked parents to share such things as game ideas, artifacts with patterns, number lines in different languages and more.

As items came in, the children created math bins — patterning, fact families, number lines, problem-solving.

Parents came in and taught games and shared materials, comparing versions of items from one country to another, simultaneously sharing culture, language, history and family stories.

Through this parent engagement, children learned and strengthened math skills such as skip counting, memory, estimation, addition, greater than, less than.

They also deepened their relationships with one another, their knowledge of diversity and sense of social cohesion.

“WE ARE ALL TREATY PEOPLE” Jesse Reis, another former graduate student, is now a high school teacher in Warman, Sask. He shared with me the example of a daily email he sent to the parents of students in each of his classes.

In the email he included a concept the students and he had discussed

turn to 05



2 Indians go missing after being swept away by Sunkoshi river in Nepal

KATHMANDU, SEPT 3 (PTI): Two Indian nationals have gone missing after being swept away by Sunkoshi river in Nepal's Sindhupalchok district, police said.

The incident occurred on Sunday when the duo were fishing in the river at Bahrabise area in the district, which is 75 km from Kathmandu, they said.

The missing persons were identified as Ruplal Sahani, 30, and Manohar Sahani, 25.

Both of them are residents of Sitamarhi district of Bihar, police said, adding that search is on for the missing persons.

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GUWAHATI, ASSAM, INDIA (NEWSVOIR) SEPT 3: Linen Club - The premium linen fabric brand from the Aditya Birla Group launched its exclusive store in Guwahati today. A pioneer in the industry, Linen Club, is India's largest linen fabric brand and is synonymous with the finest quality linen. This is the 1st store for the brand in North east India and 174th store overall in India.

While launching the Store, Mr. Thomas Varghese, Business Head - Textiles, Acrylic Fibre& Overseas Spinning, Aditya Birla Group, said, We are absolutely delighted to launch our first exclusive store in North East India. We are positive that the style connoisseurs of the city will welcome the finest European Linen fabrics. The distinctive look and comfort sets linen apart from any other contemporary fabric. All our fabrics are made from raw material sourced from France and Belgium and processed at our state of art facilities to ensure



the highest quality standards.

Mr. Jasvinder Kataria - Head, Sales & Marketing, Linen Business, Jayashree Textiles added, With this premium store, our goal is to create a rich consumer experience and ensure that linen lovers experi-

ence the largest variety of linen fabrics & products in an intimate environment. The distinctive floor plan creates a matchless experience for the retail category in general, and specifically to Linen Club. Within the brand store, a large studio-like table provides a liberal display and retailing space for the con-

venience of the consumers.

Known as a style icon, Bollywood Actress Raveena Tandon who inaugurated the store seemed elated while adorning a Linen Club saree. She said, I am very happy to partner with Linen Club for the launch of their 174th store in India. I am

loving this beautiful sari from Linen Club which is both glamorous and comfortable.

The new store in Guwahati will showcase a wide range of pure linen and linen blends, printed and embroidered linen fabrics for men and women. To add to its extensive fabric offerings, ready to wear shirts and trousers, as also accessories such as stoles, laptop bags, and handkerchiefs, are also available. The store is located at: Nagina Bhawan, Near Passport Office, Christian Basti, GS Road, Guwahati. Ph: 0361-2346888.

The brand Linen Club is promoted by Jaya Shree Textiles. Linen Club has been the pioneer brand for linen fabrics in India with over 5 decades of experience. Today, with a presence in 174 exclusive brand outlets and over 5000+ multi brand outlets, Linen Club boasts of having the world's largest retail chain in Linen. An accomplished in-house design team including internationally ac-

claimed Italian designers produce close to 1500 new fabric designs every month, which are retailed across India.

Jayashree Textiles (Linen Club) was the first company to be authorized by CELC (European Confederation of Flax and Hemp) for using European Flax to communicate the genuinity of pure European Linen and it is also a Corresponding Member of CELC. The fabric range includes 10 to 120 lea super fine fabrics. All these have enriched the design value and have made Linen Club fabric the preferred choice of connoisseurs worldwide.

About Jaya Shree Textiles Linen Club is a division of Jaya Shree Textiles, a unit of Grasim Industries Ltd. which is part of the Aditya Birla Group, a 44 billion corporation in the league of Fortune 500 and India's largest fashion and Lifestyle player. Setting benchmarks in linen and wool, Jaya Shree Textiles have strived for excellence, matching international quality standards.

Nagaland requires Rs 800 crore for flood restoration work: Official

KOIHMA, SEP 3 (PTI): The Nagaland government requires around Rs 800 crore immediately for the restoration of the damages caused by landslides and flash flood during this monsoon season, a top state government official said Monday.

Home and State Disaster Management Authority, secretary, Rovilatuo Mor said the unprecedented series of disaster in Nagaland has affected at least 13.19 per cent of the total population of the state and severely affected 48,821 families in 532 villages while an area of 5408.57 acres agricultural sector have also been impacted.

Mor said that the series of disasters during this monsoon season have disrupted the roads in multiple locations, rendered many people homeless and damaged agriculture.

The state capital Kohima and the districts of Tuensang, Kiphire and



Phek have been severely affected, he said.

The three districts of Tuensang, Kiphire and Phek were cut off from the rest of the state for about 15 days since the rains became incessant from the July 26, he said adding that about 359 locations of roads have been totally cut off sending the state into an SoS situation.

Nagaland State Disaster Management Authority (NSDMA) and the department of Food and Civil Supplies in collaboration with the Indian Air

Force made numerous sorties to these districts to airdrop essential supplies.

Because of the disaster incidents, 12 lives lost and more than 3000 families have been displaced while properties worth crores of rupees were damaged, he informed.

With the rigorous efforts of the concerned departments, roads have been cleared to some extent and essential commodities are being reached to interior areas including Kiphire district by road, he said.

Union Minister of State for Home, Kiren Rijiju had arrived in Dimapur on August 5 to survey and assess the situation.

However, inclement weather did not allow him to take an aerial survey of the situation and therefore on the recommendation of the Union Minister an Inter Ministerial Central Team is to visit Nagaland from the September 4 to 7 to make an on-the-spot assessment of the monsoon damages, the officer added.



MAMATA EMBARKS ON 3-DAY VISIT TO DARJEELING

KOLKATA, SEP 3 (PTI): West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday left for a three-day visit to Darjeeling hills where she is scheduled to take part at several meetings on development works and inaugurate a university, state secretariat sources said. Banerjee is scheduled to

hold an administrative review meeting with members of the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) on Tuesday, the sources said.

On Wednesday, she will attend a programme to celebrate the Teachers' Day to be held at the Mall in Darjeeling. Besides hon-

ouring teachers from the hills in that programme, the chief minister will be inaugurating the new university at Jogihat in Mungpo, around 30 km from Darjeeling, the sources said.

Banerjee is likely to return to Kolkata on Thursday.

How parents could revolutionize...

contd from pg04

that day, something interesting that arose, and something parents could chat with their son or daughter about that evening at home.

For example, in one email, Jesse shared with parents of students in his Social Studies class a statement they had explored that day: "We are all Treaty people." He noted that while some students saw themselves as "Treaty people," others did not. He invited parents to discuss with their teen what stance they took and why.

The daily email took Jesse less than five minutes to send per class, but gave him potential contact with every parent every day. Parents were able to engage in meaningful conversations with their children about curricular concepts in the normal course of their day — and to add their voice and knowledge to their son or daughter's teaching and learning.

Parents were always invited to respond to Jesse's email as well, sharing with him their conversations with their child and thus bringing home learning back into the classroom. Parents asked questions and offered to participate in

the unfolding curriculum in other ways (sharing knowledge, stories, artifacts or suggesting potential resources and experiences).

What we see in these examples is that parent engagement can happen on the school landscape or off of it, and with all ages of students.

Critical to parent engagement is that it draws on parent knowledge, is connected to teaching and learning, honours a parent's hopes and dreams for their child, enables a parent to remain in the role of parent, is authentic and meaningful, promotes shared decision-making, is strength-based and ensures everyone benefits from the engagement — children, parents, and teacher.

The possibilities of parent engagement in education are endless when these critical attributes are embraced by teachers and lived out in ways that are contextual and culturally responsive — honouring students, parents, families and communities.

A GENTLE REVOLUTION

To shift from the current worldview in education, one which reflects schools as a domain exclusive to educators and students, to a

new worldview where schools are using parent knowledge in teaching and learning will take a gentle revolution.

Notice the word "love" embedded in revolution? By working together, with mutual respect, care and concern for one another, educators at all levels of the system and parents can work together — to revolutionize schooling.

We need to establish "parent engagement offices" in ministries of education, develop core teacher education courses on parent engagement, require parent engagement coursework for teacher certification, establish school district positions for parent engagement consultants, structure parent universities and establish parent mentor programs.

The results of such a gentle revolution — creating an integral place and voice for parents in their children's teaching and learning — will positively impact the trajectory of student achievement and other educational outcomes.

[Professor in the Department of Curriculum Studies, University of Saskatchewan]



Alastair Cook announces retirement, 5th Test against India to be his last

LONDON, SEP 3 (PTI): Former England captain Alastair Cook, country's highest run-getter in Test cricket, has decided to retire after the fifth and final match against India at the Oval, starting September 7.

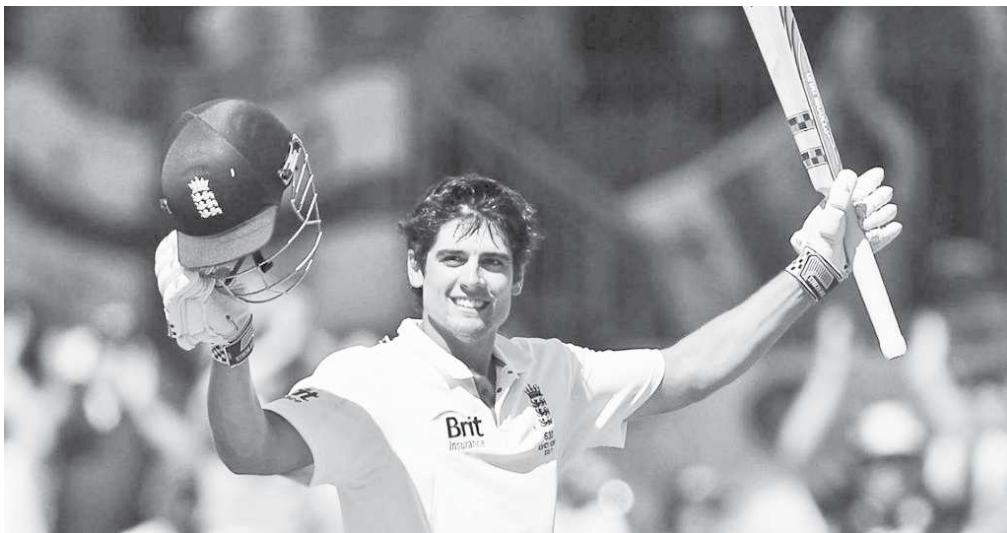
The 33-year-old Cook, who will call time on his career after playing 161 Tests, has so far scored 12,254 runs at an average of 44.88 with 32 hundreds and 56 half centuries. His highest Test score of 294 came against India at Birmingham during the 2011 series.

Cook has had a poor series against India so far, scoring only 109 runs in seven innings across four Test matches. His place in the Test side was under scanner and the former skipper could very well read what was on cards.

"After much thought and deliberation over the last few months I have decided to announce my retirement from international cricket at the end of this Test series against India," Cook said in an ECB statement.

"Although it is a sad day, I can do so with a big smile on my face knowing I have given everything and there is nothing left in the tank. I have achieved more than I could have ever imagined and feel very privileged to have played for such a long time alongside some of the greats of the English game," Cook said.

He, however, said that he would miss the dressing room



environment.

"The thought of not sharing the dressing room, again, with some of my teammates was the hardest part of my decision, but I know the timing is right," he said.

As a batsman, Cook certainly didn't possess the silken grace of David Gower or the genius of Kevin Pietersen but his unwavering concentration and the ability to accumulate runs puts him among the most prolific scorers in the game.

One of the high points of his captaincy will certainly be leading England to a 2-1 series win against India in India back in 2012. He successfully used spin

duo of Graeme Swann and Monty Panesar during that series.

Not just captaincy, Cook also excelled with the bat during the 2012 series, scoring 176 at Motera, 122 at Mumbai and 190 at Kolkata.

"I have loved cricket my whole life from playing in the garden as a child and will never underestimate how special it is to pull on an England shirt. So I know it is the right time to give the next generation of young cricketers their turn to entertain us and feel the immense pride that comes with representing your country," Cook opined.

A product of Essex, Cook

thanked former England captain Graham Gooch for his role in shaping up his career.

"There are too many people to thank individually, but a special mention must go to the Barmy Army and all supporters for their constant encouragement for the team and also a special mention to Graham Gooch.

"As a seven year-old, I queued for his autograph outside Essex County Cricket Club and years later was so fortunate to have him mentoring me. Graham was my sounding board, especially in the early years of my career, spending hour after hour throwing balls

at me with his dog stick. He made me realise you always need to keep improving whatever you are trying to achieve," said Cook while paying rich tribute to Gooch.

Cook, however, informed that he will be associated with the Essex County in some capacity during the coming season.

"I would also like to thank Essex County Cricket Club for their help and support ever since I was 12, and I can't wait to get fully involved with them in the 2019 season. I wish the England team every success in the future, and I will be watching with great excitement," he said.



Lance Klusener named consultant coach of Delhi Ranji team

NEW DELHI, SEP 3 (PTI):

Former South Africa all-rounder Lance Klusener has been named as the consultant coach of Delhi's Ranji Trophy team for the upcoming 2018-19 season.

While former Delhi skipper Mithun Manhas will be the chief coach, Klusener's appointment is certainly the most high profile among the support staff across domestic teams.

"Lance Klusener will be Cricket Consultant of Ranji Team of DCCA for One day tournaments starting from 19th September (Vijay Hazare trophy and Deodhar Trophy) and domestic T20 tournament scheduled in February 2019," DDCA president Rajat Sharma told PTI today.

"His role will require his services along side the main coach and all the other coaches in the team," Sharma added.

The 46-year old Klusener had played 49 Tests for South Africa with 1906 runs and 80 wickets in his kitty. He had four Test hundreds and best bowling performance of 8 for 64.

However, it was the ODI format where he came into his own in the 171 games in which he scored 3576 runs and

took 192 wickets.

The highlight of his career was the 1999 World Cup where he was adjudged Player of the Tournament.

Meanwhile, the DDCA has also announced the names of the coaches for the various age group teams.

For the U-23 team, T Anand will be the chief coach with Hitesh Jain and Robin Singh Jr being appointed batting and bowling coaches respectively.

In the U-19, Rajeev Vinayak will be the chief coach with NS Negi as the assistant coach and V Aravind as the bowling coach.

In the U-16s, Pankaj Joshi will be the batting coach while Arun Singh will be the bowling coach.

For the U-14s, Pradeep Chawla is the batting coach and Joginder Singh the bowling coach.

The women's selection committee was also announced with Anjum Chopra, Jaya Sharma and Renuka Dua being the members of the senior panel.

The junior women's committee comprise Amita Sharma, Reshma Gandhi and Vandana Gupta.

Moudgil, Chandela secure Olympic quotas at World Championship

CHANGWON, SEP 3 (PTI): Anjum Moudgil and Apurvi Chandela became the first set of Indian shooters to secure quota places for the 2020 Olympics by winning a silver and finishing fourth respectively in the women's 10m air rifle event of the ISSF World Championship here Monday.

Moudgil finished second on the podium behind Korean Hana Im (251.1) and ahead of bronze-medallist Eunhea Jung (228.0), who is also from Korea.

The 24-year-old Moudgil shot a total of 248.4 in the eight-women final to open the Indian senior squad's medal account in the prestigious tournament. While the equally talented Chandela aggregated 207 to finish fourth but still made the cut since a country can avail two Olympic quota places in this event.

The International Shooting Sport



Federation's (ISSF) premier tournament assumes added significance as it is the first Olympic quota event for the Tokyo Games, offering as many as 60 berths across 15 events.



Both Moudgil and Chandela's sequence of scores in the finals included quite a few high 10s, an indication that the two were shooting well.

Earlier in the qualifications, Moudgil

and Chandela finished fourth and sixth respectively. Though the two shooters have secured quotas, as per the stated policy, the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) will take the final call on selection, based on the aggregate scores of shooters (in international tournaments and selection trials) leading up to the Olympic Games.

In the men's 10m air rifle event, Asian Games medalist Deepak Kumar cleared the qualification but finished sixth in the highly competitive final which was dominated by Russia and Croatia.

India had on Sunday bagged two medals in the junior events, even as the seniors failed to make the finals of mixed events in 10m air rifle and air pistol. The junior events are not offering quotas.

Just competing not enough, need to learn art of crossing the line: Kohli

SOUTHAMPTON, SEPT 3 (PTI): India skipper Virat Kohli said his team cannot be satisfied with just competing overseas and it has to learn the art of crossing the line in pressure situation.

India suffered a 60-run loss in the fourth Test on Sunday after being dismissed for 184 while chasing a victory target of 245 set by England.

It cost India the series 3-1 and Kohli said that they need to understand situation whilst at the crease and not after the game.

"We can look at the scoreboard and say we were only 30 or 50 runs away, but we have to recognise that when we are in the midst of the situation, and not later. We know that we have played good cricket but we cannot say again and again to ourselves that we have competed," Kohli said.

"When you come so close, there is an art of crossing the line as



well, which we will have to learn. We have the ability, which is why we are getting close to a result. But when a pressure situation comes, how we react to it, is something we have to work on a bit."

Like in South Africa, India started off the series lagging 0-2

but fought hard to reduce the deficit by clinching the third Test.

Kohli said his team needs to be more relentless and fearless to make better start to the overseas tours.

"Look we've spoken about the fact that even during the match

when we're in a driving position, we should be able to capitalise on it and not let the opposition come in, and fight back again and again. We can take a leaf out of that," he said.

"Nottingham we did that, for three days we were relentless and we're on top. So we need to think about how to start a series like that as well. As a group we need to be more relentless when we start a series and be a bit more expressive and fearless at the beginning of a series.

"Especially in a long series because, as I've said at the start of the series, you have time to come back, but you want to come back when you've played fearless cricket and you don't want to be catching up too much."

When asked about the batsmen's failure in this game, and the series, as a whole, the skipper said, "It's very difficult to recognize key moments in the first innings of a Test match. But after I got out,

I myself felt that had I batted for longer that day the lead could have been bigger.

"But even after that we thought we could get a couple of more partnerships and extend the lead if possible. Eventually Pujara had to play a blinder to get us to a lead of 30 odd. So that's the only thing that I feel could have extended our lead a bit more in this first innings.

"Apart from that as I said as captain I don't see many areas we need to think of as negatives because we tried our best." Kohli said his team never gave up and made England earn the victory.

"Not many teams come close to us when we play at home. But to make the home sides earn victory against us, that's a huge boost for us. As a group we feel that we have pushed the home side to earn victories and we haven't thrown in the towel," he said.

England's Moeen Ali took nine

wickets for 134 runs as India succumbed twice to his off-spin.

While Kohli praised the off-spinner, he also defended R Ashwin, who couldn't work similar magic in this game.

"Ashwin tried his best. He pitched the ball in the right areas. He didn't get the results he would have intended. We all try to do well. Some innings it doesn't come off," he said.

"On flat wickets batsmen can get out. So this was one occasion where Ashwin could himself feel he could have got more purchase out of the wicket. The batsmen played well. There could be a lot of factors when you look at that situation.

"But Moeen bowled really well. If you have to single out his performance, I think he was relentless with the areas that he bowled in and the speeds that he bowled at, so deserved to get the wickets he got eventually," he added.

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Xi announces another USD 60 bn aid for Africa; dismisses “debt trap” criticism

BEIJING, SEP 3 (PTI): Chinese President Xi Jinping on Monday announced a whopping USD 60 billion in new development financing for the African nations as he sought to refute criticism that the massive funding under Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) drawing the countries into a debt trap.

The funds - - announced on top of USD 60 billion that Beijing offered to the African nations in 2015 - - will be provided in the form of government assistance as well as investment and financing by financial institutions and companies.

The finances to be made under the BRI include USD 15 billion grants, interest-free loans and concessional loans, USD 20 billion credit lines, setting up of a USD 10-billion special fund for development financing and a USD 5 billion-special fund for financing imports from Africa, Xi said at the start of a two-day Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) attended by the 53 heads of the African states and organisations.

The African nation heads and their officials gathered at the Great Hall of People to attend the meeting and gave a standing ovation to Xi as he made the financial commitments.

China is investing billions of dollars in aid and projects, making Africa the most focussed destination under the BRI.

This is the third-time China is hosting the Africa summit. The inaugural 2006 summit was held in Beijing and followed



by another one in 2015 at Johannesburg.

At the Johannesburg summit, Xi announced USD 60 billion in funding support for infrastructure development in Africa.

"Africa is an extension of the Belt and Road development historically and naturally and an important participant in the initiative," Xi said.

Xi said China will implement eight major initiatives with African countries in the next three years and beyond, covering fields such as industrial promotion, infrastructure connectivity, trade facilitation, and green development.

A China-Africa economic and trade expo will be set up in China and Chinese companies will be encouraged to increase investment in Africa.

Chinese companies are also encouraged to make at least USD 10 billion investment in Africa in the next three years, he said.

He said that China will carry out 50 agricultural assistance programs, provide emergency humanitarian food aid amounting to USD 147 million to African countries affected by natural disasters, and send 500 senior agricultural experts

to Africa.

He also said that China will work with the African Union to formulate a China-Africa Infrastructure Cooperation plan and support Chinese companies in taking part in Africa's infrastructure development by way of investment-construction-operation or through other models.

China's growing clout in Africa has drawn criticism that more African nations are getting to Chinese debt trap.

The only African country still remained outside Beijing's fold was the tiny kingdom of Swaziland which is still with Tai-

wan spurning China's overtures

Speaking against criticism that China don't match its public announcements with the spending on the ground, Xi said China has honoured its 2015 promise to provide Africa with funding support totalling USD 60 billion.

The financing has been either delivered or arranged, he said.

The Chinese projects in Africa include the Ethiopia-Djibouti railway and Kenya's standard gauge railway from Mombasa to Nairobi besides major highways and bridges connecting various countries.

In an apparent dig at the criticism that China is driving smaller countries into its fold with debt trap diplomacy by doling out huge loans, Xi said China followed a "five-no" approach in its relations with Africa - - No interference in African countries' pursuit of development paths that fit their national conditions, no interference in internal affairs, no imposition of China's will, no attachment of political strings to assistance and no seeking of selfish political gains in investment and financing cooperation.

"No one can undermine the great unity between the Chinese and African people," he said.

In a bid to refute criticism that China is importing only raw materials from Africa, Xi said Beijing will increase imports, especially non-resource products, from Africa and support African countries in participating in China International Import Expo being held in November in Shanghai.

Pakistan arrests 3 ISIS terrorists ahead of Defence Day

LAHORE, SEP 3 (PTI): Police in Pakistan claimed to have thwarted a terrorist attack planned on the upcoming Defence Day and said on Monday they have arrested three Islamic State militants in Punjab province.

Muhammad Iqbal, Usman Zia and Hasnain Muavia had plans to target an event on the Defence Day in Multan on Thursday, the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) of Punjab police said.

On the Defence Day, Pakistan marks the anniversary of the 1965 war with India by holding nationwide ceremonies and special prayers.

A CTD official said that the three terrorists were arrested during a raid near Basti Shorkot in Multan, some 350 kms from here.

"The CTD personnel acting on intelligence information raided a house on the outskirts of Multan city and arrested the three suspects.

The arrested terrorists belong to the Islamic State (also known as ISIS or ISIL) terror group.

A case under terrorism charges has been registered and the suspects have been shifted to an undisclosed place for interrogation.

Last month, the security agencies had arrested two ISIS terrorists from Multan. They had plans to bomb the buildings that house offices of Inter-Services Intelligence and Intelligence Bureau in Multan.

The Pakistani government often claims that there is no presence of ISIS in the country but at times the security agencies arrest suspects belonging to the dreaded terror group.

Pakistan to hold prez election tomorrow, PTI candidate Arif Alvi likely to win

ISLAMABAD, SEP 3 (PTI): Pakistani lawmakers are set to choose a new President on Tuesday, an election in which the ruling Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf party's candidate Arif Alvi is expected to win as the Opposition parties failed to field a joint candidate.

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Monday completed preparations for the election. Polling stations have been set up in all four provincial assemblies in addition to the National Assembly. Chief Election Commissioner Sardar Raza Khan will serve as the Returning Officer.

Outgoing President Mamnoon Hussain's tenure ends on September 8. He had declined for re-election to a second 5-year term.

Apart from Alvi, the Pakistan Peoples Party's Chaudhry Aitzaz Ahsan and Jamiat-e-Ulema (F) chief Maulana Fazal-ur-Rehman are also in the race.

Alvi is a Karachi-based dentist-turned-politician, who reportedly stood by prime minister Imran Khan during his political career.

The joint Opposition was to field a single candidate to give tough time to Alvi and but failed to do so. The



Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) last month nominated renowned lawyer and veteran politician Ahsan as a candidate.

Other opposition parties including Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Muttahida Majlis-e-Aml (MMA) opposed the move. As the differences persisted, they nominated Rehman.

The Opposition parties excluding the PPP met in Lahore on Sunday to discuss the presidential elections. Rehman sought the support of PML-N to convince PPP to withdraw its nominee.

He asked the PPP to withdraw its candidate and avoid damaging the joint Opposition.

PPP leader Qamar Zaman Kaira said that the division in the ranks of the Opposition will only benefit the ruling party.

He also hinted that the PPP could

meet incarcerated former premier leader Nawaz Sharif to get his party's support for Ahsan.

The PML-N has opposed the candidature of Ahsan as he had used harsh language against Sharif.

Since the PTI controls the National Assembly and has majority in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab and has support of the ruling Party in Balochistan, its candidate Alvi is in strong position.

But the Opposition parties are in majority in Senate. A joint opposition candidate can change the whole game, if he gets the support of some PTI back-benchers or disgruntled lawmakers.

At least two PTI lawmakers have recently criticised its leadership for neglecting them.

Being the highest elected official, president is a symbol of the federation in Pakistan but exercises powers on the recommendations of the prime minister.

The president of Pakistan is elected in a secret ballot by the provincial and national assemblies. There are total 706 assembly members who will elect the president.

The ruling party has the highest

number of party votes in the electoral college for elections to the office of the president scheduled for September 4.

PTI is now the only party with members in all the elected houses. It has a total of 251 votes of its party members in the 706-vote-strong electoral college and its tally goes up to 314 if the votes of members of its allied parties the Balochistan Awami Party, Grand Democratic Alliance, Pakistan Muslim League, Awami Muslim League, Balochistan National Party, BNP-Awami and Jamhoori Watan Party are also counted.

On the other hand, the joint tally of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz and the PPP comes to 260 and if votes of the Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal, Awami National Party, Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party and National Party are added, it climbs to 321.

The MQM had voted for the PTI candidate in the election of prime minister. Of the independent votes, 15 senators had defeated the PML-N candidate in the election of Senate chairman. It is likely that most of these 42 votes will go in favour of Alvi, making him unbeatable.

Reuters reporters jailed for seven years in Myanmar ‘state secrets’ case

YANGON, SEP 3 (AFP): Two Reuters journalists accused of breaching Myanmar's state secrets law while reporting on a massacre of Rohingya Muslims were jailed for seven years Monday, fuelling further international outrage a week after the army was accused of genocide.

Wa Lone, 32, and Kyaw Soe Oo, 28, who have been held in Yangon's Insein prison since their arrest in December, were charged with violating the Official Secrets Act, a draconian British colonial-era law which carries a maximum sentence of 14 years.

The case has sparked an outcry among the international community as an attempt to muzzle reporting on last year's crackdown by Myanmar's security forces on the Muslim Rohingya minority in Rakhine state.

Army-led "clearance operations" drove 700,000 Rohingya into Bangladesh, carrying with them widespread accounts of atrocities -- rape, murder and arson -- by Myanmar police and troops.

The reporters denied the charges, insisting they were set up while exposing the extrajudicial killing of 10 Rohingya Muslims in the Rakhine village of Inn Din in September last year.

They had told the court they were arrested after being invited to dinner by police in Yangon, who handed them documents.

As they left the restaurant, the pair were detained for possessing classified material.

But Judge Ye Lwin was unmoved by their testimony.

"The culprits intended to harm the interests of the state. And so they have been found guilty under the state secrets act," he told the packed Yangon court.

"They are sentenced to seven years in prison each." Kyaw Soe Oo's wife wept after the judge delivered the verdict.

As they were led to the waiting prison van the handcuffed pair, both Myanmar nationals, gave brief but defiant statements on the court steps.

"The government can detain us in the prison but... don't close the ears and eyes of the people," Kyaw Soe Oo said.

Wa Lone, who gave a defiant "thumbs up" to the massed ranks of reporters, said: "We will face it (the verdict) with stability and courage."

Defence lawyer Khin Maung Zaw said an appeal would be lodged as soon as possible

against the verdict, which Reuters denounced as based on "false charges".

"Today is a sad day for Myanmar... and the press everywhere," Stephen J. Adler, Reuters Editor-in-Chief, said in a statement, adding that the outcome was "designed to silence their reporting and intimidate the press".

The UN in Myanmar and the European Union joined the growing chorus of calls for the reporters' release. Rights groups decried the verdict as a sign of enduring repression in a country meant to be edging towards a more open and democratic future after almost a half-century of army rule.

The ruling "sends a stark warning to other journalists in the country of the severe consequences that await should they look too closely at military abuses", Tirana Hassan, Amnesty International's director of crisis response, said in a statement.

"This amounts to censorship through fear." The army has published its version of events at Inn Din village, conceding the Rohingya men were killed while in custody but saying it was a one-off case of abuse by a mixture of security forces and ethnic Rakhine locals.

Monday's ruling comes a week after the release of an explosive United Nations-led study into abuses in Rakhine, accusing Myanmar's army chief of heading a campaign of "genocide" and "crimes against humanity" against the Rohingya.

It also strongly criticised de facto civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi for failing to use her moral authority to stand up for the stateless minority.

The same day, Facebook shut down the pages of Myanmar's army chief Min Aung Hlaing and other military top brass, in what the company said was a bid to prevent them from further fanning "ethnic and religious tensions".

As calls mount for Myanmar's military leaders to face an international tribunal, they have remained defiant, insisting last year's crackdown was a proportionate response to attacks by Rohingya militants on border posts.

But Suu Kyi's reputation as a defender of human rights has been shredded by her refusal to speak out against the military for its handling of the Rohingya crisis or in support of the jailed reporters.



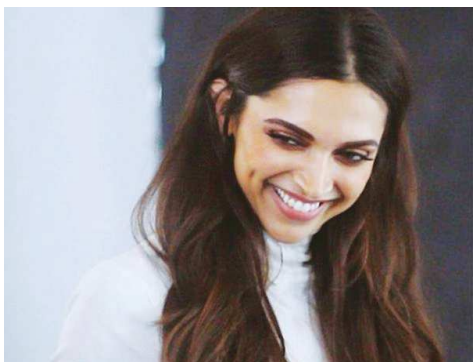
JUST LANDED! Nicole Scherzinger is end-of-summer chic in an all-white ensemble as she lands at LAX.

Deepika Padukone will be a part of Vin Diesel's xXx sequel, confirms director

Deepika Padukone is definitely going to be a part of the xXx: Return of Xander Cage, director DJ Caruso has reassured once again. Earlier, announcement came that Chinese singer Roy Wang of the The Fighting Boys band has been roped in to play an important role in the sequel. Caruso took to his Twitter page to welcome the young artist to the "family". On the same tweet, a deliberate fan asked the filmmakers about the involvement of Deepika in the sequel.

"What about @deepikapadukone . will she be the part of the film?", the fan questioned. "Yes", replied Caruso.

This is definitely not the first time Caruso has confirmed Deepika's presence in the upcoming film, which is in the pre production stage. The film is set to go on floors in January 2019. But don't expect Deepika to start shooting immediately.



Reason number 1 being, the filmmaker is yet to decide her shooting schedule. Replying to a fan query about the actress' schedule for xXx, he had tweeted, "Working it out now script being scheduled".

Reason number 2 being, Deepika is currently busy planning her big fat wedding to beau Ranveer Singh. As per a report by Filmfare, the date has been set to be 20 Nov. The love birds will tie the knot in

an intimate ceremony in Italy. Earlier, DJ Caruso has tweeted that he is looking into the possibility of having a full-blown Bollywood dance number in the xXx sequel which of course would be led by Deepika. Now, no one is certain whether he was merely joking or it actually is going to be a reality. But this reassurance that Deepika is a part of the xXx crew is very impressive.

Nick, fiancée Priyanka bring their love to Mammoth Mountain after quick Cabo trip

Globetrotting engaged couple Nick Jonas and Priyanka Chopra brought their love to Mammoth Mountain on Saturday following a quick romantic getaway to Cabo San Lucas.

The Golden Globe nominee - turning 26 in two weeks - enjoyed a can of Coors Light beer while hiking in the Northern California wilderness alongside the Indian 36-year-old.

The A Kid Like Jake actress also Insta-storied a picturesque snap of the view from their rustic rented abode, which she captioned: "#Magical."

The former boybander frequently visits the popular ski resort town where he's enjoyed snowboarding, Thanksgiving holidays, and he penned his album Last Year Was Complicated there.

Nick and Priyanka - who first canoodled at the Met Gala in May - made their July 18 engagement official with a traditional Punjabi Roka ceremony in Mumbai on August 18.

Chopra's mother Madhu got to bond with Jonas as



well as his mother Denise at the inseparable pair's August 17 engagement party.

"I told [Priyanka] that I want to meet Nick's family. They are nice people," the gynecologist matriarch told DNA India last month. "Nick is calm and mature. He's a wonderful person and everyone in the family just loves him. He's so polite and respectful

towards elders. What more can a mother want?"

Even the Jumanji action star's new single Right Now is said to be penned about the former Quantico stunner, with lyrics like: "You are my water, my sun, my moon and stars. Your heart is all I need."

Their whirlwind romance comes as a surprise to Jonas

fans - who've watched him love and leave famous exes like Lily Collins, Kate Hudson, Olivia Culpo, Gigi Hadid, Selena Gomez, and Miley Cyrus.

The 5ft7in heartthrob is next scheduled to perform a pre-birthday concert at Strike Out Slavery following the MLB game between the Angels and the Mariners in Anaheim on September 15.

Airlift actor Nimrat Kaur is dating Indian cricket team coach Ravi Shastri?



Cricket and Bollywood are two national obsessions in India, and there are no two ways about it. But if there's something that drives the country nuts, it's the marriage of two. Literally! Case in point, Virushka [Virat Kohli + Anushka Sharma] who tied the knot in an intimate and beautiful Italian wedding and gave the entire country something to sigh/gush over for days. But that's just the context. Apparently, there's a new couple at that juncture and we can't wait to tell and learn more about it.

Reports say that the romance has been brewing for

2 years now between Indian cricket team coach Ravi Shastri and Airlift actress Nimrat Kaur.

According to Pune Mirror, the duo has been dating each other for two years now and has successfully managed to keep the news under the wraps. Both Shastri and Nimrat were roped in by a German luxury carmaker to launch its cars every year since 2015.

On the workfront, Shastri is currently in the UK where the Indian team is playing a Test match against England and Nimrat has been filming a popular web-series.



Jackie Shroff to play Salman Khan's father in Bharat

While Salman Khan gets busy with Bigg Boss 12, his film Bharat continues to get bigger cast-wise. Mumbai Mirror has reported that Jackie Shroff has been roped in to play the actor's father in Bharat. Last time, they worked together was in Veer which had released in 2010.

Speaking to the daily, the director said, "We met Jaggu dada in London and discussed dates and looks. I have wanted to work with him for a long time as I feel he is the perfect amalgamation of a star and an actor. I was glad when he agreed to do the film in just 20 minutes of the narration."

The film recently completed the Malta schedule. Next, they will be headed to Abu Dhabi for two weeks

where some stunt and romantic scenes will be canned. They will also shoot in Delhi and Punjab.

The teaser for the film was released a few days back by Salman Khan. It set the tune just right for the father-son story. It is a remake of Korean film An Ode To My Father.

Speaking about it, Ali had said, "The idea is to create an Indian-Russian circus-like Raj Kapoor's Mera Naam Joker. Performers from all over the world are flying down for the circus tricks that will be a mix of trapeze hoops and rope stunts. This is Salman and Disha's introduction in the movie. He plays a daredevil stunt motorcyclist while she's a trapeze artist."

Bharat releases in Eid 2019.

ARIES: Upsets in the home or neighborhood could lead to a sudden decision to move, causing a great deal of activity. You might not yet be sure where you're going. Organization and discipline are vital at times like this, Aries. It might be helpful to make lists and cross off each task as you finish it. Don't panic. This could turn out to be the best thing that ever happened to you.

TAURUS: You could get upsetting news regarding your job, Taurus. There could be a shakeup in the hierarchy or someone in a position of authority could abruptly leave. You and your co-workers could have some momentary fears about job security, but the they're probably unwarranted. Your security will survive these events, and you'll probably be better off than you

were before.

GEMINI: Expect to fall in love at first sight today, Gemini. Someone new will come on the scene and you'll feel an instant attraction. Whether it turns into anything lasting or not isn't certain, but whatever happens, you'll remember this person for a long time! You may also have a sudden interest in new forms of artistic expression and want to start learning videography or computer graphics.

CANCER: The wonders of technology may come to your home today, Cancer. You might purchase some new equipment like a computer or phone, or decide to go for a state-of-the-art home entertainment center. Whichever it is, expect a lot of activity in and around your home as friends come to see your new toys and family members learn how to use them.

It will be exciting for everyone!

LEO: Valuable and interesting information could come your way through modern technology. You might discover new information online that awakens an exciting new interest in you, perhaps related to the sciences, occult, or metaphysics. You could even discover a talent for astrology. Group activities may also be appealing now, particularly those regarding humanitarian pursuits.

VIRGO: Finances could take on a new dimension as you look to technology to help you increase your bank balance. You could decide to invest online or try some new means of recordkeeping. Whatever you try will bode well for your financial future. Expect a lucky break or two as well.

LIBRA: Bizarre, unexpected devel-

opments might turn your life upside down today, Libra. Money could be involved. New people could arrive who open doors that eventually lead to a new life. You could even fall in love at first sight. It isn't easy to make predictions for a strange day like this. Rest assured that when you go to bed you won't be the same person you were when you woke up.

SCORPIO: Today you might be fascinated with movies, music, and video. You could discover a new interest in filmmaking, sound engineering, or videography that you want to pursue. You might decide to read about these fields and apply what you learn to the movies you see and the music you hear. If you're serious about learning these skills, this is the time to go for it. You'll enjoy it!

SAGITTARIUS: You could have a

strong urge to seek adventure, Sagittarius. You might want to take a spontaneous trip to an exotic place, meet new people in exciting fields, or try new pastimes, perhaps as outrageous as skydiving. Go for it if you want, but this urge could indicate boredom in some part of your life. What can you change about your lifestyle to avoid future stagnation?

CAPRICORN: An unexpected career break could come your way, Capricorn. It should be exciting and encouraging - and a little scary! Don't let apprehension get to you. You won't want to let this opportunity pass you by. Your good fortune could arouse envy in some of your co-workers, but don't let this bother you either. Simply do what you need to do to get the ball rolling and then go ahead with it.

AQUARIUS: A trip by air may be in the offing, Aquarius. You may be planning to tour distant states or foreign lands. You could be going with friends or a group you're associated with. Unusual new interests could capture your attention, enticing you to further study. You might enroll in a workshop. You're looking toward expanding your horizons. Take care not to spread yourself too thin.

PISCES: Unusual experiences may give rise to a new interest in the sciences or occult practices like magic or alchemy. This is an excellent time to start perusing such subjects, Pisces, or embark on a formal study of astrology. A lucky money break could come your way today. It might be a gift or a repaid loan. Your inclination might be to go out and spend it all. Take care!