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Nitish Kumar raised issue of caste census, Rahul kept mum

Sanjay Kumar New Delhi, Jan 19: The Janata Dal (United) on Sunday accused Rahul Gandhi of hypocrisy on the issue of caste census, charging him with maintaining silence when Bihar CM Nitish Kumar raised the matter in INDIA bloc meetings. The party also asked why the Congress government in Karnataka has not released the state's caste data. JD(U) working president and MP Sanjay Jha's attack on the Congress leader came a day after Gandhi slammed the caste survey carried out by the Kumar-led government as a fake exercise at an event in Patna, while pitching for a nationwide caste census. Speaking to PTI, Jha said, "There cannot be a bigger hypocrisy than this. I was a witness to Gandhi maintaining silence while Kumar strongly and logically spoke in favour of caste census at INDIA bloc meetings in several places." Kumar-led JD(U) was part of the INDIA bloc before he snapped ties with the opposition alliance and joined hands with the BJP. Incidentally, Bihar's caste survey was carried out and its findings released when the Congress was a partner in the government led by Kumar. Saif stabbing case: 2 lawyers compete to represent accused, magistrate plays the referee' Jha said Kumar was the only leader who raised the issue of caste census, and all INDIA bloc members were a witness. Defending the caste survey in Bihar, he said Kumar is the only leader since 1931, when a nationwide caste census was held last, who decided to count the population of different castes in a scientific manner to further social justice. Taking a swipe at Gandhi, he said the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha should be more specific and tell people if he believes that the Bihar's caste survey has overcounted some communities and undercount-

Mahakumbh fire: Cylinder blast sparks major blaze in Prayagraj

Simmi Kaur Babbar Prayagraj, Jan 19: Mahakumbh fire: A major fire broke out at the Mahakumbh in Uttar Pradesh's Prayagraj on Sunday. There was no immediate news of any casualties. The fire broke out in Sector 19 of Mahakumbh Tent City. The police said it was caused by an explosion of cooking cylinders. Kumbh Mela chief fire officer Pramod Sharma said 15 fire tenders were put into service to contain the blaze that engulfed 18 tents. Prayagraj district magistrate Ravindra Kumar told ANI that the fire broke out at around 4.30pm in the tent of Gita press. "...There is no information of any casualty. The situation is under control," he said. Also Read | "Unforgettable crowd, unimaginable

scenes' Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath took cognizance of the fire incident. He also visited the site of

ANI that the fire was brought under control within 20 minutes. "There has been no loss of lives in the incident and for that, I thank Ma Ganga, Triveni and Lete Hanuman ji. Our police team and NDRF are at the spot," he said. In a post on X, the Samajwadi Party also expressed its grief over the incident and asked the government to run relief and rescue operations at a fast pace. "The party expresses sorrow over the incident and prays for the safety of all devotees. It is the government's responsibility to ensure security, control the fire, and prevent such incidents in the future," Samajwadi Party spokesperson Fakhrul Hasan Chaand told PTI. "The party believes the incident is tragic and urges the government to provide necessary facilities for the devotees at the Kumbh."



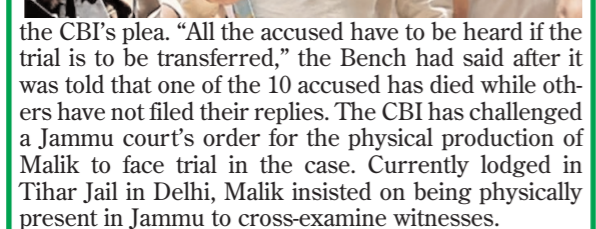
the fire and spoke to officials and fire-fighting teams on the spot. Prime Minister Narendra Modi also spoke to Adityanath and inquired about the fire at Mahakumbh, according to sources. Uttar Pradesh minister AK Sharma told

Bangladeshi national who attacked Saif Ali Khan arrested

Mumbai, Jan. 19: Mumbai police on Sunday said a 30-year-old Bangladeshi national has been arrested for allegedly stabbing actor Saif Ali Khan at the latter's residence here. Preliminary investigation suggests that the man was unaware that he had entered a Bollywood star's house and his intention was theft, a senior police official told reporters. He said the attacker was nabbed at Hiranandani Estate on Ghodbandar Road in neighbouring Thane district. The official said the man had changed his name, Shariful Islam Shehzad Mohammad Rohilla Amin Fakir, to Vijay Das after he entered India. He said the accused, who hails from Jhalokati in Bangladesh, had been living in Mumbai for more than five months, doing petty jobs and was attached to a housekeeping agency. The police have registered a case against the accused under sections 311 (robbery or dacoity with the intent to cause grievous hurt or death, 331(4) (house-breaking) and other relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita and Passport Act, 1967, the official said. Police are trying to collect the documents the accused used to enter India illegally. The official said the accused was brought to Khar police station, where interrogation is underway to find out how he reached the actor's flat and other details.

Shifting Yasin Malik's terror trial from Jammu to Delhi

ST Correspondent New Delhi, Jan 19: The Supreme Court will on Monday take up the CBI's petition challenging a Jammu court's order for the physical production of Kashmiri separatist leader and JKLF chief Yasin Malik to face trial in a case related to the murder of 4 Indian Air Force (IAF) personnel in 1989. The matter is listed before a Bench led by Justice Abhay S Oka which had on December 18 asked six co-accused to respond to



the CBI's plea. "All the accused have to be heard if the trial is to be transferred," the Bench had said after it was told that one of the 10 accused has died while others have not filed their replies. The CBI has challenged a Jammu court's order for the physical production of Malik to face trial in the case. Currently lodged in Tihar Jail in Delhi, Malik insisted on being physically present in Jammu to cross-examine witnesses. Centre's team reaches Rajouri; death toll rises to 17 Jammu, Jan 19: Jammu, A high-level inter-ministerial team Sunday reached Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district where a mysterious illness is wreaking havoc, killing another person on Sunday and taking the death toll to 17. Mysterious deaths in J&K: Centre's team reaches Rajouri; death toll rises to 17 Union Home Minister Amit Shah had on Saturday ordered the constitution of an inter-ministerial team to ascertain the causes of deaths that took place within weeks in three families linked to each other in the remote Badhaal village. Yasmeen Kousar, the last of the six children of Mohd Aslam undergoing treatment at SMGS hospital in Jammu, died this evening, officials said. Kousar's five siblings and grandparents died last week. Nine other members of two families had died in the village between December 7 and 12. "J&K health department and other departments probed the deaths but the exact cause has not been found yet. The Home Minister has constituted a team of inter-ministerial experts and they have reached here," Lt Governor Manoj Sinha told reporters on the sidelines of a function here.

Assam police chief appointed as CRPF's new director general

New Delhi, Jan 19: The Centre has appointed Assam Police chief Gyanendra Pratap Singh as the new director general (DG) of the central reserve police force (CRPF). An order issued late on Saturday by the department of personnel and training (DoPT) read that the appointments committee of the cabinet (ACC) approved the union home ministry's proposal to appoint Singh as the new head of the country's largest paramilitary force. ACC has approved the proposal of the ministry of home affairs for the appointment of Shri G.P. Singh, IPS (AM) 1991, as director general, CRPF," the order issued by the DoPT said. Singh will serve as the CRPF chief until further orders or until his superannuation on January 31, 2027. The new CRPF DG has previously served in the special protection group (SPG) and the national investigation agency (NIA), among other senior roles in the state police. Last month, the ministry of home affairs (MHA) issued an order assigning the additional charge of CRPF DG to 1993-batch IPS officer Vitul Kumar following the retirement of incumbent Anish Dayal Singh on December 31. With a strength of nearly 300,000, the CRPF is India's largest paramilitary force.

Rahul launches 'White T-shirt movement' for justice, equality

Navdeep Singh Sahni New Delhi, Jan. 19: Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi on Sunday announced the launch of a 'White T-shirt Movement,' championing the rights of the masses, even as he accused the Narendra Modi government of turning its back on the poor. Gandhi announced the launch in a post on X and urged people to be a part of it. "If you believe in economic justice, oppose rising wealth inequalities, fight for social equality, reject all forms of discrimination, and strive for peace and stability in our country, wear your white T-shirts and join the movement," said a video voiceover posted by Gandhi on X. Gandhi said, "Today the Modi government has turned its back on the poor and the working class and has left them to their own devices. The government's entire focus is on enriching a select few capitalists." He said that because of this, inequality is constantly increasing and the condition of the workers "who nourish

the country with their blood and sweat" is getting worse and they are forced to endure various kinds of injustice and atroc-



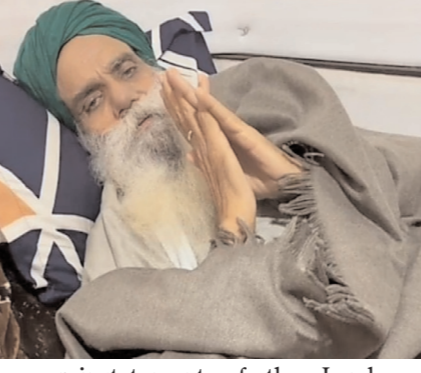
ities. "In such a situation, it is the responsibility of all of us to raise our voice strongly to get them justice and rights. With this thought, we are starting the " he said on X. "I appeal to my youth and working class colleagues to participate in this movement in large numbers. To join this campaign and get detailed information about it, visit

this link -https://whitetshirt.in/home/hin or give a missed call on this number - 9999812024," the post further read. The website of the 'White T-shirt Movement' states that a 'white T-shirt' is not just a piece of cloth but is a symbol of the party's five guiding principles - compassion, unity, non-violence, equality, and progress for all. "These values resonate the spirit of India's 800-year-old civilisation, which is based on harmony and diversity. Today, growing inequalities that are rooted in income, caste and religion demand action beyond ideology," it says. The message further reads, "Our commitment must be derived from the philosophy of Dharma and Karma, Dharma being the duty to selflessly serve society, while Karma is the resolve to uphold rights and fight for justice." The website says that the five principles can create a society where every individual is valued and freedom is not held hostage by the ambitions of a few.

Fasting Dallewal given medical aid after govt invites protesting farmers for talks

Tejinder Kaur Babbar New Delhi, Jan 19: Protesting farmers had accused the Centre of adopting an "indifferent attitude" to their demands and expressed concern over Dallewal's deteriorating health. Fasting farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal, the convener of Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-Political), was given medical aid on Sunday on the intervening night of Saturday and Sunday. This came as Dallewal agreed to take medical aid after the Centre invited the protesting farmers to a meeting in Chandigarh on February 14 to discuss their demands. A team of government doctors administered Dallewal IV fluids. The farmer leader, however, continues his fast-unto-death protest. The 70-year-old leader has been protesting at the Khanauri border since November 26 to press the Centre to accept the farmers' demands, including a legal guarantee of minimum support price (MSP) for crops. Besides a

legally guaranteed MSP, the protesting farmers have been demanding a farm loan waiver, pension for farmers and farm labourers, no hike in the electricity tariff, withdrawal of police cases and "justice" for the victims of the 2021 Lakhimpur Kheri



violence, reinstatement of the Land Acquisition Act, 2013 and compensation to the families of the farmers who died during a previous agitation in 2020-21. Earlier, the protesting farmer leaders had accused

the Centre of adopting an "indifferent attitude" to their demands and expressed concern over Dallewal's deteriorating health. During the deadlock, the Punjab government had expressed its inability to force Dallewal to accept medical aid. The top court is hearing a contempt petition against the state chief secretary and the director general of police for non-compliance with the December 20 order to provide medical aid and hospitalisation to Dallewal. The discussions between the Centre, Punjab government, and farmer representatives will occur at the Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Public Administration in Chandigarh's Sector-26. "You are cordially invited to attend the meeting. Kindly ensure your presence on time," read a letter issued by the Union agriculture ministry joint secretary Priya Ranjan. Representatives from the Sanyukt Kisan Morcha and Kisan Mazdoor Morcha have

been invited to attend the meeting. The breakthrough came after a delegation led by the joint secretary met Dallewal and held a meeting with the representatives of Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) and Kisan Mazdoor Morcha.

IIT Madras director praises cow urine for its 'medicinal value' New Delhi, Jan 19: In the video, the IIT Madras director allegedly endorsed "anti-bacterial, anti-fungal, and digestive properties" of cow urine. A video clip of IIT Madras director V Kamakoti purportedly praising Gomutra (cow urine) for its "medicinal value" has gone viral on social media. In the video, Kamakoti allegedly endorsed "anti-bacterial, anti-fungal, and digestive properties" of gomutra and claimed that they are used for conditions such as Irritable Bowel Syndrome, reported. The IIT Madras director, who was participating in an event held at a Go Samrakshana Sala in Chennai, also narrated an anecdote about a sanayasi who, he claimed, consumed cow urine when he had a high fever. Hindustan Times was unable to verify the authenticity of the video independently.

Uniform Civil Code key to national integration, need consensus for implementation: Ex-CJI Gogoi

Naresh Malhotra Surat, Jan 19: Former Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi on Sunday called the proposed Uniform Civil Code (UCC) a "very important" step towards national integration and social justice, stressing the need to build consensus before its implementation. Speaking at the 'Surat Litfest 2025' here, the Rajya Sabha MP supported the 'One Nation, One Election' idea and said frequent polls affect governance, strain the administration and finance, and cause election fatigue. "I see Uniform Civil Code as a very progressive piece of legislation which will replace diverse customary practices that have evolved into laws," the former CJI said. If implemented, UCC would establish a single set of personal laws for all citizens, regardless of their faith. It would apply to matters like marriage, divorce, adoption, inheritance, and maintenance. "Now, I think it is a very important step towards national integration to achieve social justice, and let us be clear on one thing - it does not come into conflict with Articles 25 and 26, which is the right to religion," he said during a session where he discussed various issues with Prafulla Ketkar, the editor

of RSS mouthpiece Organiser. Gogoi said the UCC is working wonderfully in Goa. What needs to be done is "consensus building and check misinformation," he said. According to Gogoi, the 46th CJI, UCC has nothing to do with religion. Even the Supreme Court, in five matters, starting with the Shah Bano case, concerning the right of Muslim women to seek maintenance, has opined that the government must get it on board, he said. The civil code is a way to bring the nation together and tackle the pendency of cases caused by various laws governing civil and personal matters, affecting social justice, he said. "But I would request the government and the Parliamentarians... don't rush into it. Build up a consensus. Tell the people of this nation what UCC really is. And then, once you build the consensus, people understand. One section of people will never understand, they will pretend not to understand," he said. On the 'One Nation, One Election' proposal, Gogoi said

former President Ram Nath Kovind had sought the opinion of 4-5 former CJIs, including him, and he supported the idea. "The

tration stops. All these affect governance," he said. Money is spent by political parties and the administration in some states is caught up in election duties for six months every year, he said. Election fatigue due to frequent polls is among the other reasons why he backs the idea, Gogoi said. The ex-CJI called the huge pendency of cases plaguing the judiciary a solvable problem, but rued that "nobody seems to be interested in doing anything about it". With 5 crore pending cases, there are 9 crore litigants, and with each having a family of five, 45 crore Indians are stuck in legal cases, he said. "Has anybody realised this? Has this issue been raised in any forum," the Rajya Sabha member asked. The judicial system is not about collegium, which has the power of appointment, said Gogoi, adding that about 45 crore Indians are stuck in perpetual litigation and one doesn't have to wait till 2047 to find a solution. "You have to get it tomorrow," he stressed. Discussions about the judiciary on any forum and in the media revolve around the collegium system

of appointment, the power of the judiciary, its overreach, and who is supreme between Parliament and the judiciary, but not pendency of cases, he said. "How to resolve the pendency of 5 crore cases has not been discussed, no white paper has been published, and nobody seems to be, pardon me, interested. But, to my mind, it is a solvable problem, and I think the head of the judicial family, the Chief Justice of India, should take the initiative," he said. He emphasised the need to get "good people" to become judges to improve the justice delivery system. "There are 24,000 judges in the country. Raise this to one lakh and get good people out of 140 crore. People who mean business. You have never endeavoured to find out what this man's true character is. Is he compassionate, kind? Is he a good man? Does he have a mission in life," he asked. As far as the new criminal laws are concerned, they have both "good and bad features", Gogoi said. Some of the positive features are provisions of community service for petty offences, some crimes being made gender neutral, setting up of a director of prosecution in every district, and expert evidence getting more credence, he said.



NEWS BOX

Karnataka ministers demand fair share of union funds; accuse Centre of injustice

BENGALURU. After Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, it was the turn of Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda to seek more funds from the Union government. After a meeting with Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan, Byre Gowda demanded that Karnataka be given its fair share of funds. He said injustice is being done to Karnataka when it comes to release of funds and urged the Union government to rectify the same. "Why should we be denied our fair share of funds? We've sought funds for Karnataka, which have to be rightfully given to us. This is based on the work we have done. Funds should be released without any further delay," he said. The revenue minister, however, expressed confidence that the Centre would set right the imbalance in terms of fund release. "However, speaking defensively, Union minister Chauhan said the state government should first utilise the funds the Centre had already provided. The Union government would provide funds without any delay. He urged the state government to effectively utilise the funds already released and promised that additional resources would be made available. "We will work on increasing the allocation for staff and the ATMA scheme," Chauhan said. On Friday, Siddaramaiah accused the Union government of betraying the state in terms of allocation of funds.

Polavaram irrigation project: Construction of new D-Wall works begin

VIJAYAWADA. The construction of the new Diaphragm Wall (D-Wall) of the Polavaram Irrigation Project on the Godavari River commenced on Saturday. After performing special puja, the excavation work was taken up using cutters. The new D-Wall will be constructed at an estimated cost of ₹990 crore. The new D-Wall was necessitated after the old D-Wall was damaged by floods in 2019 and 2020. After the NDA government was formed in the State, Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu gave topmost priority to the Polavaram project, and the Centre approved the construction of the new D-wall following recommendations from the committee of international experts. According to the project officials, a 1,400-metre-long D-Wall will be constructed in parts called panels. There will be approximately 371 panels, and once the entire construction of D-wall is constructed, it will be one single large structure. Using giant cutters, soil will be excavated in 2.8 metres width and depth up to 2 metres below rock strata beneath the riverbed, with depths ranging from 40 to 90 metres depending on the riverbed's geological composition. After excavation, concrete work will be taken up. The Central Water Commission has finalised the T5 type composition out of the two types recommended by the panel of international experts. On an average, construction of each panel will take three days.

Mandatory financial course for undergraduate engineering students in TN likely soon

CHENNAI. With an aim to improve financial literacy among engineering students, Anna University is likely to offer a mandatory financial education course for its undergraduate students. Varsity officials said the academic council has approved the proposal and the syndicate has given it the go-ahead. "The proposal to offer a course on financial education as a mandatory course to all UG students was discussed in detail at the last syndicate meeting," said a faculty of the university. Director-academic courses have been informed to explore suitable avenues for implementing it in the pre-final semester, the faculty added. The course is likely to be implemented from next academic year in the varsity and for its affiliated colleges. A senior faculty told that the low level of financial awareness among students prompted the proposal and hence the course is likely to be compulsory. "Discussions are on to chalk out the contents of the course. We are planning to prepare a course which will serve as a complete guide on financial education," said the faculty. Varsity officials said engineering students with financial knowledge are in demand and that it may enhance their employment opportunities. The idea to offer financial education was mooted with more students opting for entrepreneurship these days after completing engineering degrees. The audit courses will cover topics like auditing principles, risk assessment and internal control which will help engineering students-turned-entrepreneurs have a better control on their business ventures. "Nowadays, basic financial education has become a necessity. If students are aware financially, it will be much easier for them to build their businesses and take decisions. One of the major reasons for failing businesses is poor financial decisions," a senior faculty said.

India emerging as major pole for global economy: Singapore President Tharman Shanmugaratnam

BHUBANESWAR. President of Singapore Tharman Shanmugaratnam on Saturday said India is emerging as a major pole for the global economy and poised to move up the ladder due to its demographics, development process and significant potential as an export economy. Interacting with the media during his visit here, Tharman said, in a multi-polar world, India aspires to be a pole in its own right, "that's true geopolitically and also economically."

Tharman said India and Singapore are now on a new plane of cooperation. "India is a nation that we would like to collaborate with," he said wrapping up his two-day visit to Odisha with a visit to Bharat Biotech vaccine manufacturing unit in Bhubaneswar. Semiconductor ecosystem, skill infrastructure and sustainability are major priority sectors between the two nations but connectivity is another area of focus too. During his meetings with the leadership in India, he said it came out clearly there is keenness to expand the air services agreement that benefits both the economies. "It was revised about 10 years ago but we are now at the 10-year point to look at the next 10 years. Aviation as a tool has potential for India to emerge as a player in the

maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) business," he said. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had raised it during his September visit to Singapore which has companies ranked as global leaders.



Talking about the strong bilateral relations between the countries, President Tharman said it is not just about specific industries but about working on projects that continue to build trust between the two countries. "Trust is in short supply internationally, and Singapore and India can show how it is possible to build trust in today's world, even in today's uncertain and fractious world," he said.

He pointed out that for Singapore to do well in the future, it must engage closely with ASEAN neighbours such as India with China. "That's

where the opportunities are and that's where we also develop our sense of being contributors to Asia's growth, sustainability and stability," he added. During his two-day visit to Odisha, at least eight MoUs were inked between Odisha government and Singapore companies across varied sectors. The President said Odisha is poised for a new stage of development and must start working on the enablers. "I decided to come to Odisha at this stage because the east is rising in India and it's a priority for the Indian government," he said. Starting off from a lower level of income compared to other states, the Singapore President felt Odisha is aspiring to move on, and with the right focus on education and skills. "Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi and Union Minister for Education minister Dharmendra Pradhan visited Singapore along with their officials. They are very keen to work with us on specific projects," he said referring to skilling, ITES, industrial parks and semiconductor sectors.

He also mentioned that Odisha has clear strengths in petrochemicals and Singapore companies are looking at contributing to development of the sector. Tharman who interacted with students at the World Skill Centre, established with support from Singapore, said he found them full of hope and optimism. "I come away, feeling optimistic about Odisha," he added.

Customs arrest Kerala native with hydroponic weed worth Rs 7 crore in Bhubaneswar airport

BHUBANESWAR. Continuing its crackdown against mules engaged in transporting hydroponic weed, Customs (Preventive) Commissionerate on Saturday arrested a Kerala native from Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA) and seized 7 kg of the contraband from him. The highly potent variety of ganja is said to be worth about Rs 7 crore.

Acting on a tip-off, the customs officers stopped the person after he arrived here from Bangkok. During scanning of his check-in baggage, they found 7 kg of hydroponic weed concealed inside snacks packets. He was then arrested under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act. The arrest comes four days after another Kerala native was nabbed from BPIA on Tuesday with 4 kg hydroponic weed valued at Rs 4 crore. He too had arrived here from Bangkok. Sources said both the persons are reportedly linked to each other and lured by



members of the same international drug syndicate to smuggle the contraband into the country. This is the fourth arrest made by Customs department from BPIA in the last 14 days. On January 4, two women from West Bengal had been arrested with over 9 kg hydroponic weed worth Rs 9 crore after they arrived here from Kuala Lumpur. All the five accused persons were found to be holding

tourist visas. Preliminary probe suggests the seized consignments were supposed to be delivered in West Bengal and some southern states.

"There has been a surge in demand of hydroponic weed, especially among the youths. It was noticed that the contraband's requirement was particularly high between November and January due to New Year celebrations," said sources. After landing at different delivery points in the country, hydroponic weed is sent out in small quantities to many states including Odisha.

Amid a string of smuggling cases, Customs department's special intelligence and investigation branch has launched a detailed investigation into the matter. Sources said Customs officers are hopeful that due to the recent action against the transporters of the weed, the smugglers may turn their focus away from BPIA.

Number of full irrigation tanks in Tamil Nadu doubled to 5,445 compared to last year

CHENNAI. In the last four months, the number of tanks that have reached their full capacity in Tamil Nadu has risen from 450 to 5,455, thanks to the copious rainfall during the northeast monsoon season. This is almost twice the number compared to the same period last year (January 2024), when only 2,914 tanks were full. The Tamil Nadu Water Resources Department (WRD) manages 14,410 irrigation tanks across the state. Currently, 3,751 tanks have water levels ranging from 76% to 99%, while 182 tanks are bone dry. Officials said that a lack of water inflow due to encroachments of inlets may have led to the drying of these tanks.

"Compared to the previous monsoon, the state has sufficient water storage in irrigation tanks this year. In 22 districts, including Chengalpattu, Tiruvannamalai, Villupuram, and Pudukkottai, there are zero dry tanks," a senior WRD official told TNIE. The official added that improved water storage will help recharge groundwater in dry regions. The official, however, said that of the estimated 5,000 tanks in Chennai, Tiruvallur, Kancheepuram, and Chengalpattu districts, WRD now manages only 1,551 tanks, as the remaining ones have been encroached upon. "We are taking legal steps with the support of revenue and police officials to retrieve the tanks," the official said. The state government has also instructed authorities to identify old tanks using revenue records, he added. K. Balasubramani, state secretary of Tamil Nadu Vivasayi Sangam, said, "Sufficient water in irrigation tanks will enable farmers in delta districts and the western region to cultivate short-term crops such as black gram, green gram, and millets, boosting foodgrain production in the coming months." K. Balasubramani, state secretary.

BERHAMPUR. Vehicular movement between Paralakhemundi and Berhampur was disrupted for several hours on Saturday as hundreds of farmers staged road blockade at Upalada demanding procurement of discoloured paddy at mandis in Gajapati district.

The agitating farmers said last month, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi visited the district to take stock of the damage to crops due to unseasonal rains. The CM had assured immediate disbursement of crop damage assistance to the affected farmers. While not a single farmer has received the promised assistance, several mandis are only accepting FAQ paddy, they claimed. The district administration started paddy procurement in Gajapati from December 7. Farmer leader Suryanarayan Patnaik said as the administration is yet to finalise the list of millers to participate in the procurement process, farmers are waiting at mandis with their paddy stocks. As mandis don't have storage facility, farmers are compelled to guard



their paddy under the open sky. "Making matters worse, mandi officials are only allowing FAQ paddy due to which several farmers are returning home with their discoloured paddy stocks. Protesting this attitude of officials, farmers blocked the state highway with their paddy," said Patnaik.

On being informed, the civil supplies officer (CSO) of Gajapati, local tehsildar and deputy registrar of cooperative societies reached the protest site. However, they were detained by the irate farmers.

The agitators said they will continue the blockade and not release the detained

Retd inspector, subedar killed in road mishap near Odisha Raj Bhavan



BHUBANESWAR. In a tragic incident, two persons were killed after their motorcycle was hit by a speeding hatchback car in front of Raj Bhavan within Capital police limits here on Saturday evening. The deceased have been identified as Goura Chandra Nayak and Rabi Chandra Nayak, both of whom were retired inspector and subedar respectively. They were reportedly relatives. Police said while Rabi was riding the motorcycle, Goura was seated behind him. The duo was going towards AG Square from Surya Nagar when they were hit by the speeding car coming from Power House Square. Due to the impact of the collision, both the motorcycle and the car jumped on the roundabout in the area.

The accident, which took place on a very busy stretch, reduced their two-wheeler to a mangled wreck. While Goura was declared received dead in the hospital, Rabi was rushed to a private healthcare facility where he succumbed after a few minutes. Police said the car was being driven by one Lalatendu Barik and he had also hit two other persons travelling on a motorcycle. One of them sustained serious injuries in the accident and is undergoing treatment in a hospital here.

Sources said Lalatendu's alcohol examination was conducted immediately but he tested negative. He reportedly told the investigators that he suffers from an underlying neurological disorder which triggers seizures in his body. "The car was seized and the accused driver has been detained. Further probe into the matter is continuing to ascertain the reason behind the accident," said Capital police station IIC, Dayanidhi Nayak. Sources said Barik is a native of Raghunathpur area and works with an IT company here. On January 13, two persons including a pedestrian were killed after being hit by an SUV in Janla area on the outskirts of the city.

Farmers block road in Odisha's Upalada demanding purchase of discoloured paddy

officials until the administration gives them a written assurance of receiving their paddy within three days.

Later, police reached the spot and held discussion with the farmers. The officials were released after giving in writing that discoloured paddy would be received at mandis in three days. CSO Prafulla Behera said this year, a target has been fixed to procure 5.85 lakh quintal of paddy from farmers in

Gajapati and accordingly, 45 millers have been identified for the purpose. "But only 26 millers have submitted their documents till date due to which paddy procurement has been delayed. We will apprise the district collector and the state government about the written assurance given to the farmers," he said.

Behera, however, expressed his inability to comment on the delay in disbursement of crop loss assistance. "Officials tasked with the job can give the reason behind the delay," he said. On the other hand, farmers said if the administration fails to keep its promise, they will revive their agitation.

ISRO successfully demonstrates Vikas engine restart; flags off LVM3 for commercial operations

BENGALURU. The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on Saturday announced that the team of research scientists had successfully completed the demonstration of the restart of the Vikas Liquid Engines on January 17. The tests were done at the ISRO Propulsion Complex at Mahendragiri in Tamil Nadu.

Vikas engine is the workhorse engine that powers the liquid stages of all the launch vehicles. The test marks a milestone in the development of technologies for recovery of stages, leading to reusability in future launch vehicles, a press release from ISRO read.

The scientists explained that a series of tests are carried out to validate

the restarting of the engine under different conditions. During the test, the engine is on for 60 seconds and then it is shut-off for a period of 120 seconds, after this it is restarted and fired for a seven seconds duration.

"All engine parameters during the test were found to be normal and as expected. Earlier, a short duration restart test was successfully done in December 2024 with a shut-off time of 42 seconds and firing duration of seven seconds. More tests are planned in the coming days to optimise the performance of the engine under restart conditions," ISRO added.

ISRO flags off LVM for commercial operations

ISRO on Saturday informed that its Chairman V Narayanan flagged off the launch of the core liquid stage (L110) Launch Vehicle Marck-3 (LVM3) at Sriharikota on January 17. This is the 10th L110 liquid stage integrated at ISRO's Propulsion Complex in Mahendragiri, Tamil Nadu. It is earmarked for the LVM3 mission under a commercial agreement between NSIL and AST and Science, LLC to launch their BlueBird Block-2 satellite. The L110 was designed and developed by Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre during the development of the LVM3 launch vehicle and is powered by twin Vikas engines with a propellant loading of 110 tonnes.



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NEWS BOX

Unable To Move Forward Until...': Netanyahu's BIG Remark On Israel-Gaza Hostage Deal

Israel-Hamas Hostage Deal. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said that Israel will not be able to move forward with an agreed framework in connection to the implementation of the ceasefire deal in Gaza until Hamas provides the list of hostages to be released. He asserted that any violations of the agreement will not be tolerated.

In a post on social media platform X, the Office of the Israeli PM quoted Netanyahu and said, "We will be unable to move forward with the framework until we receive the list of the hostages who will be released, as was agreed. Israel will not tolerate violations of the agreement. Hamas is solely responsible."

This comes after the Israeli government on Saturday gave its approval to the ceasefire and hostage release deal with Hamas by a vote of 24-8, according to a report by Times of Israel.

TRENDING NOW
Earlier on Friday, the Israeli security cabinet had approved the hostage release-ceasefire deal with Hamas and recommended the government to adopt it. The Israel government's hostages and missing persons coordination unit on Friday notified the families of the 33 Israeli hostages expected to be set free in the first phase of the Gaza ceasefire deal. Israel has not been told how many of the 33 are alive, though it expects the majority are. Israel will receive a full status report on all those on the list seven days into the ceasefire. The order of release is not yet known. The identities of those set to return are expected to be provided 24 hours before each release, as reported by the Times of Israel.

Beyond the 33 hostages set for release in phase one, Israel says 65 more hostages are currently held in Gaza, including the bodies of at least 36 confirmed dead. As the first phase progresses, talks will focus on the release of remaining hostages, ending the war, and Gaza's future reconstruction.

Gasoline Tanker Explosion In Nigeria Kills At Least 70 People

World At least 70 people were killed after a gasoline tanker exploded in north-central Nigeria, AP reported citing the country's emergency response agency.

The blast happened in the early hours of Saturday near the Suleja area of Niger state after individuals attempted to transfer gasoline from one tanker into another truck using a generator. The tragic incident of tanker explosion took place in the early hours of Saturday near the Suleja area of Niger state after individuals attempted to transfer gasoline from one tanker into another truck using a generator.

TRENDING NOW
The explosion, triggered during the fuel transfer, resulted in the deaths of both those handling the gasoline and nearby bystanders, Hussaini Isah of the National Emergency Management Agency told the Associated Press, as reported by AP. Due to the lack of an efficient railway system for cargo transport, fatal truck accidents are frequent on major roads in Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation.

Thousands Protest In Washington DC Against Trump Ahead Of Inauguration

World Thousands of people from across the country gathered in the American Capital two days before the inauguration of Donald Trump as the 47th President of the United States on January 20.

Trump, 78, succeeds Joe Biden, 82, on Tuesday as the new occupant of the White House. A coalition of nonprofit bodies, including Sakhi for South Asian Survivors, under the banner of People's March, held the demonstration here to protest against the policies of Trump. Displaying anti-Trump posters and banner, the protestors raised slogans against the next



President and also against some of his close supporters including Tesla owner Elon Musk. The same group had also held a similar protest on January 2017, when Trump was inaugurated for the first time.

TRENDING NOW
There were a series of three protests which started from three different parks and culminated near the Lincoln Memorial. "Mass protest is one of the most effective ways to demonstrate to our communities that we are not obeying in advance or bowing to fascism, and invites them to do the same," People's March said.

Amongst the coalition members are Abortion Action Now, Time to Act, SisterSong, Women's March, Popular Democracy In Action, Harriet's Wildest Dreams, The Feminist Front, NOW, Planned Parenthood, National Women's Law Center Action Fund, Sierra Club, and the Frontline. Women's March is anchoring the logistics of the mobilization. Similar marches, though at a smaller scale, were also held in various other cities including New York, Seattle and Chicago. "We really wanted to come to support women, equality, immigration, everything that really feels like we don't have much of a say in right now," Brittany Martinez, one of the protesters, told USA TODAY.

Thousands rally in Washington for rights, abortion access before Trump's inauguration

WASHINGTON. Thousands of people from around the United States were rallying in the nation's capital Saturday for women's reproductive rights and other causes they believe are under threat from the incoming Trump administration, reprising the original Women's March days before President-elect Donald Trump's second inauguration. Eight years after the first historic Women's March at the start of Trump's first term, marchers said they were caught off guard by Trump's victory and are determined now to show that support remains strong for women's access to abortion, for transgender people, for combating climate change and other issues. The march is just one of several protests, rallies and vigils focused on abortion, rights, immigration rights and the Israel-Hamas war planned in advance of inauguration Monday. Around the country, over 350 similar marches are taking place in every state.



Jill Parrish of Austin, Texas, said she initially

bought a plane ticket to Washington for what she expected to be Democratic Vice President Kamala Harris's inauguration. She wound up changing the dates to march in protest ahead of Trump's swearing-in instead, saying the world should know that half of U.S. voters didn't support Trump. "Most importantly, I'm here to demonstrate my fear, about the state of our democracy," Parrish said. Demonstrators staged in squares around Washington ahead of the march, pounding drums and yelling chants under a slate-gray sky and in a chilly wind. Protesters then marched to the Lincoln Memorial for larger rally and fair, where

organizations at the local, state and national level will host information tables.

They held signs with slogans including, "Save America" and "Against abortions? Then don't have one" and "Hate won't win."

There were brief moments of tension between protesters and Trump supporters. The march paused briefly when a man in a red Make America Great Again hat and a green camo backpack walked into a line of demonstrators at the front. Police intervened and separated him from the group peacefully as marchers chanted "We won't take the bait."

As the protesters approached the Washington Monument, a small group of men in MAGA hats walking in the opposite direction appeared to draw the attention of a protest leader with a megaphone. The leader veered closer to the group and began chanting "No Trump, no KKK" through the megaphone. The groups were separated by high black fencing and police officers

eventually gathered around. Rick Glatz, of Manchester, New Hampshire, said he came to Washington for the sake of his four granddaughters: "I'm a grandpa. And that's why I'm marching."

Minnesota high school teacher Anna Bergman wore her original pink pussy hat from her time in the 2017 Women's March, a moment that captured the shock and anger of progressives and moderates at Trump's first win. With Trump coming back now, "I just wanted to be surrounded by likeminded people on a day like today," Bergman said. Rebranded and reorganized, the rally has a new name — the People's March — as a means to broaden support, especially during a reflective moment for progressive organizing after Trump's decisive win in November. The Republican takes the oath of office Monday. Women outraged over Trump's 2016 presidential win flocked to Washington in 2017 and organized large rallies in cities throughout the country, building the base of a grassroots movement that became known as the Women's March.

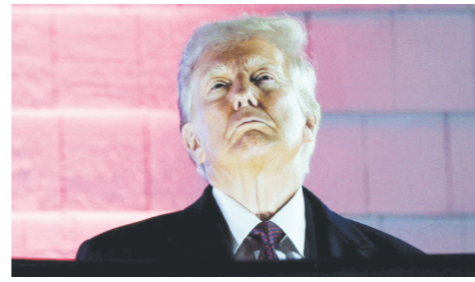
Trump lands in Washington ahead of inauguration, fireworks kickstart celebrations

World. US President-elect Donald Trump arrived in Washington with his family, supporters and political allies ahead of his inauguration as the 47th President on Monday. On Saturday evening, he landed at the Dulles International Airport in Virginia, and was accompanied by his wife, Melania, daughter Ivanka and her husband, Jared Kushner. Trump will host a reception for about 500 guests and a fireworks display later on Saturday evening, news agency Reuters said.

Notably, Trump's swearing-in ceremony will be held inside the US Capitol instead of outdoors due to the forecast for "dangerous" cold conditions in the capital.

TOP DEVELOPMENTS
Trump flew to Washington on an Air Force plane sent by outgoing President Joe Biden to Trump's resort on Palm Beach in Florida, where Trump was

preparing for his transition after defeating Kamala Harris in the November 5 election. The flight was dubbed "Special Air Mission 47", a nod to Trump taking charge as the 47th US



president. After arriving at the Dulles Airport in suburban Virginia, Donald Trump traveled to his golf club in Sterling, Virginia, on the outskirts of Washington, news agency Reuters reported. Elvis Presley impersonator

Leo Days entertained Trump and Melania ahead of the reception and fireworks display. A video on social media shows Days singing as Trump and Melania watched.

Trump is scheduled to participate in a wreath-laying ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery on Sunday, the eve of his inauguration. Trump is scheduled to hold a rally with his supporters inside the Capital One Arena in Washington on Sunday, the eve of his inauguration, as well as a post-inauguration event on Monday afternoon. Trump's rally on Sunday will be followed by a private dinner. Trump will start with the traditional prayer service at St John's Episcopal Church on Monday, before heading to the White House for a customary tea with the outgoing President Joe Biden and first lady Jill Biden.

What Happens After Gaza Ceasefire, How Many Hostages Will Be Released

Jerusalem/Cairo. A ceasefire in Gaza between Israel and Hamas is set to come into effect on Sunday morning with a hostage release to follow hours later, opening the way to a possible end to a 15-month war that has upended the Middle East. The agreement followed months of on-off negotiations brokered by Egypt, Qatar and the United States, and came just ahead of the Jan. 20 inauguration of U.S. President-elect Donald Trump.

The three-stage ceasefire will come into effect at 0630 GMT on Sunday. Its first stage will last six weeks, during which 33 of the remaining 98 hostages - women, children, men over 50, the ill and wounded - will be released in return for almost 2,000 Palestinian prisoners and detainees. They include 737 male, female and teen-aged prisoners, some of whom are members of militant groups convicted of attacks that killed dozens of Israelis, as well as hundreds of Palestinians from Gaza in detention since the start of the war.

Three female hostages are expected to be



released on Sunday afternoon through the Red Cross, in return for 30 prisoners each. After Sunday's hostage release, lead U.S. negotiator Brett McGurk said, the accord calls for four more female hostages to be freed after seven days, followed by the release of three further hostages every seven days thereafter. U.S. President Joe Biden's team worked closely with Trump's Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff to push the deal over the line. As his inauguration approached, Trump had repeated his demand that a deal be done swiftly, warning repeatedly that there would be "hell to pay" if the hostages were not

released.

Post-War Gaza?
But what will come next in Gaza remains unclear in the absence of a comprehensive agreement on the postwar future of the enclave, which will require billions of dollars and years of work to rebuild. And although the stated aim of the ceasefire is to end the war entirely, it could easily unravel. Hamas, which has controlled Gaza for almost two decades, has survived despite losing its top leadership and thousands of fighters.

Israel has vowed it will not allow Hamas to return to power and has cleared large stretches of ground inside Gaza, in a step widely seen as a move towards creating a buffer zone that will allow its troops to act freely against threats in the enclave. In Israel, the return of the hostages may ease some of the public anger against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his right-wing government over the Oct. 7 security failure that led to the deadliest single day in the country's history.

Hope And Tears As Youngest Israeli Hostage Turns Two Ahead Of Gaza Ceasefire

Tel Aviv, Israel. Israelis gathered in Tel Aviv to demand freedom for hostages held in Gaza, anxious the ceasefire deal would collapse, with many dwelling on the fate of Kfir Bibas, the youngest captive whose second birthday fell on Saturday. "Today, I tried to write a birthday message for Kfir for the second time," his aunt Ofri Bibas Levy said. "A message for a child who cannot celebrate... A child trapped in hell. A child who might not even be alive. But no words come out, only tears." Taken alongside his now four-year-old brother Ariel and his mother and father, Shiri and Yarden, he has become a symbol of the suffering of the hostages. "I have two orange balloons on my car," said Sigal Kirsch in Tel Aviv's "Hostage Square". The colour has become symbolic of the Bibas boys, both of whom are red-heads. "I don't have the words," she said, visibly overcome with emotion. Hamas said in November 2023 that the two boys and their mother were killed in



an Israeli air strike, but the Israeli military has not confirmed their deaths. Coming together to protest barely 12 hours before the first three hostages are due to be released, many couldn't bring themselves to believe after so much false hope that the ordeal of the hostages might finally be over.

"Once they cross the (Gaza) border and they will be rejoined with their families then maybe we can breathe again," said Shahar Mor Zahiro, the nephew of slain hostage Avraham Munder.

'Hell'
Anxiety was the overwhelming mood. "This past week was hell," said Kirsch, who had been every week to the gatherings at Hostage Square, across the road from Israeli military headquarters. "On Tuesday we were sure that the deal would be signed... and it took until last night. So we're very, very anxious," she said.

The deal agreed between Israel and Palestinian militant group Hamas, via mediators, is broken into three phases. But, with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu under pressure from far-right elements of his government opposed to a ceasefire, protesters and families of the hostages expressed fears that the deal would collapse.

"In one sense (the mood) is a little more hopeful, and in another sense, it's very sad. Because for the people who aren't in the first phase, I can't imagine how their hearts bleed at this point," said Neil Trubowitz, 75, from Tel Aviv, in Hostage Square.

South Korean court extends President Yoon's detention, protests erupt

Seoul. A South Korean court on Sunday extended President Yoon Suk Yeol's detention for up to 20 days, leading to violent protests by hundreds of angry supporters who stormed the court building, smashed windows and broke inside. Yoon last week became the first sitting South Korean President to be arrested as he faces allegations of insurrection related to his stunning, short-lived December 3 declaration of martial law that has plunged the country into political turmoil. Shortly after the court's decision was announced around 3 am on Sunday, his supporters swarmed the building, overwhelming riot police trying to keep them at bay. Footage showed protesters blasting fire extinguishers at lines of police guarding the front entrance, before they flooded inside, destroying office equipment and furniture. Police, who



restored order a few hours later, said they had so far arrested 4 protesters. "We will track down till the end more of those who committed illegal acts or instigated and assisted," the Seoul Metropolitan Police said in a statement. There were around 40 minor injuries sustained during the chaos but no serious injuries reported, an emergency responder near the court said.

With a requirement either to petition to extend Yoon's detention or free the impeached president within 48 hours, South Korean investigators asked a Seoul court on Friday to hold him for longer after he refused to be questioned. After a 5-hour hearing on Saturday, which Yoon attended, the Seoul Western District Court opted to grant the investigators' request due to "concern that the suspect may destroy evidence", the court said in a statement.

Under the new warrant, Yoon can be detained for up to 20 days. South Korean regulations require a suspect detained under a warrant to undergo a physical exam, have a mugshot taken and wear a prison uniform. The leader is expected to continue to be held in a solitary cell at the Seoul Detention Centre. "President Yoon Suk Yeol and our legal team will never give up," lawyers representing Yoon, who have called the criminal probe invalid, said in a statement. "We will do our best in all future

judicial procedures to correct the wrong," the lawyers said, adding that the violence at the court was an "unfortunate" incident.

Yoon's conservative People Power Party called the court's decision a "great pity". "There's a question whether repercussions of detaining a sitting president were sufficiently considered," the party said in a statement.

But the main opposition Democratic Party called the court's approval on the warrant a "cornerstone" for rebuilding order and said that "riots" by "far-right" groups would only deepen the national crisis. Support for the PPP collapsed after his martial law declaration, which he rescinded hours later in the face of a unanimous vote in parliament rejecting it. Lawmakers impeached Yoon on December 14, suspending his presidential powers. But in the turmoil since - in which the opposition-majority parliament also impeached his first replacement and investigators botched an initial attempt to arrest Yoon - the PPP's support has sharply rebounded.

NEWS BOX

Accused in STR melanistic tiger poaching case were in contact with three middlemen



BHUBANESWAR. The special enforcement wing of the Similipal South wildlife division probing the melanistic tiger poaching case has found that the accused arrested so far were in contact with at least three middlemen, indicating a possible racket involved in wildlife crimes in the area. "During interrogation, the accused revealed names of three middlemen they were in touch with after killing the rare melanistic tiger," said an STR official privy to the development.

He said that they are taking the help of police in apprehending these middlemen to further ascertain if any organised or inter-state racket is active in the region. All these middlemen named by the accused belong to Odisha, the official said.

Meanwhile, STR officials said they have intensified their search operation to apprehend prime accused Rabindra Naik of Baniadara village, who is still absconding. The special wing had on January 12 seized the melanistic tiger hide from one of the 10 accused from Tentula village.

During interrogation, the forest officials came to know that the big cat, a sub-adult, was killed in Kulpal section of the Jenabil range in Similipal South wildlife division in the second week of November last year. STR officials said the forest field staff also continued their search in fringe villages as a regular patrolling drive on Friday and Saturday.

Class IV student dies after falling from slide in Odisha school

JAJPUR. In a heart-wrenching incident, a 10-year-old Class IV student of Bagapatia Upper Primary School in Jajpur district, Odisha, tragically lost his life after falling off a concrete slide on the school premises during school hours. The deceased, identified as Soumyaranjan Sahu, son of Nabaghan Sahu from Bagapatia village, was playing with friends when the accident occurred. Sources stated that while enjoying the slide, Soumyaranjan fell to the ground, sustaining critical injuries. He was immediately rushed to a nearby hospital but was declared dead on arrival by the doctors.

Following the incident, family members and locals gathered at the school, holding the teachers responsible for the tragedy. They reportedly detained the school staff, demanding strict action against those responsible. Bagapatia Upper Primary School, which has 72 students and five teachers, including the headmaster, is now at the centre of an investigation.

Reacting to the incident, Subhranshu Puhan, Block Education Officer of Danagadi, expressed grief and assured preventive measures.

10 chain snatching incidents in Tambaram in a day



CHENNAI. At least 10 incidents of chain snatchings were reported under the Tambaram police limits on Friday. The victims include a sub-inspector working at the Chennai police commissioner's office as well. Gold chains weighing around 20 sovereigns were snatched from the victims, police said.

According to sources, the first victim was Rajeshwari (50) who runs a small shop in Maraimalai Nagar. Two youngsters on a bike wearing a helmet came to the shop and asked for two cigarettes. When she turned around to pick it out of her cupboard, they allegedly snatched her four-sovereign gold chain and escaped. Similar incidents were recorded in Guduvanchery, Mudichur, Oteri, Peerankarai, Manimangalam, and Selaiyur. In Mudichur, Indira (58), a cop, was walking down the road on Friday evening when two men on bike wearing helmets cornered her and snatched her five-sovereign gold chain. The incident was caught on the CCTV camera. Indira immediately alerted the police control room as well. Two men on a bike were seen escaping the cops near the Gandhi road in the locality, police said.

Special teams have been formed to catch the offenders, a police official said.

BMC gears up for Magha Mela, special focus on traffic management

BMC mayor Sulochana Das said all arrangements will be put in place for the purpose with a special focus on easing traffic movement and avoiding road congestion.



BHUBANESWAR. The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) on Saturday charted out a plan to ensure smooth and successful organisation of the upcoming Magha Mela.

To be held at the famous Khandagiri hills, the festival will commence from February 4 and

be attended by over 1,000 sadhus from different parts of the country. BMC mayor Sulochana Das said that all arrangements will be put in place for the purpose with a special focus on easing traffic movement and avoiding road congestion. "The government has directed the R&B division

to take up road repair work around the venue on a war footing basis. BMC will take up the drive to remove encroachment from the entire Khandagiri-Jayadev Vatika stretch to prevent road jam," Das added.

She said the jatra troupes scheduled to perform at the fair will be asked not to wind up their plays at the same time so as to prevent road congestion. "The financial support extended by the BMC for the festival will be doubled this year. While the civic body earlier provided Rs 2 lakh for the purpose, this year the funds have been enhanced to around Rs 4 lakh," the mayor said. Municipal commissioner Rajesh Pravakar Patil said from special tents and lighting to provision of drinking water, all arrangements will be made for the sadhus and the visitors.

Around 10 ambulance and fire fighting vans will remain deployed throughout the festival to deal with emergency situations. Besides, a dedicated team of sanitation staff along with garbage lifting van will be mobilised for regular cleaning of the site. Watco officials will ensure uninterrupted supply of water to the site. Adequate number of CCTV cameras will be installed at the site, while provision of barricading will also be done by the Commissionerate Police.

After sun sets, abandoned buildings in Mathur MMDA turn hub for anti-socials

CHENNAI. At least 20 buildings in Mathur MMDA, developed in the 90s by the Tamil Nadu Housing Board (TNHB) and the Madras Metropolitan Development Authority (MMDA), continue to remain unused for decades. Intended to house primary and nursery schools, police station, fire station, and electrical substation, these structures are now hotspots for anti-social activities, especially after the sun sets, say residents.

Due to TNHB's alleged failure to transfer or sell them to the respective departments or interested buyers, the facilities did not serve their purpose, but remained unused, deteriorating over the years. "These buildings, which were meant to educate children and prevent crime, have ironically become hubs for illegal activities, affecting the same children," said M Raja Rajan, president of TNHB Colony Welfare Association. Women residents said that these abandoned structures occupied by anti-social elements have



increased safety concerns.

"I've been here for over two years, and the situation has worsened last year. Every night, groups of boys aged 15-25 gather in the abandoned school building on my street to consume alcohol. Returning from my night shift at 11:30 pm is terrifying. Sometimes, they ring our doorbell repeatedly," said Kamala (name changed), a 26-year-old IT professional and resident of MMDA 29th Street.

"The old nursery school now converted into a

ration shop has no compound wall. Around 20 boys, aged 15-18, often hide behind the building to consume alcohol. Recently, a drunken boy threw stones at an electrical junction box, forcing us to call the police," said Usha B, a resident of First Main Road, MMDA 46th Street, adding that there have been instances where these boys harass women and run away.

These abandoned sites have also become garbage dumping grounds, increasing mosquito population and posing health risks.

While police have increased patrolling in the area, residents insist on permanent solutions. They urged authorities to demolish these buildings and replace them with functional schools, hospitals, parks, and community halls. "Several vacant lands earmarked for purposes such as a theatre, religious spaces, and a market also remain unused. No action has been taken so far to initiate these constructions," said R S Babu, secretary of Mathur MMDA Welfare Association.

Odisha is fifth state in country with around 1,052 unrecognised schools

BHUBANESWAR. Odisha has the fifth highest number of unrecognised schools - mostly private Odia and English medium - in the country. The Ministry of Education has detected 1,052 unrecognised schools in the state. These schools currently have 91,895 students with 8,285 teachers. Although these schools are functioning with a Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+) code assigned by the ministry to keep a track of their academic performances, they are not recognised by the state government.

As per the ministry's report, while Jharkhand has the highest 5,879 such schools, it is followed by Bihar (4,915), Assam (3,630), West Bengal (3,380) and Odisha. On the whole, there are 22,298 such schools in the country. Secretary of the department of School Education and Literacy Sanjay Kumar had recently written a letter to the states asking them to either recognise such schools by March-end this year or take appropriate action against them. As per the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, no school can be established or operated without obtaining recognition from the government. Section 19 of the Act states that the schools established before the commencement of the Act and not fulfilling the norms shall take steps to fulfil them within three years from the date of commencement of the Act. It also mandates that if such schools fail to fulfil the norms, the recognition shall be withdrawn and they will cease to function. In spite of these provisions, 1,052 unrecognised schools in the state are continuing in UDISE+ till date. In his letter, Sanjay Kumar highlighted that many unrecognised schools were included in the UDISE+ list with the condition that they

Delayed salaries force Karnataka employees to pay extra loan interest; seek government intervention

BENGALURU. A section of employees from a few government departments are not getting salaries on time for various reasons. For no fault of theirs, those who have taken loans from the Karnataka Government Insurance Department (KGID), or have to pay their monthly contributions to KGID policy, have ended up paying "penalty interest" for delays in their payments. Now they have approached senior authorities in the state government to rectify levying more interest for delayed payments. Government employees of a few departments in some districts, including Zilla and Taluk Panchayat, Health, Education, Women and Child Welfare and Rural Development and Panchayat Raj, have not been receiving salaries on time. In many cases, it is delayed by days, in many others by months. This issue has been continuing over several years.

The government-sanctioned posts are 7.7

lakh, of which around 5.4 lakh posts are filled. The shortage has resulted in the government depending on a large number of contract employees, especially guest lecturers, pourakarmikas and others, who too are not getting salaries on time.

struggling to manage this and this is one of the reasons for delays in payment of salaries," said a senior official requesting anonymity.

CS Shadakhari, President, Karnataka State Employee Association, said KGID, a government-owned body,

gives loans for lesser interest. "The loan amount is deducted on a particular date every month. But when the salaries are delayed, many are unable to pay the interest on time. The salaries are delayed for various reasons. But for no fault of theirs, they are paying additional interests," he said.

He has written to the Additional Chief Secretary (Finance), urging him to make changes in the software of KGID that deducts additional interest for delayed payments. "Employees who are facing inconvenience have approached me. It is not just loan interest payment, even KGID monthly contributions are also paid late," he said.

MUDA scam case: ED attaches 142 properties worth Rs 300 crore involving Siddaramaiah

BENGALURU. After the Directorate of Enforcement (ED) attached 142 immovable properties worth Rs 300 crore on Friday under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) in connection with the MUDA case against Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and others, all eyes are now on the Lokayukta report on the alleged MUDA site allotment scam. The Karnataka High Court has directed the Lokayukta Police, probing the alleged scam in which Siddaramaiah and his wife BM Parvathi are accused No 1 and accused No 2, to submit its report by January 27. Siddaramaiah was booked under Sections 9 (bribing public servant by a commercial organisation) and 13 (criminal misconduct by a public servant) of the Prevention of Corruption Act (PCA), Indian Penal Code (IPC), and Prohibition of Benami Transaction and Land Grabbing Acts. Under the PC Act, the Lokayukta Police



are investigating whether there was any criminal intent (mens rea) behind the allotment of premium sites worth around Rs 56 crore to Parvathi at Vijayanagar, an upscale locality in Mysuru, in 2022 for 3.16 acres of land acquired from her by MUDA at Kesare village in Mysuru, which was worth around Rs 3.25 lakh. "Under the PC Act, the Lokayukta Police are probing whether there was any conspiracy to wield influence (by

the accused) to get the premium sites allotted and whether they were the recipients of any illegal gratification," said sources. The ED, which has launched an investigation into the alleged scam based on the FIR registered by the Lokayukta Police, unearthed several violations, including alleged benami and other illegal transactions. During the investigation, it was found that 3.16 acres of land was reportedly denotified and converted illegally.

The land parcel was allegedly transferred to Siddaramaiah's brother-in-law Mallikarjun Swamy in 2005 and he reportedly gifted it to Parvathi in 2010. Since the land was acquired by MUDA to develop a layout, Parvathi was allotted sites in Vijayanagar with higher circle rates in violation of norms. Swamy and land owner Devaraju have been named as the third and fourth accused in the FIR, which was registered on September 27,

2024, by the Lokayukta SP, Mysuru, on the direction of the special court for elected representatives in Bengaluru, which took cognisance of a complaint filed by RTI activist Snehmaya Krishna. The latter has named Siddaramaiah as the prime accused and his wife as the second accused. Siddaramaiah has repeatedly claimed that the land was transferred to his wife in accordance with law and that the BJP government was in power in 2021 when the plots in Vijayanagar were allotted to her.

The case also relates to alleged violations by MUDA in which many people were illegally allotted alternative sites than they were entitled to in lieu of their land acquired under a 50:50 scheme, which was introduced in November 2020 and scrapped by Siddaramaiah in 2023. Under the scheme, land losers were entitled to 50% of the developed sites, while the other half was retained by MUDA.

Polavaram irrigation project: Construction of new D-Wall works begin

VIJAYAWADA. The construction of the new Diaphragm Wall (D-Wall) of the Polavaram Irrigation Project on the Godavari River commenced on Saturday. After performing special puja, the excavation work was taken up using cutters. The new D-Wall will be constructed at an estimated cost of ₹990 crore.

The new D-Wall was necessitated after the old D-Wall was damaged by floods in 2019 and 2020. After the NDA government was formed in the State, Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu gave topmost priority to the Polavaram project, and the Centre approved the construction of the new D-wall following recommendations from the committee of international experts. According to the project officials, a 1,400-metre-long D-Wall will be constructed in parts called panels. There will be approximately 371 panels, and once the entire construction of D-wall is constructed, it will be one single large structure.

Using giant cutters, soil will be excavated in 2.8 metres width and depth up to 2 metres below rock strata beneath the riverbed, with depths ranging from 40 to 90 metres depending on the riverbed's geological composition. After excavation, concrete work will be taken up.

The Central Water Commission has finalised the T5 type composition out of the two types recommended by the panel of international experts. On an average, construction of each panel will take three days. This single-structure D-Wall will run parallel to the damaged wall, ensuring robust flood resilience and enhanced water retention capacity of the Polavaram project. The introduction of plastic concrete in its construction underscores the focus on durability and long-term effectiveness, critical to the project's success.

The CWC approved the D-Wall's new design in November, and construction will proceed in phases based. The new D-wall is likely to be completed before December this year, the deadline set by the Chief Minister.

Producing biochar a profitable alternative to stubble burning

Agriculture, the backbone of global food security and economics, sustains billions of lives. However, the excessive use of fertilisers and pesticides since the Green Revolution has significantly degraded soil, depleting its carbon levels, a key indicator of soil health. Simultaneously, agriculture is a major contributor to climate change, with intensive farming practices releasing greenhouse gases (GHGs), such as carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide into the atmosphere. The challenges facing agriculture in India are multifaceted: demand for fair crop prices and assured procurement, effective stubble management, deteriorating soil health, lack of crop diversification, depleting water levels and rising food demand, driven by a growing population. Addressing these challenges requires innovative solutions that safeguard farmers' livelihoods, boost incomes and reduce environmental harm. Recognising their role in shaping a sustainable future, farmers are willing to adopt eco-friendly practices like carbon-negative farming, provided their profits remain intact.

Carbon-negative farming involves practices that remove more GHGs from the atmosphere than they emit. It surpasses carbon neutrality, which merely balances emissions with removals. This approach uses natural methods to capture carbon dioxide and store it in the soil, which is the best place for carbon. Practices like agroforestry, cover cropping and biochar enable this transformation, with biochar emerging as particularly effective. Biochar is a carbon-rich material produced by heating crop residues through pyrolysis, a high-temperature, low-oxygen process that sequesters carbon in the soil for centuries. Globally, Bhutan, Suriname and Panama are recognised as carbon-negative, with Sikkim leading as India's first carbon-negative state. These examples highlight the feasibility and impact of sustainable practices at both global and local levels. Carbon credits, a key driver of carbon-negative farming, offer farmers an opportunity to earn additional income. Each carbon credit certifies the removal of one metric tonne of carbon dioxide. These credits, calculated by using remote-sensing and AI-driven satellite data, enable farmers to monetise the carbon sequestered in their fields. As corporations strive for carbon neutrality, the demand for carbon credits is increasing rapidly. Private players are enrolling farmers in programmes that reward sustainable practices with carbon credits, positioning carbon-negative farming as both an environmental solution and a profitable venture. Crop residue management is one of agriculture's most pressing challenges. In Punjab and Haryana, stubble burning has escalated into a crisis, releasing massive GHGs and causing hazardous air pollution. This practice harms public health, degrades soil and pollutes the environment. A sustainable solution lies in producing biochar from stubble, unlike burning, which releases carbon into the atmosphere. Biochar locks carbon in the soil, transforming waste into a valuable resource. The concept of biochar is not new. It dates back to ancient Amazonian agriculture, where it was used to create fertile "Terra Preta" soils that remain productive even today. Modern science has revived this practice, demonstrating its ability to improve soil health, enhance water retention, boost nutrient availability and reduce reliance on fertilisers. Farmers who adopt biochar often report increased yields and greater resilience to climate stresses within a single growing season. However, scaling biochar production and adoption remain a significant challenge. In this context, the pyrolyser, a portable and automated machine developed by Applied Carbon, is transforming crop waste management by converting it into biochar directly in the field. The pyrolyser employs a high-temperature, low-oxygen process powered by syngas, a byproduct of pyrolysis, making it self-sustaining.

Nehru-bashing bodes ill for India

Nehru's 'Idea of India' was a united country where caste and creed would not matter.

I belong to a generation of Indians that grew up idolising the Mahatma and Jawaharlal Nehru. One was the 'Father of the Nation' and the other the country's first Prime Minister. Tales of their heroic deeds to free our land from foreign rule were what we were told by our elders and what we liked to hear. Soon after the country was freed and the British had left our shores in August 1947, an extremist, steeped in an ideology to which very few in the country subscribed, shot dead our beloved Mahatma. Nehru died a natural death many years later. It is only in the past decade since the Modi-Shah government took charge in Delhi that the denigration of our two most respected leaders began. Extremist Hindutva leader Pragna Singh Thakur was given the BJP ticket for the Lok Sabha elections. As an MP, she lauded Nathuram Godse, who had assassinated the Mahatma. The hostile reaction of people to that statement forced our Prime Minister to chide his party's representative, who is incidentally separately facing prosecution in a terror case.

But the subtle and not-so-subtle, sometimes strident, vitriol against Nehru continues to be spouted by Hindutva elements. It is sickening to hear their laments and accusations that obviously are based on the visceral hatred of the minority Muslim community. These laments and accusations have not cut ice with a large majority of the country's majority Hindu population. In fact, Nehru's standing in the freedom struggle and in people's hearts has not suffered even a tiny bit. Yet the core followers of the majoritarian philosophy continue their tirade!

These brainwashed men and women in saffron want Nehru's contribution to getting his countrymen free from the colonial yoke to be obliterated from our history books. To that end, their favoured historians are busy rewriting textbooks for students in schools and colleges.

Nehru differentiated between Muslim conquerors who crossed the Khyber Pass to enslave India and European invaders who came by the sea route. According to him, the former settled down and planted roots in our country. Over the years, they have been assimilated into Indian society. Like Jews and Parsis, who sought refuge on the western coast of India and were welcomed, they are to be counted as part and parcel of the country and its people.

On the other hand, the Portuguese, the French and the British were sea-faring people whose sole intent was to benefit their own people back home through trade and expropriation of the country's natural resources. Hindutva stalwarts reject Nehru's arguments and paint the Muslim and European conquerors with the same brush. They refuse to acknowledge the descendants of Muslim conquerors as one of their countrymen. Narendra Modi has often said in his speeches that India's subjugation to foreign rulers began a thousand years ago. We agree with him on one score, but wonder why he refuses to differentiate between colonialism and plain conquests



that are a feature of recorded history in many countries.

There is a thin but clear line between the two forms of servitude. The fact that the remnants of the conqueror's armies settled in India and were assimilated has, to my mind, to be accepted. There was also conversion of natives to the religion of the conquerors. The converted can under no stretch of imagination be considered foreigners since they have not known any other country that they could call their own. The communal angle is the one that plays prominently on the minds of the adherents of Hindutva.

They also cite faulty decisions by Nehru on the course the economy should have taken. They blame his Eton and Cambridge education and the fact that he was influenced by the thoughts of leftist philosopher Harold Laski. Prof Aditya Mukherjee, a historian who taught at Jawaharlal Nehru University, has put up a spirited defence of the economic path followed by Nehru as the first Prime Minister of India. In his book *Nehru's India — Past, Present and Future*, Mukherjee argues that two principles were non-negotiable for Nehru — democracy and sovereignty. In the pursuit of development after the departure of the British, he only allowed these two prime concerns to guide his thinking. Hence, his choice of the public sector to fill the yawning gaps in the economy.

The commanding heights of the economy, Nehru decided, could not be placed in the hands of foreigners, who were

bound to slip in if industrial development was left to the private sector. His commitment to sovereignty was evident in this decision. The Prime Minister's commitment to democracy, Mukherjee says, meant that labour needed to be consulted in the pursuit of any grand design. If labour was to be a partner and not merely a performer on command, its consent had to be obtained through democratic consultations. Nehru's 'Idea of India' was a united country where caste and creed would not matter. That would cover the entire population. Hindutva's agenda is to unite 80 per cent of the population that professes Hinduism or other religions like Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism that originated in India, to form the bulwark against any threat to the primacy of Hinduism.

Personally, I have no quarrel if the intention is to build up the pride of the Hindu in his or her religion. Why should she or he not be proud of following an ancient religion that has stood the test of time and is now being studied by seekers of spirituality in Europe and other advanced societies of the world? My objection is to the spread of fear and hatred against followers of other creeds and creating dissensions in society that did not exist earlier.

The demonisation of Nehru is a manifestation of the divisiveness that is spreading throughout the country because of an ideology that is fast turning viral. My view is that this will do more harm than good to India and its place in the minds of people all over the world.

Shun corruption

Act on the CJJ's plainspeak

SO entrenched is corruption in the Indian social and political reality that any resolve to counter it instantly runs into thick clouds of pessimism. A sense of resignation with regard to the status quo runs deep. Yet, for hope to filter through, the significance of terse plainspeak at the highest echelons cannot be overstated. Chief Justice of India (CJI) Sanjiv Khanna's call to reinforce systems of accountability and fairness is a reminder of how the citizen continues to be let down. Corruption as a hydra-headed monster that undermines public trust and hinders the ideals of democracy is an apt description. Equally crucial is the CJI's emphasis that the success of the anti-corruption ombudsman, the Lokpal, hinges on public trust and citizen engagement. It's the ability of the little man or woman to hold the big and powerful accountable, as he put it. It's indisputable that corruption can be rooted out



only with the help of an educated and engaged citizenry. What's essentially missing — and that's the hydra on the ground — is institutional support. The

social contract between the government and citizens to safeguard against corruption remains breached, and the gap is only widening. The referee agencies have been found wanting. Public trust is the sum total of the efficacy of the systemic reaction and action on complaints and grievances at every level. Nothing less will suffice. What the citizen has come to recognise is the futility of standing up against corrupt practices, small or big. Nothing weakens the national character more than a social sanction to graft and an official stamp, as it were, to the right to cheat. All organs of democracy are to blame. If you truly desire change, revitalise the institutions. Else, expect a more shrivelled moral and ethical fibre in an average Indian.

India, China and the Malacca Strait game

Any blockade of the Malacca Strait could result in the Chinese invasion of Taiwan. The reverse is also possible: a blockade of Taiwan by China could lead to the closure of the Malacca Strait.

FROM the 48th floor sea-facing room at Oakwood Hotel in Sri Racha, Thailand, overlooking the Gulf of Thailand, I see an oil refinery being built by some 200 Indian employees of the multinational, Petrofac. Unlike in the adjoining dispute-ridden, China-claimed South China Sea, the Thai Gulf is tranquil. The growth of China, the world's second biggest economy, depends on an uninterrupted supply of energy, which suffers from a Malacca dilemma. During his marathon briefing on Monday, eve of Army Day, Chief of Army Staff, Gen Upendra Dwivedi said the LAC was sensitive but stable (earlier it was unpredictable). China calls the shots there; India reacts. Time it turned the tables elsewhere: possibly the Malacca Strait in the Indian Ocean where India has the upper hand for now. Along the narrow neck of southern Myanmar and Thailand, connecting the Malaysia peninsula to the Asian mainland, is the Isthmus of Kra, called Devil's Neck, like our own Chicken's Neck in the Siliguri corridor which is being hedged under the Kaladan Multi-Modal project through Sittoung port in Myanmar. Across Kra, Thailand, prodded by China, had sought to make a canal; now a 90-km land bridge is to join the Andaman Sea in the Indian Ocean with the Gulf of Thailand in the South China Sea/Pacific Ocean to bypass the Malacca Strait. An alternative passage avoiding the Malacca Strait will inflict severe strategic and economic loss on Malacca's custodians — Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia — and alter maritime dynamics in the Indo-Pacific: depriving India of a strategic choke point in the Indian Ocean to offset its diminished deterrence against China along the LAC. China's Malacca dilemma is the stuff of legend. At a Chinese Communist Party meeting in 2003, the then President Hu Jintao mentioned the lack of alternative routes and vulnerability of the Malacca Strait to naval blockade. As much as 90 per cent of China's trade is by sea, including 80 per cent of oil and 60 per cent of gas.

The Strait of Malacca is 80 km long, 65-to-150 km wide and 2.8 km at its narrowest point. From Malacca town, I could see the other side. Around 250 ships use it daily; it is congested with cargo ships and will reach its capacity by 2030. A closure of Malacca by accident or design will cost \$85 million a week. During the Gulf War, Indian warships escorted US shipping through the Malacca Strait. China has weighed its Malacca diversion options: alternative routes, a new passage and enhancement of deterrence to use the existing route. Alternative routes are available further south of the Malacca Strait through Sunda, Lombok and the Macassar Strait. These are shallow for submarines and involve two-to-three days of additional sailing (1500 nm), incurring added cost, which a Thai estimate puts at an astounding \$200 billion a year. The Maritime Silk and Belt and Road initiatives launched in 2013 were designed to protect China's land routes and sea lanes of communication for energy. Three land corridors were envisaged: the \$65-billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) from Gwadar to Xinjiang; the China-Nepal Economic Corridor (CNEC), which is at the design stage, and the \$7-billion partly developed China-Myanmar Economic Corridor (CMEC) from Kyaukphyu to Kunming, containing road, rail and oil and gas pipelines with SEZs.

China is acquiring military bases and access to ports and airfields to dominate the Indian Ocean Region — the Djibouti military base, Gwadar (Pakistan), Hambantota (99-year lease in Sri Lanka), Kyaukphyu and Coco



island (Myanmar) and Ream (Cambodia) in the Gulf of Thailand. Negotiations are on with Madagascar, Comoros, the Seychelles and Mauritius for use of access to military facilities.

India, too, is creating strategic assets in Mauritius, the Seychelles and Myanmar, coupled with bilateral and multilateral partnerships in the Indo-Pacific. China is a loner. In November 2023, the then Thai Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin presented the design to bypass the Malacca Strait and ports in Singapore and Malaysia, with a land bridge from Ranong and Chumphon, both deep sea container ports in the Andaman Sea and the Gulf of Thailand. In September 2024, Transport Minister Suriya Jungrengreangkit said the South-Eastern Corridor connecting Bimstec and Asean countries with the Indo-Pacific would come into effect in September 2025, the construction would commence in 2026 and the project

completed in 2030. In August 2024, PM Paetongtarn Shinawatra confirmed that Thailand would seek Chinese investment for the \$27-35-billion project.

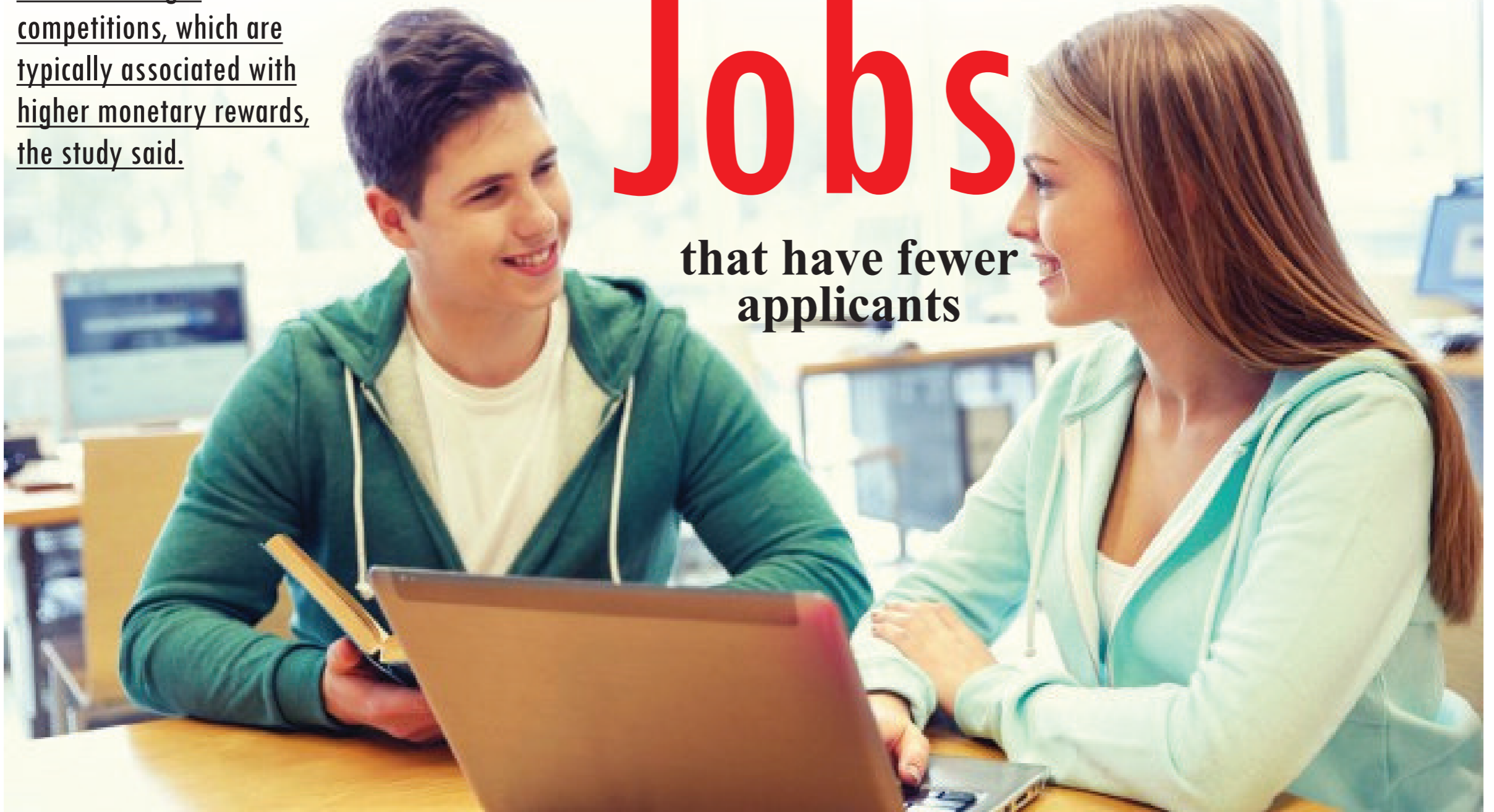
For enhancing deterrence in the Indian Ocean, Beijing had shifted the military focus from the PLA to the PLA Navy (PLAN). It is now the fastest growing naval armada in the world, transforming from a brown-water navy to a blue-water one, crossing the First Island Chain and implementing the Two-Oceans Strategy — the Indian and Pacific Oceans. By 2035, it will be a 390-ship navy with seven aircraft carriers, frontline warships and submarines, hugely surpassing the US navy.

In the event of a blockade of the Malacca Strait by the US and/or India, which is an act of war, China may not attempt to break the blockade as it has three months of strategic oil reserves, with plans to make it last for 18

months and replenishing from Uzbekistan and Russia. Any blockade of the Malacca Strait could result in the Chinese invasion of Taiwan. The reverse is also possible: a blockade of Taiwan by China could lead to the closure of the Malacca Strait. Further, a blockade or invasion of Taiwan independent of action against Malacca will also harm India's economy. In such contingencies, as per the India-US cooperative deterrence — the Indo-Pacific Strategy — New Delhi should align its maritime domain expertise and naval capability in the Indian Ocean while the US focus should be in the Pacific Ocean. As PLAN's blue-water proficiency would take a decade to manifest, India should exploit more imaginatively China's Malacca dilemma to alter the adverse balance along the LAC. Or, will the Kra land bridge become China's hedge?

Women prefer smaller competitions, whereas men seek larger competitions, which are typically associated with higher monetary rewards, the study said.

Women prefer Jobs that have fewer applicants



When applying for a job, women seek positions with fewer applicants than men - a factor that could partly explain why we see fewer of them in the corporate boardrooms, new research suggests. The size of a competition - such as the number of applicants to a particular job or the number of people vying for a monetary reward - shapes who enters the competition. Women prefer smaller competitions,

whereas men seek larger competitions, which are typically associated with higher monetary rewards, the study said. "These patterns of findings can contribute to a better understanding of gender inequality in the workforce," said Kathrin Hanek, the study's lead author from University of Michigan in the US. "The gender difference in preferences may in part explain pay gaps and the

underrepresentation of women in particular fields or at the helm of large organisations," Hanek noted. The findings appeared in the Journal of Applied Psychology. The difference between the genders can be partially attributed to women feeling more comfortable in smaller competitions. The researchers found consistent gender

differences in the preference for smaller versus larger competitions across a variety of different competition contexts. For instance, one study examined women's and men's real decisions to enter a small (10 competitors) or large (100 competitors) word-formation task competition. The results indicated that 53 percent of women but only 41 percent of men preferred

the small competition. "This research by no means blames women for gender inequality but rather uncovers a novel environmental factor that might contribute to inequality, beyond the well-documented effects of gender biases and discrimination," Stephen Garcia, associate professor University of Michigan.

Fairness at work can boost Employees' health



Fairness at work is likely to bring you positivity as well as good health, says a new research, indicating that an organisation is rated on the basis of the health of its employees. The findings showed that when perceptions of fairness changed, the self-rated health of employees also changed. Those who experienced more fairness on average reported better health.

"People who feel fairly treated are not only more likely to be motivated at work and go the extra mile for their organisation, but they are also more likely to be healthy, have an active lifestyle and feel positive," Eib added. Further, the health status of employees may also affect how employees feel treated at work. The results are detailed in the Journal of Work, Environment and Health.



"Our study provides a thorough examination of how fairness at the workplace and health of employees is related over time," said Constanze Eib, lecturer at Britain's University of East Anglia. Also, fairness at work is a crucial aspect of the psychosocial work environment and that changes towards greater fairness can improve employees' health.

The team investigated whether perceptions of what they call 'procedural justice', such as the processes in place to decide on rewards, pay, promotion and assignments are related to employees' health. The findings can help raise awareness among employers and authorities that fairness at work but also health is important to consider increasing satisfaction, well-being and productivity in the workplace and wider society, the researchers said. The study, focused on more than 5800 people working in Sweden. Participants were asked to rate their general state of health on a scale from one to five, one being 'very good' and five being 'very poor'.

Research says the following 10 types are most likely to be gainfully employed. Do you see yourself here?

The cheerleader:

What's a good sport without a happy bunch of cheerleaders? All work and no promotion, makes the company disappear in the market.

So your small law firm maybe known in the circles, but a little push from a marketing guru will make the world aware of your facilities, capabilities, which will result in acquiring more clients. The marketer works in tandem with the founder to position the company that suits his or her vision and build the brand. This personality type is highly assertive, understands urgency and is willing to gamble (even when the founder develops cold feet).

The multi-tasker:

So your company is tiny and everyone is a bit stretched. There are some who just can't handle the pressure, but there are few who can grin and bear it all, and can put their hands in several puddings all at once - be admin one day, and a creative executor the next. These multi-taskers serve as real assets to smaller firms whose budgets are meagre and manpower a handful. Young entrepreneurs are constantly on the look out of talent that not only can juggle many roles, but also switch parts as and when required.

The obligator:

What's the difference between an accommodator and multi-tasker?? The former is a 'willing personality', while the latter is just blessed to focus on too many things at the same time. But as an owner of a small business, you need an accommodator in your squad, too. Read: These personalities are not spineless 'yes minister' kinds, but understand when they need to up their game, and do whatever it takes to work with impossible demands and deadlines.

Reverse role player:

Small firms have a strong tendency and leaning to employ people who are like-minded, but HR officials reckon that a personality whose views and beliefs are opposite of that of the company would do the latter good and result in growth. He/she would bring in the perspective and insight that owners would fail to notice.

10 types of people who get Better jobs

Sometimes, they'll also serve as mock rivals, thus further enhancing the chances of success and productivity.

The decision maker:

When an entrepreneur has just started off in the business, he/she is always a bit averse to taking big risks and making concrete decisions. They are constantly turning to people who can use their own judgment and give them sound advice. Remember, they need someone who is not afraid to pull the trigger in times of distress. If you're a firm decision maker, then you are just the person your boss needs by his/her side.

The cautious player:

Likewise, if you're the kind of entrepreneur who has a tendency to run with his/her dreams, an employer who likes to play it carefully is always a good hand in the team. You need this type of personality as a counterbalance to risk takers. They are risk-averse, but sometimes you need such people to bring in stability and caution you from getting too excited and taking on more than your resources can manage.

The planner:

A person skilled in drafting policies and plan

ning the next action the company must take is a key member to have in the team. Many serve as efficient executors, but few as effective planners (who essentially run the ship). These are the guys who can identify long-term goals, have a vision for the future and can work on a calculated measure to get there.

The organiser:

It's one thing to be a good strategist, and another to pull it all together. The best ideas go for a toss if you do not have someone who is task-oriented to put them into action. So if you are a master at organising, then it's imperative to add that in your CV.

The analyser:

While the strategist and organiser have their own skill sets to execute the idea into action, it takes an observant kind -who has one eye firmly on the markets and another on the rivals -to help you weigh the pros and cons and work accordingly.

The helper:

If you have wetted your hands in the hospitality business, and are looking to make a switch, be sure you retain the 'service-oriented' trait in your next job, too. A person who has a willingness to help others always makes for a great team player. They balance administrative qualities, understand urgency and have the patience to deal with finicky clients.



'Convoy attack': Kejriwal's campaign turns battleground for AAP and BJP

➤ **Posting a video, AAP called the attack a "cowardly act" by the BJP in fear of their impending defeat.**

NEW DELHI. AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal's vehicle was allegedly attacked while he was campaigning in New Delhi, sparking a heated exchange between the ruling party and the opposition BJP on Saturday.

The party accused BJP "goons" of pelting Kejriwal's convoy with bricks and stones, aiming to disrupt his campaign and intimidate him ahead of the elections. Posting a video, AAP called the attack a "cowardly act" by the BJP in fear of their impending defeat.

"Fearing defeat, BJP panicked, got its goons to attack Arvind Kejriwal. BJP candidate Pravesh Verma's goons attacked Arvind Kejriwal with bricks and stones while he was campaigning and tried to hurt him so that he could not campaign.

BJP people, Kejriwal ji is not going to be scared of your cowardly attack, people will give you a befitting reply," AAP wrote in Hindi and posted a video clip of the incident on X. In a swift rebuttal, Verma dismissed AAP's allegations and accused Kejriwal of running over three people by his vehicle during the campaign. "When the people were asking questions, @ArvindKejriwal hit youngsters with his car.



Both were taken to Lady Harding Hospital. Seeing defeat in front, he forgot the value of people's lives. I am going to the hospital," Verma responded on X sharing a video proof. As the day unfolded, leaders of both parties exchanged accusations of playing dirty ahead of the high-stakes battle.

BJP MP Bansuri Swaraj accused Kejriwal of failing to fulfill his promises. In retaliation,

AAP MP Sanjay Singh alleged that BJP wanted to win the polls through hooliganism. AAP says cops stopped docu, officials cite MCC

Kejriwal alleged Delhi Police prevented the screening of a documentary exposing "conspiracies" behind arrest of AAP leaders. The cops said no permission was sought for the screening despite MCC being in force.

Poll office holds awareness event

New Delhi. The Delhi election office on Saturday organised 'Aagaz-e-Voting', a musical event at Central Park, Connaught Place, as part of the voter awareness campaign for the upcoming Delhi legislative assembly elections. The event featured a performance by the Nizami Brothers.

Addressing the gathering, chief electoral officer R Alice Vaz emphasised the importance of active citizen participation in the biggest festival of democracy, that is, the election. "Your vote is your voice. Let us come together and make our vote count."

"The 'Aagaz-e-Voting' was an initiative under the Systematic Voter's Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) programme, aimed at maximising voter turnout and promoting informed voting," a statement from the CEO office said.

Woman strangled by boyfriend in Delhi, murder staged as suicide

NEW DELHI. A 23-year-old woman was murdered by her boyfriend in northwest Delhi's Bharat Nagar on Friday. Police said the accused suspected she was having an affair with someone else, leading to an argument at her home. He allegedly strangled her. The accused, who has been arrested, attempted to disguise the murder as a suicide but failed.

The accused, Shakir (26), lived in Om Nagar, Dhobi Ghat, and worked as a delivery boy in Sadar Bazar. On Jan 17, police received information about a suspected suicide. The caller claimed his niece had hanged herself.

A team from the local police station rushed to the scene, where they found a woman on the floor, identified as Saniya. She used to give tuition to children.

Deputy commissioner of police (Northwest) Bhisam Singh said that a ligature was tied around Saniya's neck, and a dupatta was attached to the ceiling fan. However, the ends of the dupatta were untied. The district crime team and the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) team inspected the crime scene, and CCTV cameras in the vicinity were thoroughly analysed.

"The circumstances were staged to appear as a suicide. However, certain facts and circumstantial inquiries raised serious doubts about this projection," said Singh.

Upon further investigation, the team recreated the crime scene and concluded that someone entered secretly from the roof, killed Saniya, and then fled. A case under section 103(1) (murder) of BNS was registered at Bharat Nagar police station.

Acting on secret information, a team led by SHO (Bharat Nagar) arrested Shakir. During interrogation, Shakir confessed to dating Saniya for five years and claimed she was cheating on him for the past three months. This allegedly led him to plan her murder. "When he was trying to hang her on the ceiling fan, someone knocked on the door. This frightened him, and he fled through the roof," police added.

German national caught with banned GPS device at airport, seventh case this month

New Delhi. A banned GPS device was recovered from the baggage of a German national at IGI Airport, marking the seventh such case this month. A case was registered, and the individual was bound down. Police investigations revealed that foreign nationals caught with these devices often claimed they brought them for research or navigation purposes. The incident was reported on Jan 13 when security officials identified an unspecified device in the passenger's baggage.

The German citizen, en route to Ahmedabad, arrived at IGI Airport around 10.24 am and submitted his hand baggage for screening. During the screening, CISF personnel noticed a suspicious image of an electronic device in the passenger's hand baggage, prompting a physical check. Upon inspection, a GPS device was discovered. The passenger did not have the necessary permission from the Union ministry of home affairs (MHA) or the department of telecommunications to carry the device in India.

A case was registered under Section 42(3)(d) of the Telecommunications Act of 2023 at IGIA police station. Earlier this month, similar cases were reported involving nationals from New Zealand, Switzerland, Tanzania, Tokyo, the UK, and the US. An assistant professor from a university in Varanasi was also found with a banned GPS device. To "be bound down" means being required to appear before an investigating officer on a specified date. Police sources explained that satellite phones are banned in India to mitigate security risks and unauthorised surveillance.

Defamation case: Order reserved on CM Atishi's plea against summons

NEW DELHI. A city court on Saturday reserved its order on Chief Minister Atishi's appeal against summons issued to her in a defamation case filed by BJP leader Praveen Shankar Kapoor. The decision, expected on January 28, comes after extensive arguments by both sides.

Special Judge Vishal Gogne of Rouse Avenue Court, presiding over the case, heard rebuttal arguments from senior advocate Ramesh Gupta, representing Atishi. Gupta argued that political defamation cases required a higher threshold since political parties are inherently subjects of public discourse.

The case traces back to a press conference by Atishi on April 2, 2024, where she alleged that the BJP approached her to join their party under threat of arrest by the ED. This

prompted Kapoor, a BJP spokesperson, to file a defamation complaint, claiming her statements were false, malicious, and intended to harm BJP's reputation.



Kapoor's legal team, led by senior advocate Ajay Burman, contended that the defamation was not only directed at the BJP but also personally defamatory to Kapoor due to his long-standing association and representation of the

party. Gupta countered that the alleged defamatory remark was against the BJP as a collective, not Kapoor personally. He suggested that the defamation complaint should have been filed by the party itself if it felt aggrieved.

The court had previously stayed the proceedings in November 2024, after Atishi moved the sessions court against the summons issued on May 28.

Atishi sticks to allegations. The notice accused Atishi of making baseless claims without specific evidence or details about the BJP. Atishi, however, stood firm on her allegations, asserting that the BJP is using central agencies to intimidate opposition leaders. She dismissed the threats as attempts to derail her political career.

Killings of Delhi's notorious serial killer: Chanderkant Jha targeted young men, hacked them and scattered body parts

NEW DELHI. The notes found with the murdered bodies always read, "Tumhara baap+Jijaji. CC". Chanderkant Jha, the man behind the bizarre series of killings, terrorised Delhi for years, leaving a trail of dismembered bodies and the taunting letters in his wake.

His modus operandi was to target young men, often migrants from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, and chop off their heads, legs and hands. Born in 1967, Jha is alleged to have killed 18 victims in west Delhi between 1998 and 2007, dumped their bodies outside Tihar Jail and scattered other body parts across Delhi.

Officially, the serial killer is charged in seven murder cases and six other crimes. Arrested in 1998 for his first murder, Jha was incarcerated until 2002, when he was released due to insufficient evidence. His release only facilitated another killing spree.

During questioning, Jha blamed his parents for neglecting him in his childhood. His mother was a schoolteacher, and he felt she prioritised her profession over him. Dejected, he decided to leave his village and search for a job elsewhere. Jha eventually made his way to Delhi, where he found work selling vegetables at Azadpur Mandi.

He soon developed a grievance against the police officers in the area, who he claimed demanded bribes from him. "This instilled a strong sense of resentment towards the system," he confessed to the cops.

While working at Azadpur Mandi, Chandrakant got into a fight with fellow vegetable dealer Pandit and injured the latter hand with his knife. Pandit filed a complaint, leading to Chandrakant's arrest in Oct 1988. After his release from police custody, Jha began plotting his revenge against

Pandit. He pretended to be close friends with Pandit and eventually killed him. The case remained unsolved, as Pandit's head was never found and his body remained unclaimed.

Jha relocated to Haiderpur, where he continued to sell vegetables. His first marriage was short-lived but he had five daughters from his second marriage, said police. "He would extend help to young men, often by assisting them in finding work, offering them meals and treating them like his brothers.

During the course of their stay with him he took offence to their small indulgences like drinking, eating meat, womanising or lying. Often, his demeanour took a savage turn and led to the brutal murders," said additional commissioner Sanjay Sain, who headed the special police team created to pursue the serial killer after he jumped parole.

Probe Agency Restores Properties Worth Rs 290 Crore in Maharashtra Bank Scam

New Delhi. The Enforcement Directorate (ED), Mumbai Zone, has restituted immovable properties worth Rs 289.54 crore to the Competent Authority, MPID appointed by the Government of Maharashtra in the case of M/s Pen Co-operative Urban Bank Ltd, an official said on Friday. A statement mentioned that the assets were provisionally attached by ED under Section 5 of Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002 as the erstwhile office bearers had cheated the banks and siphoned off the bank funds for private investments.

The investigation was initiated based on the FIR registered by Pen Police Station, District Raigad, Maharashtra. It was alleged by the LEA in its chargesheet that office bearers of the bank entered into criminal conspiracy with the then Auditors of the Bank willfully and intentionally manipulated the books of accounts of Pen Bank and fraudulently reported profit and caused a loss of Rs. 651.35 Crore to the bank. ED investigations revealed that the proceeds generated out of crime of forgery and cheating was diverted and routed through the bogus cash credit accounts opened in the said bank using the services of cheque discounters in the market. The statement further read that part of such Proceed of Crime (POC) was utilised for purchase of immovable properties at different locations in Raigad District of Maharashtra in the names of third parties (Benami properties). "These Benami properties measuring 70.9 acres worth Rs. 25.20 Crore were attached u/s 5 of PMLA on 26.05.2014 and 03.12.2014. Further Prosecution Complaint dated 20.06.2018 has been filed in the subject case before Hon'ble Special Court, PMLA and the trial is underway," it read. "In the meantime, a Criminal Writ Petition bearing was filed by one of Depositor of Pen Urban Cooperative Bank Ltd before the Hon'ble Bombay High Court praying for release of the properties attached under the PMLA. The Hon'ble Bombay High Court vide order dated 07.10.2016 directed the ED to hand over the properties to MPID. Against the said order, ED filed a SLP before the Apex Court vide order dated 03.11.2017 which granted a stay on the order of Hon'ble Bombay High Court. MPID authorities filed an application u/s 8(8) of PMLA dated 01.02.2019 before Hon'ble Special Court (PMLA), Mumbai to confiscate the attached property to MPID for its restitution," it further

Sandeep Dikshit corners AAP over water, air pollution

Addressing a press conference, Dikshit claimed there were around 5,500 DTC buses in 2013, but the number has now reduced to around 3,000.



NEW DELHI. Congress leader Sandeep Dikshit on Saturday blamed the AAP government for the air and water pollution in the capital, claiming it did nothing while in power over the past 10 years. Addressing a press conference, Dikshit claimed there were around 5,500 DTC buses in 2013, but the number has now reduced to around 3,000. "In 2013, 43 lakh people used to commute in DTC buses, but today only 41 lakh people travel in DTC and cluster buses.

The numbers should have increased to around 60-65 lakh, given the rise in population, but it has dropped to 41 lakh. If these surplus 20-25 lakh people are choosing private transport, it clearly adds to pollution," he said.

Dikshit also refuted Kejriwal's claim that sewage capacity in Delhi increased by 50%. "In 2013, the capacity was 613 MGD. Now, its 632 MGD," he said.

Centre-farmers' talks on February 14, fasting Jagjit Dallewal accepts medical aid

New Delhi. Farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal, on an indefinite fast for 54 days, agreed to take medical aid late on Saturday after the Centre proposed a meeting with the protesting farmers on February 14 to discuss their demands, including a legal guarantee on MSP for crops. However, Dallewal will not end his indefinite fast till the Centre agreed to give a legal guarantee on MSP for crops during next month's meeting in Chandigarh, farmer leader Sukhjit Singh Hardojhande said. Later, pictures showing Dallewal taking medical aid with an intravenous drip were released by the farmers.

The breakthrough came after a delegation of Union Agricultural Ministry officials, led by Joint Secretary Priya Ranjan, met Dallewal and held a meeting with the representatives of the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) and Kisan Mazdoor Morcha (KMM), which have been spearheading the agitation for the last 11 months. Following the February

14 meeting announcement, farmer leaders appealed to Dallewal to take medical aid so that he could recover and participate in the talks. Earlier, farmer leader Abhimanyu Kohar said Dallewal was unable to take water and had been vomiting. He said that doctors had warned that anything could have happened to Dallewal. Before agreeing to take medical aid, Dallewal had asked the farmer leaders to take consent from the 121 farmers who were also on an indefinite fast. A few days ago, a group of 111 farmers and later, 10 more farmers sat on a fast-unto-death in solidarity with Dallewal. The Centre's delegation also appealed to Dallewal to take medical aid so that he can participate in the proposed meeting, which will take place at the Mahatma Gandhi State Institute of Public Administration at Chandigarh at 5 pm on February 14. Talking to reporters at



the Khanauri protest site, Ranjan said a high-level delegation was sent by the Centre, keeping in mind the deteriorating health of Dallewal. "We enquired about his health and held a meeting with the representatives (of the protesting farmers' bodies). We urged him (Dallewal) to break his fast and take medical aid, so that he can participate in the meeting," he said. So far, four rounds of meetings had taken place between the Centre and the protesting farmers on February 8, 12, 15 and 18 last year, but

the talks remained inconclusive. Farmers protesting at the Khanauri and Shambhu border points between Punjab and Haryana said they received a proposal from the Centre to hold talks over their demands.

Farmer leader Kohar said officials fixed February 14 for the meeting as Assembly polls were due in Delhi on February 5 and the Model Code of Conduct will be in force in the national capital till February 9. Dallewal, who is the convener of the SKM (Non-Political), has been on an indefinite hunger strike at the Khanauri border point since November 26 last year in support of various demands, including a legal guarantee on the MSP for crops. On Thursday, farmer leaders said Dallewal had lost about 20 kg of weight during his fast-unto-death. The weight of Dallewal had reduced to 66.4 kg from 86.9 kg, when he began the indefinite fast.

Top 10 fundamentals for

first-time Job seekers

Some of the most successful people started off peeling stacks (and stacks) of potatoes, skinning chickens, washing dishes and clearing tables. They didn't get disheartened by the work required, as they knew that it was just a stepping-stone onto bigger and better things. As a start, here are the top ten fundamentals that all recruiters want fresh grads to know:

It's never too early to start researching the company companies you want to work with and for the position you want. Do your background research regarding the company and the requirements for the position you want when you graduate (size, global presence, \$ value, any recent news, follow them on social media, etc.). If possible, try and talk to someone who

already works there; they will be able to give you a much more accurate picture on the company's culture, work environment, etc. so that you have all the information required to make an informed decision.

- Have a professional resume and cover letter. Just ensure that both your resume and cover letter portray an accurate image of you and tell the story that you want them to tell (in the best possible way). Ensure the resume is crisp and highlights the points you want the recruiter to notice. Get second opinions when possible.
- Manage your social media effectively. Think of yourself as a brand and all your social media as advertising your "personal brand". Just as you are going

to be researching the companies/employees where you are applying, they will be doing the same to you. Ensure there isn't anything online that you aren't comfortable sharing with a room full of strangers (aka employers). Where possible have restricted profile access or screen the information you share online. Ensure you have a LinkedIn profile. Even if you don't have any prior work experience, try and highlight internships, leadership positions, how you ranked in your school and your technical skills.

When you do manage to get an interview with the company/companies that you want, apart from ensuring that your background research on the company itself is updated and accurate, try and gather as much information about the recruiters and the selection criteria process as possible. This will be invaluable in ensuring that you appear well informed and are adequately prepared at the time of the interview.

Practice, practice, practice. Practice mock interviews with a friend/mentor where they ask you potential interview questions, ranging from predictable ones like, "Tell us about yourself" or "Why do you think you are the right person for this job" to slightly unique ones like "What classes were your favorite and why" or "What's your favorite website" or "Who's your real life hero?" Try and make these mock interview sessions as realistic as possible with quiet locations, appropriate attire and timing the entire process.

Prior to the interview day, get enough rest (it's not time to celebrate yet). Ensure that you are relaxed and plan to get to the venue a minimum of 30-45 minutes prior to the scheduled time (always allowing for last minute emergencies). Lay out your attire and check that you have all required paperwork

k, directions to the location and extra copies of your resume handy.

First impressions matter. When introducing yourself ensure you have the right attitude, smile and a firm handshake. Expect to be evaluated (on body language, grooming, confidence and effective



communication skills). Don't hand out your resume or give out all the personal details (place of birth, family background, etc., unless specifically asked).

During the interview, be prepared with a few relevant questions when given the opportunity to ask them. Expect most interviews to last between 30 to 45 minutes and when possible try and touch upon your internship project or the various organizations that you might have worked for. Also, add the responsibilities you handled and some achievements you had over those roles. Remember to keep the answers brief, to the point and avoid winding answers. Be prepared for them to ask you to stay back longer to meet others in the company.

Maintain eye contact always (depending upon the number of people in the panels). Prior to leaving, thank them for their time; ask them for their business card as well as the next steps in the interview process. Ensure that you are prompt and respectful in your follow up.

As a summary, while the hiring criteria may vary depending on company, industry, etc., recruiters are typically looking for graduates who exhibit confidence (not over confidence). They are looking for consistency in your "personal brand". Do your communication skills, overall appearance, attitude and personality match your resume? They're also asking themselves if you really want to work in their company or is it just one of the many open positions that you are applying for? Does your intellect and previous success record match what they envision for this role?



Firms set terms and perks by seniors' personality traits

Companies appear to structure compensation contracts and incentive pay based on seniors' personality traits and not just firm characteristics, a team of US researchers, including an Indian-origin scientist, has found. Companies offer incentive-heavy compensation contracts to overconfident CEOs to "exploit" their positively biased views of the firms' prospects, the researchers noted.

"There are divergent views on the use of options and stock in CEO compensation contracts: Do they appropriately incentivise managers and enhance shareholder value and if so, why is there much variation in their use across firms?" said Vikram Nanda from Naveen Jindal School of Management in the US. The notion is that if managers and shareholders -- represented by the board - have a different take on a firm's prospects and CEO talent, there will be greater use of incentive pay that the managers value highly but the board regards as less costly.

"When you think about incentive contracts, you don't usually think about the personality of the individual being a factor in the contract," Nanda added in the

paper published in the Journal of Financial Economics.

Using the compensation data of CEOs between 1992 and 2011, the researchers identified managers who were exhibiting behaviour that was overconfident compared to other CEOs.

"You don't usually hear about how two profit-sharing agreements are going to look different because the personalities and the beliefs of the individuals are coming into play," Nanda stated.

The team conducted empirical tests to explore the relationship between CEO overconfidence and incentive compensation.

The researchers found that CEO overconfidence increases the proportions of total compensation that comes from both option grants and equity grants, compared to other executives.

Overconfident CEOs receive even greater option and equity intensity in innovative and risky firms.

"Overconfident CEOs are prone to overestimate returns to investments and underestimate risks. They may use extremely positive words in the media or tend to invest more than a typical manager in the industry," Nanda stated.



5 reasons why you need to laugh more at work



The corporate turf is said to be most stressful, what with deadlines, work hassles, thinking ahead of time and more. And so, it's crucial to keep your wits about you as you go through the daily grind. Laughter is one of the best therapies to help you achieve that. Here's why...

It makes you more productive:

Days devoid of merriment can be dull, more so at the office. Laughter releases happy endorphins and takes away the dreary feeling of long hours there, making

one work faster

and better.

Lessens the workload:

Much-needed laughter intersperses the day with amusement and fun. It helps lighten the load as you go about tasks happily.

Builds better relationships:

The team that laughs together, works together, so have fun. Having a light demeanour makes others more approachable to you, so do away with straight faces, even under work pressure. Laughing boosts creativity and also draws out introverts.

Helps you recharge the batteries:

Sometimes a dose of laughter is the pick-me-up that you need. So apart from eating right and that desktop yoga, go out of your way to chat with your colleagues and giggle about small things.

One of the best de-stressors:

Laughter is known to induce a positive state of being and increase tolerance levels to pain and anger. It also makes stress fade away.

And remember to laugh at yourself, while you're at it as humour directed at yourself can instantly break the ice and make people like you.



Indusind Bank CFO Gobind Jain resigns

NEW DELHI. Gobind Jain, chief financial officer of the private sector lender Indusind Bank, has put in his paper "to pursue other professional opportunities," the bank said in an exchange filing on Saturday. The bank further said Arun Khurana, the deputy chief executive, and a whole-time director, will take the additional charge as chief financial officer from January 21. "I am keen to pursue opportunities outside the bank or within the promoter group after having put in over three years," Jain, who joined the bank in October 2021, said in his resignation letter.

Khurana joined the lender in November 2011, and has been the deputy chief executive since April 2020. He has also served as overall head of the bank's global markets group. Khurana is also the overall head of global markets group, transaction banking and investment banking. The bank said Jain will serve a notice period of 90 days and will be available until April 17. Jain joined the bank after the then chief financial officer SV Zaregaonkar had resigned in September 2021. Jain is a chartered accountant, chartered financial analyst, certified financial planner and financial risk management. The bank's share tumbled nearly 2.5% by the closing of the trade on Friday.

Bank FD: Which Bank Is Offering Highest Interest Rate On 3-Year Fixed Deposit? Check Detailed Comparison

NEW DELHI. When compared to alternative investment options, bank fixed deposits have long been regarded as a safe investment. Many people choose fixed deposits (FD) because they believe they are safer, more reliable, and more stable. The length of the account, the quantity of the deposit, economic variables like inflation and the repo rate, and other economic considerations all affect the interest rates on fixed deposits, which differ from bank to bank.

For the required tenure, bank customers should compare the interest rates provided by various banks. A comparison of interest rates offered by private, public, and international banks over a three-year period may be seen in this table: Private sector banks like DCB Bank (7.55 per cent) and RBL Bank (7.5 per cent) offer the highest interest rates on 3-year fixed deposits, while Canara Bank leads among public sector banks with 7.4 per cent. Public sector banks generally offer slightly lower rates compared to private sector counterparts. Among foreign banks, Deutsche Bank offers the highest interest rate on 3-year fixed deposits at 8 per cent, significantly outpacing HSBC Bank (7 per cent) and Standard Chartered Bank (7.1 per cent). This makes Deutsche Bank a standout choice for higher returns in this category.

Big Loss For Narayana Murthy! Family Loses Rs 1,850 Crore As Infosys Shares Drop By...

New Delhi. The family wealth of Infosys co-founder NR Narayana Murthy took a significant hit on Friday as the company's share price dropped by nearly 6 per cent. This decline resulted in a loss of Rs 1,850 crore for Murthy's family.

Murthy Family's Shareholding and Recent Losses

NR Narayana Murthy, co-founder of Infosys at the end of the September quarter held a 0.40 per cent stake in the company while his wife Sudha N Murthy owned 0.92 per cent. Their children, Rohan Murthy and Akshata Murthy (wife of former UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak), held stakes of 1.62 per cent and 1.04 per cent, respectively. NRN's grandson, Ekagrah Rohan Murthy, had a small 0.04 per cent stake in Infosys. Together, the Murthy



family owns a 4.02 per cent stake in the IT giant. Following a nearly 6 per cent drop in Infosys' stock price, their collective holdings were valued at approximately Rs 30,300 crore, a decrease from Rs 32,152 crore the previous day, marking a notional loss of over Rs 1,850 crore, according to a Business Today report.

Infosys Stock Decline

Infosys shares dropped 5.89 per cent, reaching a low of Rs 1,812.70 on the BSE, wiping out some of the gains made over the past six months, which now stand at 5.42 per cent. This decline comes despite the company's Q3 results surpassing expectations in several areas.

Infosys Announces Salary Hikes for Employees

Infosys announced on Thursday that it will implement annual salary hikes ranging from 6-8 per cent for its employees in India, starting in January 2025. This marks the first phase of salary revisions planned by the company, led by N R Narayana Murthy, with a second phase expected in April 2025. Employees based outside of India are likely to receive smaller, single-digit increases.

EPFO New Rule! BIG Update On Personal Details And EPF Transfers – All You Need To Know

New Delhi. The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has introduced a new online feature that allows its 7.6 crore members to easily update their personal details such as their name and date of birth without requiring employer verification or EPFO approval. Members with Aadhaar-seeded e-KYC accounts can now file their EPF transfer claims directly using an Aadhaar OTP, eliminating the need for employer involvement. Union Labour & Employment Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Saturday launched two new services aimed at improving the experience for EPFO members. The minister noted that approximately 27 per cent of the grievances are related to profile or KYC issues. With the introduction of these services he expects reduction in such complaints. He also highlighted that large employers, who handle a high volume of such requests would benefit from this process.

The minister stated that the EPFO has simplified the process of joint declaration



on the EPFO portal by allowing employees to self-correct most common errors in personal details like name, date of birth, gender, nationality, father/mother's name, marital status, spouse name, date of joining and date of leaving, without any verification by employer or approval by EPFO.

This facility will be available for members, whose UAN (universal account number) was issued after October 1, 2017 (when Aadhaar matching was made mandatory). No supporting document is required in such cases, the minister informed. If the UAN was issued prior to October 1, 2017, the employer can correct details without

the EPFO's approval. Requirement of supporting document has also been simplified for such cases. Only where UAN is not linked with Aadhaar, any correction would have to be submitted physically to employer and after verification forwarded to EPFO for approval, he explained.

UAN registration is done by employer for the employee at the time of joining. For many employees, mistakes were committed by employers in recording father/spouse name, marital status, nationality and service details during the registration process or later. In order to correct these errors, the employee had to make a request online with supporting documents. The request would have to be verified by the employer and then forwarded to EPFO for approval before any change could be effected. This process was called Joint Declaration. Out of the 8 lakh requests that were forwarded to EPFO by employers in FY 24-25, it was seen that only 40 per cent were sent within 5 days, 47 per cent were sent after 10 days and the average time taken by employer

was 28 days.

The simplification would provide relief to employees in 45 per cent of cases through immediate correction through Aadhaar OTP verification and in the balance 50 per cent of cases through the employer itself. If any member who can self-approve has already filed his request which is pending with the employer, the member can delete the already filed request and self-approve as per simplified process. This will benefit nearly 3.9 lakh cases pending with employer as on date. About the simplification of process of claims for transfer of EPF account, the minister said EPF members with fully compliant e-KYC EPF accounts can file their Online Transfer Claims with Aadhaar OTP directly with EPFO without any need for intervention of employer. If number of claims filed (1.3 Crore) during FY 2024-25 is considered more than 94 per cent claims (1.2 crore) will instantly reach EPFO. The turnaround time of EPF transfer claim processing will be considerably reduced since it does not require approval by the employer.

VinFast enters India with three e-SUVs, BYD to expand presence

NEW DELHI. VinFast on Saturday announced its first electric vehicles (EVs) for the Indian market at the Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2025.

The Vietnamese automaker unveiled two all-electric premium SUVs, VF7 and VF6, at the Expo.

The SUVs are expected to be priced under Rs 30 lakh, he unveiling marks a major milestone for VinFast as it will now compete against the likes of Maruti Suzuki, Hyundai, Mahindra & Mahindra and Tata Motors in the small but fast-growing Indian electric car market. India is the first market where VinFast will launch a right-hand drive version of the VF7 and VF6. Pham Sanh Chau, CEO of VinFast Asia, said, "We believe our premium SUVs VF7 and VF6 are



game changers that will accelerate adoption of EVs in India." Ashwin Ashok Patil, deputy CEO of sales & marketing at VinFast India, said VF7 and VF6 are expected to go for sale from second half of CY25. He said VinFast is appointing dealers across

major towns with omni-channel presence. Last year, it broke ground on an electric vehicle manufacturing plant in Thoothukudi, Tamil Nadu. It had committed an investment of \$500 million. Meanwhile, the world's largest electric carmaker BYD introduced its SEALION 7 Pure Performance eSUV at the Expo. Under the promotional booking offer, the BYD SEALION 7 can be booked with Rs 70,000 across India from Saturday. The Chinese auto giant said it will expand its dealership network in India to 40 locations by January 2025. The BYD SEALION 7 can accelerate to 100 km/h in 4.5 secs in the Performance trim, and the Premium does the same in 6.7 seconds.

EPF Vs NPS: Understanding The Key Differences In India's Retirement Plans

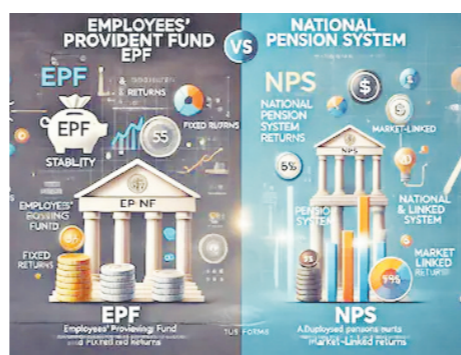
New Delhi. In India, the Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) and the National Pension Scheme (NPS) are the two most popular retirement pension plans. Both are intended to give people a monthly pension and a lump sum payment after they retire. There is a fundamental distinction between the two. EPF is a guaranteed return plan based on interest rates, whereas NPS is a market-linked investment programme that allows investors to choose investment plans and managers according to their aggressive, moderate and cautious return strategies.

There is a probability that NPS will outperform EPF in the long run because it is market-linked. Some individuals may wish to move their EPF funds to market-linked returns NPS if they prefer them to fixed returns (EPF).

Employees' Provident Fund: Details About It

EPFO, or Employees' Provident Fund Organisation, is in charge of EPF. A compound interest of 8.25 per cent is

offered on an employee's EPF contribution annually. The highest amount an employee can contribute is 12 per cent of their base pay and dearness allowance (DA). One of the benefits is that employers are required



to make equal contributions to their employees' Employee Provident Funds.

EPF deposits made up to Rs 1.50 lakh within a fiscal year are exempt from taxes. Additionally, withdrawals and interest are tax-free.

National Pension Scheme: Know

More About It

Any Indian national between 18 and 70 can open an NPS account by going to an eNPS or Point of Presence-Service Provider (POP-SP) and providing their bank account information and PAN. While NPS offers Tier II accounts with no lock-in term, Tier I accounts have a 60-year-old lock-in duration. A minimum annual payment of Rs 1,000 and a contribution of Rs 500 are required to start an NPS Tier I account. You can start a Tier II account by contributing Rs 250. After that, no minimum balance is needed. Under Section 80 CCD (1), Tier I accounts provide tax benefits up to a total of Rs 1.50 lakh. Only NPS subscribers are eligible for an extra deduction under subsection 80CCD (1B) for investments up to Rs. 50,000 in NPS (Tier I accounts). The NPS contribution made by an employer for the benefit of their employees up to 10 per cent of their base pay plus DA is deducted from their taxable income up to Rs. 7.50 lakh. For Tier II account holders, there are no tax advantages.



Hyundai said the concept vehicles will not only address the pressing need for sustainable mobility but also align with the evolving demands of Indian roads and urban infrastructure. "TVS is proud to explore a partnership with Hyundai to shape future of urban mobility," said Sharad Mishra, President, Group strategy, TVS Motor Company. "By combining Hyundai Motor's global expertise with our deep understanding of mobility solutions, we aim to develop next-generation micro-mobility solutions that redefine last-mile connectivity. With a shared vision, we are confident that this partnership under discussion will deliver impactful solutions that set new standards in design, engineering, technology, and quality," added Mishra.

Hyundai said it will explore the practicality and potential of these futuristic mobility solutions while analysing their integration into India's traffic ecosystem. Based on the findings, Hyundai and TVS will explore rollout of the project. The three-wheeler concept is proposed to be produced in collaboration with TVS, while the development of the four-wheeler is under review, with a focus on its global potential.

Hyundai claims that with the electric three-wheeler concept, they have reimagined India's ubiquitous motor rickshaw, transforming it into a versatile and eco-friendly vehicle that can serve not only as a people mover but also as an efficient logistics option or a rapid-response emergency vehicle.

Petrol, Diesel Fresh Prices Announced: Check Rates In Your City On January 19

Petrol And Diesel Price Today: Check City-Wise Rates Across India Including In Delhi, Mumbai And Kolkata.

NEW DELHI. Oil marketing companies (OMCs) update petrol and diesel prices every day at 6 AM to ensure transparency and reflect the volatility in global markets. These daily adjustments take into account fluctuations in international crude oil prices and currency exchange rates, allowing consumers to receive accurate and current fuel cost information.

In India, fuel prices have remained steady



since May 2022, after the central government and various state governments reduced fuel taxes.

Oil marketing companies (OMCs) update fuel prices daily at 6 a.m., reflecting changes in global crude oil prices. The government controls these prices using tools such as excise taxes, base pricing, and price caps.

Factors Influencing Petrol and Diesel

Prices in India

Crude Oil Prices: As the key raw material for producing petrol and diesel, fluctuations in global crude oil prices have a direct impact on fuel costs in India. Exchange Rate: India imports a significant portion of its crude oil, so changes in the exchange rate between the Indian rupee and the US dollar influence fuel prices. A weaker rupee

generally leads to higher fuel costs.

Taxes: Petrol and diesel prices are subject to various taxes imposed by both the central and state governments. These taxes can vary from state to state, contributing significantly to the final price consumers pay at the pump.

Refining Costs: The process of refining crude oil into petrol and diesel incurs costs that influence fuel prices. These expenses can vary based on factors such as the type of crude oil processed and the efficiency of the refinery. Demand: The balance of supply and demand plays a crucial role in determining fuel prices. Increased demand for petrol and diesel typically results in higher prices, as suppliers adjust to market conditions.

Check Petrol and Diesel Prices via SMS

You can easily check the latest petrol and diesel prices in your city through SMS. For Indian Oil customers, text the city code followed by "RSP" to 9224992249. BPCL customers can send "RSP" to 9223112222, and HPCL customers can text "HP Price" to 9222201122 to receive the current fuel prices.

NEWS BOX

Seeking old touch, hoping net gains

New Delhi. A decade ago, Kidambi Srikanth and Saina Nehwal had delighted the home fans with titles in their respective categories at the India Open. The times were different then. Indian shuttlers boasted a vibrant energy. There were several talents in singles capable of rubbing shoulders with the creme de la creme of badminton. Fast-forward to 2025, the energy seems different. Singles results have not been envious at all.

PV Sindhu (in 2017) and Lakshya Sen (in 2022) did follow the duo's footsteps but with the gradual decline of Srikanth and Saina, and Sindhu growing older, India has been starving for potential talents capable of repeating that feat. Especially in the last two years or so. Given that the ongoing edition of the India Open is a BWF Super 750-level meet (it was Super 500 in 2015), it is much more challenging to get the wins. In the ongoing edition, Sindhu and surprise entrant Kiran George were the two shuttlers who went the furthest (quarterfinals). The results have been no different in other BWF World Tour events with Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty being India's saving grace. Missing out on an Olympic medal in the 2024 Paris Games was the wake-up call.

The Badminton Association of India is



cognizant of this recent slump and is looking to reboot. The 2028 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles is 1273 days away. It might seem a long way away but every hour in the lead-up to the Games is critical for athletes with serious aspirations to challenge for medals. With the future in their mind, the BAI is looking to lay the groundwork so that shuttlers can return to the podium in LA and Games thereafter. For that the BAI is trying to look within rather than without. The focus would be more on Indian coaches. It's still early days as necessary approvals from the sports ministry and the Sports Authority of India need to be sought. But BAI does have something concrete in mind. The federation is drifting away from the personal coaches system. Indonesia's Irwansyah was recently roped in as coach and he will help India's women's singles players. Irwansyah was guiding Sindhu here but BAI is planning to form a group which will include five or six junior girls with Sindhu in the mix.

The system will be ditto in other categories. Tan Kim Her will be passing on lessons to all the doubles players including Satwik and Chirag.

Darwin Nunez late double rescues win for Liverpool in Premier League

Liverpool has still lost only one league game all season, at home to Forest in September. The Reds had 37 shots against Brentford and scored with their final two.

New Delhi. Darwin Nunez scored twice in stoppage time as Liverpool beat Brentford 2-0 to strengthen its spot in first place in the Premier League on Saturday. Second-placed Arsenal will look to restore the four-point gap to Liverpool by defeating Aston Villa later. Brentford's fans derided Nunez after going on as a substitute in the 65th minute, but the Uruguay striker responded by turning home a cross from Trent Alexander-Arnold in the first minute of added-on time. Nunez then finished off a counterattack two minutes later and secured a first victory in three league games for Liverpool, which drew with Manchester United and Nottingham Forest either side of a loss to Tottenham in the first leg of the

English League Cup semifinals. Liverpool has still lost only one league game all season, at home to Forest in September. The Reds had 37 shots against Brentford and scored with their final two. "We were close to not getting what we deserved," Liverpool manager Arne Slot said. Nunez, who is sometimes criticized for wasteful finishing, doubled his tally of league goals for the season. "Darwin did really well, not only with the goals but with his attitude and the way he fights for every ball," Liverpool goalkeeper Alisson Becker said. "You can say he doesn't score too much this season, but he is working hard every day."



Kluivert's second hat trick Justin Kluivert scored his second hat trick of the season in the league to inspire Bournemouth to 4-1 at Newcastle, whose nine-match winning run in all competitions came to an end emphatically. The Dutch midfielder netted in the sixth, 44th and second-half stoppage time at St. James' Park. Milos Kerkez added the fourth goal in the sixth minute of added-on time. Bruno Guimaraes equalized for fourth-placed

Newcastle. Kluivert, whose father is former Netherlands striker Patrick Kluivert, also scored three goals against Wolverhampton in November. In that match, all of Kluivert's goals were penalties, but he scored from open play each time against Newcastle. Six of Newcastle's nine straight victories came in the league, helping to lift the Saudi-controlled team into the top four in its bid to return to the Champions League. Newcastle striker Alexander Isak failed to score, having previously netted in eight league games in a row. That left him three games short of Leicester striker Jamie Vardy's

record for the longest scoring run in Premier League history.

Bournemouth dominated Newcastle despite being hampered by a long list of injuries. The south coast team extended its unbeaten run to 11 games and climbed to sixth place, tied for points with fifth-placed Chelsea. A fifth-place finish could earn a place in the Champions League next season for the first time. "Why not dream big?" Kluivert posed. "We never know where we can end up."

Van Nistelrooy under pressure

Next-to-last Leicester lost a seventh straight game in the league, 2-0 to Fulham, to pile the pressure on recently hired manager Ruud van Nistelrooy. The former Manchester United and Real Madrid striker, who is in only his second senior coaching role, has won just one of his nine league games in charge — the first against West Ham on Dec. 3. "We weren't good enough in all aspects," Van Nistelrooy said. "This is the first game I've felt like this." Emile Smith Rowe and Adama Traore scored for Fulham. Crystal Palace won at West Ham 2-0 thanks to two second-half goals by Jean-Philippe Mateta, the second from the penalty spot.

Mohammad Rizwan sledges Kevin Sinclair during Multan Test: Come to the graveyard

New Delhi. Pakistan wicketkeeper batter Mohammad Rizwan sledged West Indies batter Kevin Sinclair during Day 2 of the first Test between the two teams at the Multan Cricket Stadium, Multan on Saturday, January 18. Pakistan completely dominated West Indies as they finished day leading by 202 runs in the second innings. They were earlier bundled out for 230 in the first innings but stormed their way back into the game courtesy of sensational spells from their spin-twins Noman Ali and Sajid Khan. West Indies batters had no answer to their vicious spin as they were reduced to 42/6 in 11.2 overs. As Noman Ali dismissed Kevin Imlach to claim the sixth wicket of the innings, Sinclair walked to the crease and was sledged by Rizwan. In a video going viral on social media, Rizwan can be heard saying, "Yeah brother, come to the graveyard. You enjoying the bowling brother," as he welcomed Sinclair to the



crease. Watch the video here: Coming back to the action on Day 2, Pakistan resumed their first innings on 143/4 with Saud Shakeel (56*) and Rizwan (51*) at the crease. The duo extended their partnership to 141 before Sinclair got rid of Shakeel for 84. Following his dismissal, the Pakistan lower order perished against the spin duo of Sinclair

(2/61) and Jomel Warrican (3/69) and were bundled out for 230. Rizwan also departed for 71 as he got trapped in front of the stumps by Sinclair. Noman Ali picks up 7th five wicket haul. However, despite being bowled out cheaply, Pakistan managed to take a significant first innings lead of 93 runs as Noman Ali picked up his seventh wicket haul in Tests. The left-arm spinner registered figures of 5/39 and was well-supported by Sajid Khan who also picked up 4/65. As a result, the duo ran through the West Indies' batting order and bundled them out for just 137. Having taken a massive 93-run lead, Pakistan got off to a good start in the second innings with their captain Shan Masood scoring a half century (52 off 70). They finished the day on 109/3 leading West Indies by 202 runs with Kamran Ghulam (9*) and Saud Shakeel (2*) at the crease.

Coldplay's Chris Martin mentions Jasprit Bumrah during Mumbai concert

New Delhi. Coldplay's Chris Martin decided to surprise his fans during the concert in Navi Mumbai as he gave a shoutout to India's pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah on Saturday, January 18. Martin was on stage performing one of his famous songs 'A sky full of stars' on Saturday as the fans in attendance joined in to create a wonderful experience.

As the song was going on, Martin quickly took to the mic and told the fans that they would have to end the show quickly as Bumrah wanted to come backstage and play cricket with him. The Coldplay frontman would also joke that the Indian pacer wants to bowl at him. "Hold on, we have to finish the show because Jasprit Bumrah wants to come and play backstage," said Martin. "He (Bumrah) says he needs to bowl at me now."

The fans got excited hearing the mention of Bumrah as they felt that Indian pacer could make surprise appearance on stage during the concert. However, that didn't happen in the end. You can see the full video below:



The Coldplay concert in Mumbai certainly turned into 'paradise' for the fans in Mumbai as Chris Martin captivated the crowd and even addressed them in Hindi. The Bumrah shoutout certainly added to the excitement on the night. Bumrah set for Champions Trophy assignment while he may not have appeared during the Coldplay concert, Bumrah has been named in India's Champions Trophy squad. The India pacer, who picked up 32 wickets during the Border-Gavaskar Trophy in Australia, is expected to lead India's attack during the tournament. However, Bumrah is carrying a knock he picked up at the end of the Australia tour and is recovering at the moment. The India pacer will be monitored by the medical staff, according to chief selector Ajit Agarkar, as they're expecting him to be fully fit for the entire duration of the tournament. India's squad for the Champions Trophy: Rohit Sharma (C), Shubman Gill (VC), Virat Kohli, Shreyas Iyer, KL Rahul, Hardik Pandya, Axar Patel, Washington Sundar, Kuldeep Yadav, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Shami, Arshdeep Singh, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Rishabh Pant and Ravindra Jadeja.

Bumrah's fitness to be tested by India against England before Champions Trophy

MUMBAI. Fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah was picked for India's Champions Trophy squad on Saturday despite doubts about his fitness.

Bumrah suffered back spasms and didn't bowl on the last day of the fifth and final test against Australia in Sydney two weeks ago. He was the leading wicket-taker in the series.

India chairman of selectors Ajit Agarkar suggested Bumrah may play the third one-day international against England on Feb. 12 in Ahmedabad to test his fitness for the Champions Trophy, which starts for India eight days later in the United Arab Emirates.

"Bumrah has been advised to off load from bowling for five weeks and he won't be available for the first two ODIs against England. We are awaiting news on his fitness and will know in early February from the medical team," Agarkar said. Captain Rohit Sharma added, "We were not sure about his fitness at the moment, and thus picked Arshdeep Singh to perform his roles with the



new and old ball." Opening batter Yashasvi Jaiswal was included even though he has yet to play an ODI. Jaiswal takes Suryakumar Yadav's spot and will be the third opener choice after skipper Sharma and Shubman Gill. Virat Kohli and Shreyas Iyer complete the top-four options. Jaiswal averages 54 in List A cricket and he will compete for the second opener's slot with Gill, who averages 58.20 in ODIs. There will also be a keen spotlight on the batting form of Sharma and Kohli who both struggled in the five tests against Australia. Missing the cut from the squad which reached the final of the 2023 ODI World Cup were Yadav, Mohammed Siraj, Ishan Kishan, Prasidh Krishna, Shardul Thakur, and Ravichandran Ashwin.

Ashwin has retired, and Yadav and Kishan have been dropped. Rishabh Pant and Lokesh Rahul are the wicketkeeper-batter options.

Australian Open: Aryna Sabalenka reaches quarters by dominating Mirra Andreeva

Aryna Sabalenka swept aside the challenge from Mirra Andreeva with ease as she progressed to the quarterfinals of the Australian Open 2025 with a straight sets win on Sunday, January 19. Sabalenka defeated the Russian teenager in just 1 hour and 2 minutes.

New Delhi. Aryna Sabalenka continued her dominant run at the Australian Open 2025 as she breezed past Mirra Andreeva to reach the quarterfinals in Melbourne. In what was a dominant display, Sabalenka defeated Andreeva in straight sets and with a scoreline of 6-1, 6-2 to reach the quarters for the third consecutive year. The World No. 1 and defending champion also extended her winning streak at the Australian Open to 18



matches, a run that has seen her as a favourite to complete a hat-trick of titles in Melbourne. Andreeva had defeated Sabalenka in the French Open quarterfinals in a big upset, but failed to just get going in the match against the World No. 1. The Belarusian star set the tone with her serve in the first game and didn't allow the teenage star to get any offence going. While

Andreeva returned the favour by winning the next game off her own serve, that was the best for the Russian in the first set. Sabalenka went on to break Andreeva twice to take a 5-1 lead and sealed the first set in just 24 minutes. The Russian star committed 18 unforced errors during the match and it came back to haunt her in the end. The second set started much like the first one as both women were able to win off their own serves before Sabalenka was able to break the Russian in the 3rd game.

Game 5 saw some good spirit from Andreeva as she won 5 points on the trot to hold and had Sabalenka having to dig deep to avoid a break in the next one. Unfortunately, the Russian's effort wasn't enough in the end as Sabalenka wrapped the game in one hour and 2 minutes to secure her passage into the quarterfinals. Sabalenka said that she was thrilled to get the win in straight sets against Andreeva. "Always tough matches against Andreeva, she's so young but playing such great tennis," the 26-year-old said on court, as quoted by Reuters

Premier League: Liverpool extend lead with late win over Brentford, Arsenal held

Nunez' brace helped Liverpool secure the win
Villa came back to hold Arsenal 2-2 at the Emirates
Liverpool have a 6-point lead at the top with a game in hand

New Delhi. Liverpool extended their lead at the top of the Premier League table to 6 points as Darwin Nunez was the hero for the Reds in stoppage time during the match against Brentford on Saturday, January 18. Arsenal, on the other hand, squandered a 2-goal lead to be held 2-2 by Aston Villa at the Emirates. Liverpool, who were coming into the game against Brentford on the back of 2 straight draws, seemed to be destined for

another one as Thomas Frank's men were able to weather the storm from the Reds throughout the game. Brentford did have a chance early on to take the lead through Mikkel Damsgaard in the 5th minute, but the Denmark international ended up squandering the golden chance. Luis Diaz would also spoil his chance to give Liverpool the lead as he got his header completely wrong in the 15th minute. But the chances kept on coming for Arne Slot's men with Ryan Gravenberch testing Mark Flekken and Virgil van Dijk having his header go wide. Slot would make substitutions which almost had an immediate impact as Nunez' header went wide and Alexis MacAllister hitting the side netting with his effort. Brentford would almost take the lead against the run of play with Alisson coming in clutch to produce



saves to deny Mbuemo, Kevin Schade and Yoane Wissa. Then Nunez decided to flip the script in the 91st minute as he converted from Trent Alexander-Arnold's cross from close range before adding a second with an emphatic finish to give Liverpool all 3 points.

Arsenal squander 3 points Arsenal thought they were on course for a much-needed win to keep the pressure on Liverpool, before Ollie Watkins turned out to be the villain for them once again. Gabriel Martinelli and Kai Havertz had given the Gunners a 2-0 lead with efforts from either side of half-time. However, Villa would come back to life as Youri Tielemans pulled one back with a header. Watkins would then volley home a fine effort at 68 minutes to level the scores and set up a thrilling finale. Arsenal thought they had won when Mikel Merino's effort would bounce off Havertz into the net. However, VAR intervened and ruled that the ball had hit the German's hand. The draw means that Arsenal trail Liverpool by 6 points, having played an extra game.

Deepika Padukone

Shares Goodbye Kiss With Ranveer Singh Before Leaving Family Wedding

Deepika Padukone and Ranveer Singh never fail to make heads turn every time they are spotted together, and last night was no different! The couple were clicked by the paparazzi as they attended Ranveer's cousin's wedding in Mumbai. They redefined royalty in elegant traditional outfits, and their pictures went viral. Now, a video that has been widely shared on the couple's fan pages shows Deepika giving her hubby a goodbye kiss before leaving. In a video that is now going viral, Ranveer Singh is seen escorting Deepika to the car, making sure she was comfortable as she sat inside the car. He carefully adjusted her dress while she settled in. Deepika is then seen plating a sweet kiss on Ranveer's cheek before leaving. The viral video has left fans swooning over the lovely couple. Check it out below!

Meanwhile, an inside picture from Ranveer's cousin's wedding has also surfaced on social media. Ranveer and Deepika are seen beaming with joy as they posed with



Anju Bhavnani as well as the bride and groom, and other relatives at the wedding. Ranveer is seen with his arm around Deepika's shoulder, while the actress was all smiles for the picture. Check it out below!

Ranveer Singh and Deepika Padukone, who rarely makes public appearances together since welcoming their daughter Dua, made a striking impression with their regal and coordinated traditional outfits. The 'Fighter' actress looked gorgeous in an intricately embroidered pink

anarkali suit with full-length sleeves. She accessorized her look with a pair of elegant gold jhumkis with ear chains, a choker necklace, and a heavy emerald-adorned neckpiece. Meanwhile, Ranveer Singh complemented her in an ivory embroidered sherwani.

Deepika Padukone and Ranveer Singh tied the knot in 2018. They welcomed their first child, daughter Dua Padukone Singh, on September 8, 2024. They announced the news of her arrival through a heartfelt social media post with a caption that read, "Welcome, baby girl. 8.09.2024. Deepika and Ranveer."

Kartik Aaryan

Says He Has A 'Love-Hate Relationship' With Karan Johar: 'Jab Hum Logo Ne Pehli Film...'

Kartik Aaryan recently mentioned that he has a love-hate relationship with Karan Johar, since their previous film, Dostana 2 was shelved. At a recent SCREEN event, Kartik Aaryan was asked to react to a photo of him with Karan Johar. In the image, Karan pulled Kartik's ear as the actor folded his hands in front of the director. Kartik reacted, "Ispe kya bolu? (What do I say to this)." He said, "I think yeh love and hate relationship hai... Bahut acha yeh photo represent karti hai (I think this is a



love and hate relationship This photo represents that very well).

Kartik recalled that the photo was taken before they began filming Dostana 2. However, the actor didn't directly mention the film's name "Yeh moment tab

ka hai jab hum logo ne pehli film, jo humari honi thi kabhi, woh sign ki thi. Toh tab ka moment hai. I think he knew ki main... photo pehle se le li thi (This was the moment when our first film, which was going to happen, was signed. This was then. I think he knew that I... so he took the picture beforehand)," he recalled. For the unversed, Karan Johar was all set to make the sequel of Dostana with Kartik Aaryan and Janhvi Kapoor. While the original film starred Abhishek Bachchan, Priyanka Chopra and John Abraham, Dostana 2 would feature Kartik and Janhvi as siblings. However, the film was shelved, resulting in a falling out between Kartik and Karan. The matter has since been resolved as Kartik and Karan are now collaborating on Tu Meri Main Tera Main Tera Tu Meri.

Kartik Aaryan said, "But abhi main inke sath film kar raha hu. And hum sath mein kar rahe hain yeh film and I hope yeh film toh hogi. Yeh film main puri tarah karunga and woh bhi puri tarah karenge yeh film. (Now I am doing a film with him. We are doing it together and I hope it happens. I will do this film and he will do it too.)" Kartik also added, "Yeh film toh bohot special hone wali hai (This film is going to be very special)." Although the film was announced weeks ago, there is no information about who will star opposite Kartik Aaryan in the film.



Mammootty And Dulquer Salmaan Attend Engagement Of Makeup Artist's Daughter



Actors Mammootty and Dulquer Salmaan are big names in the South Indian film industry. Recently, the two were spotted together at their makeup artist George Sebastian's daughter's engagement. George shared beautiful photos of Mammootty and his entire family on X. The first image showed Mammootty and his wife, Sulphath, making a rare appearance, sitting on either side of the bride-to-be. The next frame showed Dulquer Salmaan and his wife, Amal Sufiya, posing on either side of the bride. In the pictures, Dulquer Salmaan's daughter, Maryam, drew a lot of attention with her adorable appearance. The child sat on her father's lap while they posed for photos. Along with the pictures, George wrote, "A heart full of love as we marked our daughter Cynthia's sweet offering ceremony, surrounded by love, light and blessings." While Mammootty was dressed in a floral-patterned shirt and mundu, Dulquer Salmaan wore a gorgeous full-sleeve white shirt, black pants and sunglasses.

Meanwhile, Dulquer Salmaan was last seen in Lucky Baskhar. The film, written and directed by Venky Atluri, was released in Malayalam, Hindi, Tamil and Kannada languages. Dulquer Salmaan plays a commoner who is willing to go the additional mile for his family. He plays the role of a bank cashier who becomes entangled in the web of riches and greed. The film has music by GV Prakash Kumar, editing by Navin Nooli and cinematography by Nimish Ravi. The film is produced by Naga Vamsi S and Sai Soujanya through Sithara Entertainment and Fortune Four Cinemas. The film is produced by Srikara Studios. Lucky Baskhar features Dulquer Salmaan, Meenakshi Chaudhary, Ramki, Surya Sreenivas, Sachin Khedekar and others. On the other hand, Mammootty is set to reunite with Mohanlal on the big screen after over 11 years in a much-anticipated film directed by Mahesh Narayanan.

Abhishek Bachchan Recalls Quitting College Amid Amitabh Bachchan's Bankruptcy: 'He Borrowed Money...'



Abhishek Bachchan, a seasoned entrepreneur, recently opened up about his journey in business and how it influenced his acting career. Speaking to CNBC TV18, the actor revealed there was a time when he signed films solely to fund his sporting ventures, but he has since changed that approach, prioritizing creativity over financial necessity. "I have been pitched several businesses. In the early days, when you were naive, you would get impressed by these numbers. And having run 2-3 successful sporting teams, you realise that projections are just that, they are just on paper," Abhishek explained. Reflecting on his Pro Kabaddi League team and other ventures, he admitted that his earlier strategy of financing business ventures through his acting earnings took a toll on his creative work.

"Thankfully, I have moved on from that thought process. I realised, about 2-3 years into kabaddi and football, that signing innumerable films to finance my love for sport and the business of sport was not something which I was very happy doing," he said. While this approach was financially sustainable, Abhishek found it creatively stifling.

"It is sustainable, it might not be a lot of fun. And then what happens is that you stop making creative choices, you start making financial choices. And I think in a creative field, that's harakiri," he said, adding, "I wanted my films to be a creative choice. Not because I had to fill the bank balance to support my, at that point of time, hobby." Abhishek now takes a more structured approach to his investments through his "family office." He shared, "I started up my family office, streamlined the finances, investment portfolios etc. It's taken me about seven years, but thankfully, now we have a balance sheet and allocated funds through my family office that I can run a sporting business." He further emphasized, "It is a passion for me but it is not something I am willing to lose money on and I will turn heaven and earth upside down to make sure it's profitable." Abhishek also recalled a pivotal moment from the 1990s when he quit college in Boston to support his father, Amitabh Bachchan, during a financial crisis. Speaking to Ranveer Allahabadi, he said, "He had to borrow money from his staff to put food on the table. I just felt morally obliged to be with him. I called him and I said 'You know, dad, I think I want to leave college half-way and come back and just be with you, try and help you in whatever way.'"