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## Change in Passport application fees: All key things you should know

New Delhi: People willing to obtain a passport are willing to apply for it as per the prevailing guidelines issued by the Passport Seva Kendra. Along with the passport application form, a person is mandated to pay the passport application fees which is different for different passport types. Recently last week, the government proposed a plan of issuing a chip-enabled passport to the citizens which will be having advanced security features. All the chip-based passports will be digitally signed and all the personal data will be stored in the chip which is likely to be embedded in the physical passport.

According to Passport Seva Kendra (PSK), every individual is required to pay the fees via online channels for booking appointments at

all the PSKs. There are several payment options available which include credit/debit card (MasterCard and Visa), internet banking (State



Bank of India and other scheduled commercial banks), SBI challan, SBI wallet payment.

The applicants applying under 'Tatkaal' are only required to pay the fee as applicable under 'Normal Category' while making an online payment. The remaining 'Tatkaal' fee applicable should be payable in 'cash' at

Passport Seva Kendra/ Passport Office after the passport application form under 'Tatkaal' category is accepted. An individual will be charged Rs 500 each for Police Clearance Certificate (PCC) and Background Verification for GEP.

The passport application fees once paid can't be transferred from one application reference number (ARN) to another ARN. People who don't have an SBI Bank account can continue to make a payment online using either the credit/debit card of other banks or SBI challan. The refund of excess payment will be made by the concerned regional passport office (RPO). The passport application fees paid will be valid for one year from the date of payment. If you have booked an appointment then the validity of fee will be one year from first appointment date, PSK said.

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# Rag Pickers

അവനീഷ് പണിക്കർ



## Story 1.

The story of India's rag pickers is well known in the waste management world. It is estimated that there are some 4 million of them- just under the total population of New Zealand. They are unorganised, unrecognised and unpaid- and make up the backbone of India's resource recovery sector. They make a living by rummaging through the mountains of trash looking for items to recover that can be recycled or reused.

Such materials could cause pollution if left in the wild such as electronic waste or plastic items.

India's waste recycling efficiency at best is less than 60%. This is fiercely supported by this unorganised group that will go hungry in inclement weather if they cannot go about the utterly inhuman conditions that they regularly go through to make a living. Diseases and potential infections await their journey through the unpredictable cocktail of 'stuff' thrown out by the new throw-away culture that seeping across the developed India.

## Story 2.

The recent introduction of container deposit scheme in many parts of Australia is creating a modern well-equipped version of rag

pickers. They can be seen rummaging through our yellow top bins once they are out on the kerb for collection by trucks the next morning. They do not resemble their Indian counterparts, rather are well-dressed and well-equipped with gloves to protect themselves and large bags to collect their target materials of different types. This includes aluminium cans, bottles etc. They will take it to a reverse-vending machine the next day and collect their earnings. The deposited items then go to a recycling centre.

Without them, the said containers will go to a recycling centre from the sorting facility that takes your

yellow top bins. They were not destined to cause pollution anyway.

The scheme was/is developed to reduce people throwing away these recyclable materials in the nature to save the bush, the beaches and the backyard. Not specifically to save your yellow top recycling bins from the recyclable materials. However it is human nature to be opportunistic and recognize the revenue stream.

Is it stealing? Or just creating a new middle-man/woman in the journey the tossed out pepsi can will be taking from your fridge to, perhaps back as a recycled and completely new,

pepsi can? Or some other material; whatever that may be.

-0-

The two stories tell the tale of the same beer bottle or pepsi can in two different worlds, and the hands that handle them. Whether the modern day rag picker amuse you or annoy you, have a moment of thought about rag pickers in India when you throw a recyclable item into the red top bin. Send it to a recycling centre so that makes their life's ultimate purpose worthwhile. Spare the world mining for more materials one pepsi can at a time.

## China says Hong Kong protests 'absolutely intolerable'

Beijing, Jul 22 (AFP) China reacted furiously on Monday to anti-government protesters vandalising the walls of its representative's office in Hong Kong and defacing the national emblem, branding their actions "absolutely intolerable". Thousands of masked pro-democracy demonstrators briefly occupied the road outside the office in the semi-autonomous city Sunday night and targeted the building with eggs, projectiles, laser lights and graffiti in a stark rebuke to Beijing's rule.

Hong Kong has been shaken by massive, sometimes violent, protests initially organised to oppose a now-suspended bill that would have allowed extraditions to mainland China. They have now morphed into a wider and sometimes violent movement for democratic reforms.

"Actions by some radical demonstrators have affected the bottom line of the 'one country, two systems' principle, and that is absolutely intolerable," foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said in Beijing, referring to the former British colony's special status under the terms of its 1997 handover to China.

Geng said Beijing opposes all acts of violence and "firmly" supports the use of "all necessary measures to safeguard central government agencies in Hong Kong". Protesters have vowed to sustain pressure until their core demands -- including universal suffrage and the resignation of the city's pro-Beijing leader Carrie Lam -- are met.



So far, Beijing has refused to budge. Officials and state media have accused the protesters of playing into the hands of foreign powers who seek to harm China, and backed the Hong Kong government.

Beyond agreeing to suspend the extradition bill, there have been few other concessions and fears are rising that Beijing's patience is running out.

"These (acts)... have seriously damaged the feelings of all Chinese people including seven million Hong Kong compatriots," Wang Zhimin, China's top envoy to the city, told reporters, calling on authorities to pursue the "rioters".

Radical protests have "insulted the country and the

nation", Chinese Communist Party mouthpiece People's Daily declared in a front-page article.

"These acts of violence seriously undermined Hong Kong's social order and trampled on the rule of law." Under the handover deal, China promised to allow Hong Kong to keep key liberties such as its independent judiciary and freedom of speech -- but many say those provisions are already being curtailed.

But Beijing has reacted angrily to other governments and foreign officials expressing solidarity with Hong Kong's pro-democracy movement, warning them against interfering in China's domestic affairs.

The foreign minister of Taiwan -- the self-ruled democratic island that China considers parts of its territory -- called for "genuine" democratic elections in Hong Kong. Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Geng dismissed those comments as "irresponsible".

"These little tricks are doomed to be unsuccessful," he said.

In an editorial, the state-run China Daily said the "violence unleashed by some fanatic elements is

not really against the bill to amend the extradition law... (but) to advance their own political agenda".

The newspaper warned that the clashes in Hong Kong go against the views of the "silent majority", who want to "live a peaceful life and strive to achieve their dreams rather than rack their brains over politics".

### Social media corner

ഭാര്യ: ജോലി കഴിഞ്ഞു വരുമ്പോൾ പച്ചക്കറിയും പാലും കൊണ്ടുവരുവാൻ മറക്കരുത്  
 ഷഹാൻ നിക്കൽമാട് എഫ് പറയാൻ പറഞ്ഞിട്ടുണ്ട്.  
 ഭർത്താവ്: ആരോ ഷഹാൻ??  
 ഭാര്യ: ആരുമില്ല, നിക്കർ മെല്ലെ വായിച്ചു എന്തു മറപ്പു വരുത്താൻ ഭവണ്ടി ഞാൻ വെറുത്തു പറഞ്ഞതാ...



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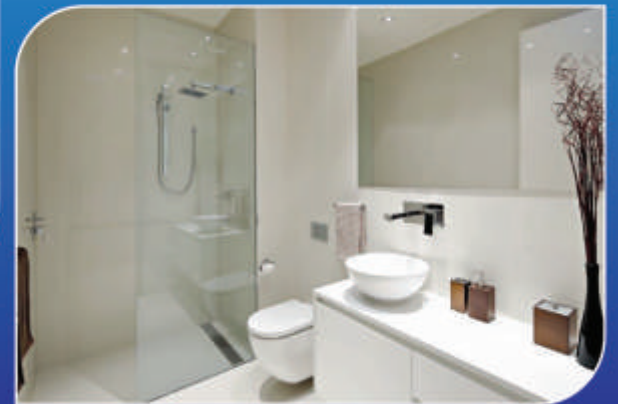
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## The need to acquire knowledge and wisdom

VIKAS VARRIER

Aithiyamala is full of stories about learned men especially Brahmins with great knowledge and poetic skills. Almost all of them were experts in Sanskrit and enjoyed the patronage of the kings, princes and other royalties of the time.

Although it could be argued that the high caste positioning of the Brahmins gave them edge and made them preferable in the eyes of the royalty, it is in fact their mastery over the language and the ability to use it according to the situations that earned them the accolades. Most of them had to prove their worth and mettle before they could enjoy the benefits of their learning.

Hence, it can be seen that while almost all Brahmins had access to education and/or the right to learn Vedas and other scriptures, only a few could really excel in them and make a name or living out of it. A vast number of others had to struggle and earn their living the hard way. They worked as teachers, priests, advisors on religious matters and so on. Only a handful of the Brahmins were especially revered and acknowledged for their knowledge and literary contributions.

Since the royalty themselves were generally learned and wise men, it wasn't easy for the Brahmin scholar to come up with a poem or a literary work to impress

them. In most cases, it was a mutual respect and the chance to learn from one another that kept them engaged in discourses and discussions. For, you need to have a minimum knowledge about things if you had to comment on it. Without a good grasp of language and the subject under discussion, no fruitful results could be derived from these interactions.

So, it might be wrong to accuse the royalties in the Aithiyamala and the Brahmins mentioned there in of nepotism or casteism because they were simply enjoying the company of people with similar tastes and abilities. Of course, one could argue that the subject under discussion could be something trivial. But in those days, there were not many pressing problems such as climate change or plastic pollution to discuss. So, it is only natural they would write and discuss about lesser topics such as a beautiful flower or a benevolent king.

If we try to draw a parallel in today's world, we might fail miserably. However, it can be seen

that although education is now more open and accessible for the masses, the number of good scholars are less. Yes, we do have universities and colleges churning out graduates in thousands year after year. Yet, if we take a closer look at these brand-new scholars

other new learning tools have not helped in making these young minds think more. Instead, they are often asked not to think, but to follow what they were told. As a result, generation after generation is losing the ability to think independently.

Many a times one feel these are days when real knowledge is scorned upon. Crowd pleasers and favour seekers enjoy more popularity than a person with knowledge and wisdom. This is because the quality of the audience has come down.

In the earlier times, people discussed, argued and thought about things before they could be called an expert on the topic. Nowadays, no one is sure of anything and yet they act as if they know everything. Moreover, the other person doesn't dare to call the pretender out for the fear of him being called out. So, the world moves in a circle with people pleasing one another for their own selfish reasons.

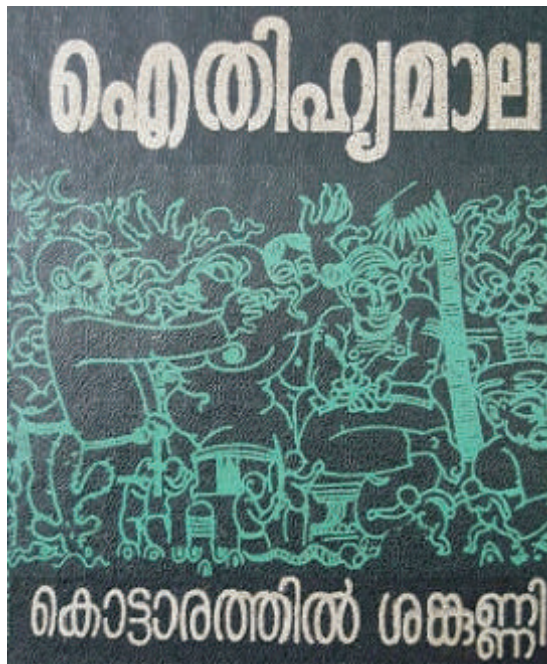
The stories in the book of legend also tell us why it is important for the people in high places to have good education, knowledge, expertise and farsightedness. They have to be shrewd enough to understand the situation and take decisions accordingly. In today's make believe world, a shallow

knowledge and a lot of show-off can take you a long way although in the end, one might eventually fall off from the high pedestal. When such a fall occurs, that person is incapable of standing up again. This is because he had built all his fame and money on false, weak foundation. Such people can't stand the test of time for long.

Hence, the stories of the learned and wise men in the Legend tell us the need to be educated and be knowledgeable of the things we deal in our lives. If we try to build our lives on pretensions and falsehood, we will be exposed and taken down eventually.

As the saying goes an empty pot makes the loudest noise. It is for us to decide if we want to be an empty pot or a pot brimming with knowledge and wisdom. The stories of the wise men depicted in the Aithiyamala shows us the latter is always a better option. For, knowledge is something no one can steal from us. Furthermore, the more we share knowledge the larger it grows. It is definitely worth a try in even today.

So, we can learn our lesson from the Legends and mould ourselves to suit the needs and demands of the times. In doing so, we will not only promote self-growth but we would be setting the wheel of revival of the society as a whole in motion.



we can see that a large number of them are not fit for the roles life give them.

They have all learned something or the other in schools and colleges but very few assimilate knowledge. As a result, we see a lot of educated fools. The availability of technology and

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# Chandrayaan-2 illustrates India's determination to scale new frontiers of science: PM

New Delhi, Jul 22 (PTI) The launch of Chandrayaan-2 illustrates the prowess of Indian scientists and the determination of 130 crore countrymen to scale new frontiers of science, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said.

Soon after the launch, the prime minister took to Twitter to hail the success and also sent a congratulatory audio message to those involved in the launch, saying the scientists overcame the glitches spotted during the previous launch thus proving their grit and determination. He also said every Indian is immensely proud today. India has successfully launched its second lunar mission Chandrayaan-2 on board its powerful rocket GSLV-MkIII-M1 from the spaceport in Sriharikota to explore the uncharted south pole of the celestial body by landing a rover.

"Thanks to Chandrayaan, India's lunar programme will get a substantial boost. Our existing knowledge of the moon will be significantly enhanced," the prime minister tweeted.

On the importance of Chandrayaan-2, Modi said, the mission is unique because it will explore the south pole of lunar terrain and perform studies on the region which has not been explored and sampled by "any past mission". "What would make every Indian overjoyed is the fact that Chandrayaan-2 is a fully indigenous mission... It will have an orbiter for remote sensing the moon and also a Lander-Rover module for analysis of lunar surface. Special moments that will be etched in the annals of our glorious history!" he wrote on the microblogging site.

The prime minister also shared on Twitter pictures of him watching the launch on a large screen. In his audio message, Modi congratulated ISRO chief K Sivan and the launch team, saying it is a matter of pride for all Indians. "Last week, the launch had to be postponed due to technical reasons.



You found the technical glitch with alacrity and took steps to solve it. And now, within a week you achieved success in the launch. You deserve a special congratulations for this," the prime minister said in the message.

It is an excellent example of the talent, capability and self-confidence of the scientists to take on any challenge, he said. "The bigger the challenge, the intention gets equally big. I am told despite a delay of a week, the date of Chandrayaan-2 reaching the moon will remain the same," Modi said.

The prime minister pointed out that the mission team not only overcame the challenges faced during the previous launch, but has also decided to reach the moon in a shorter period of time. He said it will be the first Indian spacecraft to reach the surface of moon and the country will become the fourth nation to land on the moon.

With this, Modi said, India will contribute to enhance the knowledge of humankind in the knowledge of lunar surface.

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