

CANADA INDIA HEALTHCARE SUMMIT 2021.

DETAILS ON PAGE 5

Y MEDIA COVID & VACCINE REPORT

Province Safely Reopening Outdoor Recreational Amenities Prior to End of Stay-at-Home Order

The Ontario government, in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health, has released its Roadmap to Reopen, a three-step plan to safely and cautiously reopen the province and gradually lift public health measures based on the provincewide vaccination rate and improvements in key public health and health care indicators. In response to recent improvements to these indicators, Ontario will allow more outdoor recreational amenities to reopen, with restrictions in place, effective May 22, 2021 at 12:01 a.m. "As a result of the strict public health measures we introduced to stop the spread of COVID-19 variants, we are seeing a steady improvement in our situation as ICU and hospital numbers begin to stabilize," said Premier Doug Ford. "While we must remain conscious of the continued threat the virus poses, with millions of Ontarians having received at least their first dose of vaccine we can now begin the process of a slow and cautious re-opening of the province in full consultation with our public health professionals." Roadmap to Reopen outlines three steps to easing public health measures, guided by the following principles:

STEP-1

60 per cent of adults vaccinated with one dose.
Outdoor recreational amenities to resume Sat, May 22 in Ont.
Ontario allows non-essential retailers to open at 15% capacity
Ontario permits 10 people to gather outdoors
Outdoor dining, with up to four people per table, allowed to resume
Schools to provide virtual learning for now

STEP-2

70 per cent of adults vaccinated with one dose and 20 per cent vaccinated with two doses. Further expanding outdoor activities and resuming limited indoor services with small numbers of people where face coverings are worn.

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- Ontarians 12+ can now book Covid-19 vaccine appointment.
- Ontario reopens outdoor recreational amenities such as golf courses, tennis courts, skateboarding parks and sports fields, with restrictions in place.
- Ontario permits outdoor gathering of maximum of five people, including members of different households.
- Beginning week of May 24, Ontario to administer second dose of Astra Zeneca COVID19 vaccine, starting with those who received their first dose between March 10 and 19.
- Canada's Ban On Flights From India, Pakistan Extended Till June 21.
- All non-essential travel between Canada-U.S. remain in effect until June 21.



SONU SOOD ANNOUNCES OXYGEN PLANTS IN ANDHRA PRADESH.



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EGYPT-BROKERED CEASEFIRE BETWEEN ISRAEL-HAMAS COMES INTO EFFECT



An Egypt-brokered ceasefire came into effect on Friday between Israel and the Palestinian Hamas movement, ending 11-day bloodshed in the Gaza Strip. The ceasefire came into force at 2 a.m., reports Xinhua news agency. According to Egypt's official MENA news agency, Cairo will send two security delegations to Israel and Palestine to ensure the implementation of the truce.

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BABA RAMDEV ISSUES APOLOGY AFTER 'EXTREMELY UNFORTUNATE' REMARKS ON ALLOPATHY

After Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan, on Sunday, called yoga guru Ramdev's statement on allopathic medicines "extremely unfortunate", Baba Ramdev took to his Twitter account and issued an apology. Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan on Sunday asked yoga guru Ramdev to withdraw derogatory remarks he allegedly made against allopathy.

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2 STATES, 2 LEADERS: SACHIN PILOT & SIDHU GIVING HEADACHE TO CONGRESS



NEW DELHI, (IANS) While Congress is trying to corner the government for the mismanagement of the Covid pandemic, the party is facing internal feud in the ruling states of Rajasthan and Punjab. Former Rajasthan Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot has upped the ante against Ashok Gehlot, while in Punjab, Navjot Singh Sidhu is targeting Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh.

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LAB ESCAPE FROM WUHAN CAN EXPLAIN CORONAVIRUS MORE EASILY



NEW DELHI, (IANS) Proponents of lab escape can explain all the available facts about SARS2 considerably more easily than can those who favour natural emergence, said Nicholas Wade, a science writer.

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RAILWAYS SUSPENDS WRESTLER SUSHIL KUMAR UNTIL FURTHER ORDERS



NEW DELHI, (IANS) Two-time Olympian Sushil Kumar, who was arrested by the Delhi Police on Sunday in connection with the death of wrestler Sagar Dhankar, has been suspended by the Indian Railways until further orders, officials said on Tuesday.

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SIDHU-AMARINDER FEUD ‘ORGANISATIONAL ISSUE’, PARTY WATCHING: CONGRESS

NEW DELHI, (IANS) Amid infighting in its Punjab unit with former minister Navjot Singh Sidhu training guns at Chief Amarinder Singh over the 2015 sacrilege issue and calling for party leaders to go to Delhi and raise it with the top leadership, the Congress on Friday said it was seized of the matter and will soon act.

Congress General Secretary, Organisation, K.C. Venugopal said: “We are watching it and will take a call on it” while terming it an “organizational issue”. Sources say that the party is likely to constitute a committee to look into the issue in Punjab, where Assembly elections are due next year. Cricketer-turned-politician Sidhu, who had been lying low since his resignation from the state Cabinet in July 2019, has launched scathing attacks all this month against the Chief Minister over his government’s action over the alleged desecration of the Guru Granth Sahib in 2015 when the Akali Dal-BJP government was in power and accused him of “shielding the Badals”. Charging the Chief Minister with taking action against his own party leaders instead, Sidhu, in a tweet on Thursday, said: “In 2019, I began & ended my Election Campaign in Punjab seeking – Justice for Sacrilege of Guru Granth Sahib Ji & punishing the culprits & the ONE shielding them... Now, Our MLAs & Party Workers must go to Delhi & speak the Truth of Punjab to our High Command, as I regularly do.” Earlier, he had tweeted: “Ministers, MLAs & MPs raising People’s Issues are strengthening the Party, fulfilling their Democratic Duty & exercising their Constitutional Right... But everyone who speaks the truth becomes



your enemy. Thus, you threaten your party colleagues, exhibiting your fear & insecurity”. As his attacks on Amarinder Singh saw pushback from other ministers, who demanded his suspension from the party for indiscipline, Sidhu had urged him to stop firing from his “colleagues’ shoulders”, and asked, “... Who will protect you in a court of the Great Guru?”

Taking a tough stance last month, Amarinder Singh had said that if Sidhu “wants to contest against him, then he is free to do so but that would only lead to Sidhu meeting the fate of (former Army chief and Akali Dal candidate) General J.J. Singh who had lost his security deposit”. He had also challenged Sidhu to clearly spell out whether he is a Congress member or not.

CDC STUDY SAYS COVID-19 INFECTIONS EXTREMELY RARE AFTER FULL VACCINATION

Vaccine breakthrough cases are expected. COVID-19 vaccines are effective and are a critical tool to bring the pandemic under control. However, no vaccines are 100% effective at preventing illness in vaccinated people. There will be a small percentage of fully vaccinated people who still get sick, are hospitalized, or die from COVID-19. More than 123 million people in the United States have been fully vaccinated as of May 17, 2021. Like with other vaccines, vaccine breakthrough cases will occur, even though the vaccines are working as expected. Asymptomatic infections among vaccinated people will also occur. There is some evidence that vaccination may make illness less severe for those who are vaccinated and still get sick. Current data suggest that COVID-19 vaccines authorized for use in the United States offer protection against most SARS-CoV-2 variants currently circulating in the United States. However, variants will cause some vaccine breakthrough cases. A total of 10,262 SARS-CoV-2 vac-

cine breakthrough infections had been reported from 46 U.S. states and territories as of April 30, 2021. Among these cases, 6,446 (63%) occurred in females, and the median patient age was 58 years (interquartile range = 40–74 years). Based on preliminary data, 2,725 (27%) vaccine breakthrough infections were asymptomatic, 995 (10%) patients were known to be hospitalized, and 160 (2%) patients died. Among the 995 hospitalized patients, 289 (29%) were asymptomatic or hospitalized for a reason unrelated to COVID-19. The median age of patients who died was 82 years (interquartile range = 71–89 years); 28 (18%) decedents were asymptomatic or died from a cause unrelated to COVID-19. Sequence data were available from 555 (5%) reported cases, 356 (64%) of which were identified as SARS-CoV-2 variants of concern, including B.1.1.7 (199; 56%), B.1.429 (88; 25%), B.1.427 (28; 8%), P.1 (28; 8%), and B.1.351 (13; 4%).

Homicide team investigating as 2 found dead in Scarborough Home

Toronto police homicide detectives are probing the death of a 46-year-old woman after two people were found dead in a home in Scarborough.

Daisy Sehgal, 46, of 25 James Park Square, Toronto, was found deceased with “obvious signs of trauma” on May 22. Police said in a news release, “an autopsy revealed her cause of death to be neck compressions.”

Officers also located a deceased 50-year-old man in the basement of the home.

Police have identified as Anurag Kalwar, 50, of Toronto, police said the news release.

“The Toronto Police Homicide Unit has taken carriage of the investigation. The deaths are not being treated as suspicious. There are no outstanding suspects,” it added.

PRESIDENTS BIDEN, PUTIN TO HOLD SUMMIT IN GENEVA IN JUNE

WASHINGTON/MOSCOW, (IANS) US President Joe Biden and Russian President Vladimir Putin will hold their first summit in Geneva, Switzerland on June 16, the White House said on Tuesday. “The leaders will discuss the full range of pressing issues, as we seek to restore predictability and stability to the US-Russia relationship,” the White House said in a short statement. “It will be Biden’s first in-person meeting with Putin as President. Biden said earlier this month that he expected to meet with Putin during his trip to Europe in June, when he would attend the Group of Seven Summit in Britain and then the NATO Summit in Brussels, Belgium, the Xinhua news agency reported. “The Kremlin also confirmed the meeting in a separate statement. “We intend to discuss the state of and the prospects for the further development of Russian-US relations, strategic stability issues, as well as topical issues on the international agenda, including interaction in the fight against the coronavirus pandemic and the settlement of regional conflicts,” said the Kremlin statement. “Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov met US Secretary of State Antony Blinken in Iceland last week in a move that was widely perceived as part of the preparation for the summit. “The two officials have expressed willingness to cooperate while admitting “serious differences” amid tense relations. “On Monday, US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan held consultations with his Russian counterpart Nikolay Patrushev in Geneva. The White House said in a joint statement that their meeting was “constructive” despite “outstanding differences.” “The sides agreed that a normalisation of US-Russian relations would be in the interest of both countries and contribute to global predictability and stability,” according to the joint statement. “Relations between Washington and Moscow have been adversarial in recent years. The two sides have obvious differences on issues related to Ukraine, cybersecurity, human rights, and US election interference.”

PAK FM CALLS FOR UN'S DECISIVE ROLE IN RESOLVING KASHMIR DISPUTE

ISLAMABAD, (IANS) Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi has called on UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to take decisive measures and ensure implementation of the UN Charter and the UN Security Council Resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir and play a key role in resolving the longstanding dispute.

“Pakistan desires normal relations with India, however, the onus is on India to create an atmosphere to enable meaningful engagement,” the Minister said during his interaction with the Guterres in New York.

Qureshi also renewed his invitation to India for a dialogue and said that the only solution to the Kashmir dispute is through talks, based on the aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

“India is running away from table talks with Pakistan on Kashmir,” he said. Qureshi briefed Guterres about what he called serious human rights violations in the “Indian occupied Jammu and Kashmir”, including incarceration of political leaders and extra-judicial killings.

The Foreign Minister also brushed aside the criticism on Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan, by the opposition political parties, for selling of the Kashmir cause, stating that the premier can never compromise on the Kashmir cause as he is the “Ambassador of the Kashmir cause and is the voice of the people of Kashmiris to the world”. “Let this be clear, Pakistan’s position on the issue of Kashmir is very clear. There can be no talks until India reverses its decision of August 5, 2019,” he insisted. Talking about his visit to New York for the Palestinian cause, Qureshi said that his visit to attend the UNGA session on Palestine was “an expression of Pakistan’s support for the legitimate case of the Palestinian people for their right to self-determination”.



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COVID & VACCINE REPORT



CANADA'S BAN ON FLIGHTS FROM INDIA, PAKISTAN EXTENDED TILL JUNE 21

The Government of Canada is extending the temporary travel measures restricting entry into Canada by foreign nationals until June 21, 2021. To continue managing the elevated risk of imported COVID-19 cases into Canada, the Government of Canada has extended the Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) restricting all direct commercial and private passenger flights to Canada from India and Pakistan until June 21, 2021, at 23:59 EDT. The government is also extending the requirement for air passengers who depart India or Pakistan to Canada, via an indirect route, to obtain a COVID-19 pre-departure test from a third country before continuing their journey to Canada.

"As the number of COVID-19 cases remains disproportionately high in India and Pakistan, we have extended our flight restrictions and third-country pre-departure testing requirements for these countries. These ongoing measures are in place to help protect Canadians, and manage the elevated risk of imported cases of COVID-19 and variants of concern into Canada during a time of increasing pressure on our health care system," said Minister of Transport, Omar Alghabra. Canada's approach to border management includes entry and flight restrictions; mandatory pre-arrival, on-arrival, and post-arrival testing requirements; mandatory hotel stopover for air travellers; and mandatory 14-day quarantine for travellers. The Government of Canada is also extending those measures to protect the health and safety of Canadians.

"Throughout the pandemic, we have taken strong action at our borders to protect Canadians while maintaining the flow of essential goods. We will continue to prioritize the health and safety of Canadians as we adapt to the changing reality of the pandemic," Bill Blair, Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness said.

As the science and evidence evolve and knowledge of the virus and variants increases, the policies to keep Canadians safe will evolve as well. Current data shows that Canada's pre-arrival, on-arrival, and post-arrival testing requirements, as well as mandatory hotel stay for air travellers, are working. The Government of Canada's response will continue to prioritize protecting the health and safety of Canadians, while also ensuring the safe flow of goods and services that are necessary for the Canadian economy.

Minister of Health, Patty Hajdu, said, "We are extending the testing and quarantine measures at the border because they protect Canadi-

ans. As our health care system grapples with the third wave of the pandemic, our government will continue to adjust its response to COVID-19. I encourage all Canadians to get vaccinated when it's their turn, and to keep following local public health measures."

QUICK FACTS

To address unique situations along the Canada-U.S. border, residents of Alaska who transit through Yukon by car to get to another part of Alaska, and residents of Northwest Angle, Minnesota, travelling by car through Canada to mainland U.S., will be exempt from pre-and post-arrival testing. Travellers must continue to use ArriveCAN to provide COVID-related information but must enter it within 72 hours prior to their arrival to Canada. In addition, travellers must submit their travel history for 14 days before entering Canada. This information will help identify and monitor countries with high importation rates of COVID-19 and variants of concern.

Positivity rates for those arriving by air (1.7%) and land (0.3%) remain very low. The measures have resulted in 96% less air traffic and a 90% drop in non-commercial traffic entering Canada by land, compared to pre-pandemic volumes.

All travellers entering Canada must submit their information, including details of their 14-day travel history, electronically using ArriveCAN. This information must be entered into ArriveCAN within 72 hours before a travellers' arrival to Canada to ensure accuracy and to help monitor the importation of COVID-19.

Violating any quarantine or isolation instructions provided to travellers by a screening officer or quarantine officer when entering Canada is an offence under the Quarantine Act and could lead to serious penalties, including 6 months in prison and/or \$750,000 in fines.

The Government of Canada currently contacts more than 5,500 travellers each day through live-agent or interactive automated phone calls, which verify their compliance with the mandatory isolation order.

As of May 18, 2021, 97% of the 90,044 interventions by law enforcement have resulted in compliance by travellers. However, in a minority of cases, verbal warnings, written warnings, tickets, and charges have been issued.

As of May 20, 2021, there have been 1,577 reported contraventions tickets issued for offences under the Quarantine Act.

Lab escape from Wuhan can explain coronavirus more easily

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Writing in the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, Wade said, "For the lab escape scenario, a Wuhan origin for the virus is a no-brainer. Wuhan is home to China's leading center of coronavirus research where, as noted above, researchers were genetically engineering bat coronaviruses to attack human cells. They were doing so under the minimal safety conditions of a BSL2 lab. If a virus with the unexpected infectiousness of SARS2 had been generated there, its escape would be no surprise." "It is clear that the Wuhan Institute of Virology was systematically constructing novel chimeric coronaviruses and was assessing their ability to infect human cells and human-ACE2-expressing mice," says Richard H. Ebright, a molecular biologist at Rutgers University and leading expert on biosafety. Researchers at the Wuhan Institute of Virology, led by China's leading expert on bat viruses, Shi Zheng-li or "Bat Lady," mounted frequent expeditions to the bat-infested caves of Yunnan in southern China and collected around a hundred different bat coronaviruses, Wade said. Shi then teamed up with Ralph S. Baric, an eminent coronavirus researcher at the University of North Carolina. Their work focused on enhancing the ability of bat viruses to attack humans so as to "examine the emergence potential (that is, the potential to infect humans) of circulating bat CoVs [coronaviruses]." Wade said in pursuit of this aim, in November 2015 they created a novel virus by taking the backbone of the SARS1 virus and replacing its spike protein with one from a bat virus (known as SHC014-CoV).

This manufactured virus was able to infect the cells of the human airway, at least when tested against a lab culture of such cells. Wade said natural emergence was the media's preferred theory until around February 2021 and the visit by a World Health Organization (WHO) commission to China. The commission's composition and access were heavily controlled by the Chinese authorities. Its members, kept asserting before, during, and after their visit that lab escape was extremely unlikely. But this was not quite the propaganda victory the Chinese authorities may have been hoping for. What became clear was that the Chinese had no evidence to offer the commission in support of the natural emergence theory, Wade said. This was surprising because both the SARS1 and MERS viruses had left copious traces in the environment. The intermediary host species of SARS1 was identified within four months of the epidemic's outbreak, and the host of MERS within nine months. "Yet some 15 months after the SARS2 pandemic began, and after a presumably intensive search, Chinese researchers had failed to find either the original bat population, or the intermediate species to which SARS2 might have jumped, or any serological evidence that any Chinese population, including that of Wuhan, had ever been exposed to the virus prior to December 2019. Natural emergence remained a conjecture which, however plausible to begin with, had gained not a shred of supporting evidence in over a year," Wade said. "And as long as that remains the case, it's logical to pay serious attention to the alternative conjecture, that SARS2 escaped from a lab," Wade said.

RESEARCH TO STUDY MIXING-AND-MATCHING COVID-19 VACCINES IN CANADA

The Government of Canada, through the COVID-19 Immunity Task Force (CITF) and the Vaccine Surveillance Reference Group (VSRG), is supporting a new nationwide study that will look at the effects of 'mixing-and-matching' approved COVID-19 vaccines in adults. Approximately \$4.8 million is being provided for this study, which will assess the safety and effectiveness of using two different COVID-19 vaccines for the first and second doses. The project will also study the effects of increasing the interval between doses. "As questions of vaccine interchangeability arise and alternative dosing intervals are being used in public health programs, our objective is to determine: what are the effects of different dosing intervals of the vaccines on immunity and safety?" explains Dr. Joanne Langley, co-Principal Investigator (PI) of this research project. She is also the lead investigator of the Canadian Immunization Research Network's (CIRN) Clinical Trials Network and a Professor in the Departments of Pediatrics and Community Health and Epidemiology at Dalhousie University. "We also want to know what the immune response is if two doses of different COVID-19 vaccine products are used, and how long these responses last." The study, entitled "Mix and match of the second COVID-19 vaccine dose for Safety and Immunogenicity," or MOSAIC, is expected to enroll 1,300 participants as soon as possible across CIRN clinical trial sites in Nova Scotia, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta and British Columbia. "There are currently four COVID-19 vaccines approved for use in Canada, three of which are being distributed by public health programs," says co-PI Dr. Manish Sadarangani, an Associate Professor in the Department of Pediatrics at the University of British Columbia and Director at the Vaccine Evaluation Center at BC Children's Hospital. "As other vaccines become available, they will be added to the study to address public health knowledge gaps. Study data will be communicated regularly to public health officials to help inform decision making for the ongoing vaccine rollout in Canada." "Soon after vaccine programs began, manufacturing interruptions resulted in delayed vaccine shipments to various countries, including Canada," states Dr. Scott Halperin, co-Chair of the VSRG and Principal Investigator of CIRN. "This led some provinces to change their vaccine delivery strategies, including following the National Advisory Committee on Immunization's (NACI) approved guidelines to allow second-dose immunizations to occur up to four months after the first dose, rather than the 21- to 28-day period recommended by manufacturers.

OSLER-HUMBER COLLEGE COVID-19 VACCINE CLINIC NOW OPEN TO INDIVIDUALS 12 YEARS AND OLDER WHO LIVE, WORK, OR ATTEND SCHOOL IN NORTH ETOBICOKE



William Osler Health System (Osler) is now vaccinating individuals who are 12m years of age or older at the time of their vaccination and who live, work, or attend school in North

Etoibicoke. This is in alignment with the Province's COVID-19 Vaccination Distribution Plan and Toronto Public Health. Appointments can be booked at any of Osler's vaccine clinics by phone or online through Osler's website. At all Osler COVID-19 Vaccine Clinics, individuals 12–17 years of age will receive the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, the only COVID-19 vaccine currently authorized for use in this age group.

Individuals 18 years and older will receive the Moderna vaccine, as provided by Toronto Public Health. Since Osler opened its COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic in December 2020, it has administered more than 169,000 COVID-19 vaccinations. Osler remains committed to sharing more information about vaccine rollout plans as it becomes available.

Osler Vaccine Clinic locations open to individuals 12 years and older:

Osler-Humber College COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic

207 Humber College Blvd., Etoibicoke, Ontario

Hours of operation: 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday to Friday

Century Gardens Recreation Centre

360 Voddan Street East Brampton, Ontario

Brampton Civic Hospital

2100 Bovaird Drive East Brampton, Ontario

For more information, visit www.williamoslerhs.ca.

CANADIAN RESEARCHERS STUDYING EFFECTIVENESS AND SAFETY OF COVID-19 VACCINES DURING PREGNANCY



TORONTO, (IANS) The Government of Canada will invest approximately Canadian \$1.3 million for two studies on vaccine safety and effectiveness in pregnant women. While pregnant or breastfeeding individuals were excluded from the initial mRNA and viral vector Covid-19 clinical trials, recent real-world evidence is showing that mRNA Covid-19 vaccines are safe during pregnancy. Additional research and surveillance of Covid-19 vaccination among pregnant and lactating populations are needed. The results will be communicated regularly to public health officials to help inform decision-making for the ongoing Covid-19 vaccine administration programme. Researchers from the University of British Columbia, leading the first study called COVERED, are launching a Covid-19 vaccine registry for pregnant and breastfeeding people across Canada. "We are asking pregnant and breastfeeding individuals in all 10 provinces and three territories to sign-up for the registry, after which they will be invited to fill out a survey," said study lead researcher Deborah Money, Professor at the varsity's Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology.

"Through this registry and survey, we will monitor the safety of the various vaccines for those who are pregnant and breastfeeding. We will also study whether the vaccines are more effective — or less so — in this group. It is important that these data become available to pregnant and breastfeeding individuals so that they are able to make an informed choice about getting a Covid-19 vaccine," she added.

OSLER'S BRAMPTON COVID-19 VACCINE CLINICS NOW OPEN TO INDIVIDUALS 12 YEARS AND OLDER WHO LIVE, WORK, OR ATTEND SCHOOL IN PEEL

Starting Thursday, May 20, William Osler Health System (Osler) will be vaccinating individuals who are 12 years of age or older at the time of their vaccination and who live, work, or attend school in Peel Region. This is in alignment with the Province's COVID-19 Vaccination Distribution Plan. Appointments can be booked at either Brampton Civic Hospital or Century Gardens Recreation Centre vaccination sites by phone or online through Osler's website. At both of these COVID-19 vaccine clinics, individuals will receive the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, the only COVID-19 vaccine currently authorized or use in this age group. Osler is also pleased to share that it is in the process of developing a youth-friendly environment at the Century Gardens Recreation Centre COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic. Developed in collaboration with local youth groups, the Youth Pad at Century Gardens will be Osler's primary vaccination site for Peel residents 12-15 years of age. The innovative space will provide youth with a comfortable, safe and interactive space to receive their vaccine. Osler will have pediatricians and family physicians on-site to administer the vaccine.

"Osler is proud to continue to support the COVID-19 vaccine rollout efforts in Peel Region and to expand eligibility to our community's youth," said Kiki Ferrari, Chief Operating Officer, William Osler Health System. "Developing the Youth Pad space is an important step in building vaccine confidence among some of our youngest community members, and providing a space where they feel welcome, comfortable and safe." Since Osler opened its COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic in December 2020, it has administered more than 158,000 COVID-19 vaccinations, in alignment with the Ontario Government's three-phased Vaccine Distribution Plan. Osler remains committed to sharing more information about vaccine rollout plans as it becomes available.

Osler Vaccine Clinic locations open to individuals 12 years and older:

Century Gardens Recreations Centre

360 Voddan Street East Brampton, Ontario

Hours of operation: 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Brampton Civic Hospital

2100 Bovaird Drive East Brampton, Ontario

Hours of operation: 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

For more information, visit www.williamoslerhs.ca.

CANADA INDIA HEALTHCARE SUMMIT 2021



TORONTO: The most high-profile healthcare conference in the annals of Canada India relations was held successfully as a virtual event on May 20-21, 2021. The Canada India Healthcare Summit 2021 (“CIHS 2021”), organized by Canada India Foundation (“CIF”), in partnership with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (“FICCI”), Toronto Rehab Institute-University health Network (“TRI-UHN”) and the Consul General of India in Toronto, featured about 60 speakers and several hundred attendees participating virtually from Canada, India and countries as far away as Japan and Botswana. It was the third healthcare summit being organized by CIF and, in addition to the speaking and panel sessions, it also provided the venue for the presentation of the first ever CIF Canada India Healthcare Innovation Awards to young entrepreneurs, as well as the announcement of a groundbreaking partnership between CIF and UHN on Integrated Disease Management, combining the modern medical knowledge and techniques that Canada is a leader in, and the millennia-long tradition of holistic medicine that India is known for. CIHS 2021 was a year-long initiative, that had its genesis in deliberations between Dr. V.I. Lakshmanan, past Chair of CIF and the visionary behind the series of Canada India forums organized under the aegis of CIF since 2009, the Consul General of India in Toronto, Smt. Apoorva Srivastava,

Responses and Initiatives. The high-profile organizing team was composed of Dr. Lakshmanan as Chair of the Summit, Mr. Satish Thakkar, Chair of Canada India Foundation as co-chair of the Summit, Dr. Arun Chockalingam as Chair of the Scientific and technical Committee of the Summit, as well as Dr. Milos Popovic from the Kite Research Institute – Toronto Rehab and Dr. Alok Roy, representing FICCI., along with many volunteers who put in months of dedicated effort to make the Summit a success. The quality and potential impact of the Summit can be gauged by the number of government leaders and industry healthcare experts who spoke at the Keynote, Plenary and Breakout Sessions of the Summit. Despite her busy schedule managing the procurement of COVID-19 vaccines for Canadians, Minister Anita Anand, Canada’s Minister for Procurement and Public Services, readily agreed to speak at the Summit and shared the government’s plans for ensuring that country’s population will be fully vaccinated against the virus. The High Commissioner of India to Canada, Ajay Bisaria, and the High Commissioner of Canada to India, Nadir Patel, also spoke at the Summit. The Indian Government was also represented by Rajesh Bhushan, the Health Secretary, Ministry of Health as well as Dr. Manoj Nesari, Advisor to the Ministry of Ayush. The Government of Ontario was well represented through a video address by

developers from Canada, making a total of 5 organizations involved in this leading-edge effort, represented at the Summit. In addition, heads of major hospital groups such as Dr. Randeep Guleria, Director of All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Dr. Nareesh Trehan, Chairman of Medanta Group, Dr. Sangita Reddy, Joint Managing Director of Apollo Hospitals, Dr. Alok Roy, Chairman, Medica Hospitals and Dr. Harsh Mahajan, Founder, Mahajan Imaging spoke at the Summit. Dr. Srinath Reddy, President of Public Health Foundation of India and a thought leader on India’s public health needs, was one of the Keynote speakers and he emphasized the urgency of better primary and secondary healthcare to avoid the healthcare crisis India is going through. Healthcare experts from Canada, Dr. Lakshmi Krishnan from the National Research Council, Dr. Brian Ward from Medicago and Dr. Milos Popovic from Toronto Rehab also spoke at Plenary sessions. As the Keynote and Plenary Sessions provided the big picture for healthcare in general and COVID-19 management in particular, the three Breakout Sessions addressing the three Summit themes, directed by Dr. Chockalingam, provided the attendees with a rich collection of information, ideas and recommendations for the fight against COVID-19. He was supported by Dr. Alex Mihailidis, Dr. Rohin Iyer, Dr. Michael Farkouh, Dr. Kumar Murty as session leaders, and expert speakers from Ontario, Quebec, Manitoba, Alberta, Saskatchewan and British Columbia, all corners of India as well as from parts of USA. The vale of the breakout sessions was augmented by the three webinars that had taken place earlier on the same themes. The discussions and recommendations from the sessions will be consolidated into three white papers which will be part of the Summit report.



and the Chair of CIF, Mr. Satish Thakkar. These forums included two previous Canada India Healthcare Summits, held in Toronto (2015) and New Delhi (2017). What started out as traditional face-to-face event intended to address diverse healthcare themes, quickly and seamlessly morphed into an all-virtual Summit, narrowing its focus on COVID-19. The themes chosen were Artificial Intelligence (“AI”), Biotechnology, and their efforts to overcome COVID-19, as well as Pandemic

Hon. Vic Fedeli, Minister of Economic Development, Job creation and Trade and Hon. Michael Tibollo, Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions. Speakers from India at the Summit included some of the most prominent healthcare practice and thought leaders in the country. They included major Vaccine manufacturers, Dr. Krishna Ella, Chairman of Bharat Biotech and the developer of India’s first indigenous vaccine, Covaxin, and Mr. G.V. Prasad, Co-Chair of Dr. Reddy’s Laboratories, who were joined by 3 vaccine

Two first-of-its-kind initiatives marked the conclusion of the Summit. The first-ever CIF Canada India Healthcare Innovation Awards were handed out to six deserving young healthcare entrepreneurs who were chosen from more than 30 submissions, by a panel of judges from Canada and India. It is significant to note that the sponsors of the awards, valued at \$5,000 each, were all people of Indian origin from India, Canada and the USA. 4 of the Award recipients were from India and two from Canada. The Awards presentation was followed by a blockbuster announcement of a first-ever partnership on Integrated Disease Management between CIF and UHN, which would bring together the advanced technologies in healthcare rehabilitation being developed and practiced in Canada and the millennia-old knowledge and practices of traditional holistic healthcare available in India. Funds for the \$1 million program would be raised by CIF and UHN. The program would be managed by Dr. Paul Oh of Toronto Rehab. “I am honoured to have the opportunity to chair CIHS 2021, the third Healthcare Summit and 8th Canada India theme forum organized by CIF” said Dr. Lakshmanan. “The partnership of FICCI, UHN and the Consulate General of India in organizing the conference and the high caliber of speakers who readily accepted our invitations is a clear indication of how the idea and importance of the Summit was appreciated. We are thankful to all these organizations and individuals”, he added. Mr. Satish Thakkar echoed the sentiments and said, “the Summit provided an excellent backdrop for the CIF Healthcare Innovation Awards and the CIF-UHN partnership, which will be catalysts for healthcare innovation and holistic healthcare management”. “The rich technical content of the Summit on Artificial Intelligence, Biotechnology and Pandemic Response, and ideas shared among the participants will be provide lasting value, with publication of the Summit proceedings in a professional medical journal”, said Dr. Chockalingam. Heading the Advisory Group of the Summit was Consul General Smt. Srivastava, who provided valuable guidance, sustained support and regular intervention as needed to secure key speakers from India. “I am very pleased with the way the entire Summit was conceived, organized and executed”, said Mrs. Srivastava. “I believe that the profile of the speakers, rich content of the Summit as well as the Canada India Healthcare Innovation Awards and the CIF-UHN partnership will all go a long way in strengthening India Canada relations in addition to advancing the state of healthcare in the two countries”, she added. CIHS 2021 demonstrated how a major public policy organization, promoting stronger Canada India relations can join hands with India’s premier commerce and industry group, Canada’s top healthcare provider and research institution, and the Indian consulate in Toronto, to successfully run an all-virtual healthcare summit featuring the most prominent healthcare leaders and experts in the two countries. The lasting impact of the CIHS 2021 will be a set of healthcare policy recommendations to be presented to the two governments, and the publication of highlights from the Summit proceedings in a prestigious medical journal. Highlights of the proceedings will be available on Youtube. For more information about the Summit, the Awards and the CIF-UHN partnership, please contact Dr. V.I. Lakshmanan (llakshmanan@processortech.com) or Mr. Satish Thakkar (satish@efgcanada.ca)





2 STATES, 2 LEADERS: SACHIN PILOT & SIDHU GIVING HEADACHE TO CONGRESS

CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

The new twist to the political saga of the Congress came in Rajasthan when senior Congress MLA Hemaram Choudhary, who belonged to the Pilot camp, sent his resignation to Assembly Speaker, while Ved Prakash Solanki, from the same camp turned vocal against the government, demanding that power should be decentralised and the party workers should be given more opportunities.

Solanki said, "Senior MLAs are not being heard in the present government. Hemaram Choudhary has just resigned. A thorough probe should be conducted to find out why the senior leader and six-time MLA had to step down." Solanki belongs to the group of MLAs who under the leadership of Pilot had rebelled against the leadership of Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot in July last year. However, the 19 rebel MLAs were re-inducted into the party after senior Congress leaders stepped in to sort out the matter, including Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and the late Ahmed Patel.

Sachin Pilot did not say anything directly but said, Choudhary is most honest and respected leader hinting that all is not well in the state. While Congress is likely to constitute a committee for Punjab but the committee formed for Rajasthan has not come out with any amicable solution since the demise of Ahmed Patel last year. The Pilot camp is getting restless as it's about a year when he rebelled only to come back in the party fold, since then he is putting pressure on the party to accommodate his loyalists in the government but somehow Gehlot has managed to evade the issue. Similarly in Punjab, Sidhu has openly called the disgruntled leaders to go to Delhi and air their grievances to the party leadership. Navjot Singh Sidhu has been training guns at Chief Amarinder Singh over the 2015 sacrilege issue and calling for party leaders to go to Delhi

and raise it with the top leadership, the Congress on Friday said it was seized of the matter and will soon act.

Congress General Secretary, Organisation, K.C. Venugopal said: "We are watching it and will take a call on it" while terming it an "organisational issue". Sources say that the party is likely to constitute a committee to look into the issue in Punjab, where Assembly elections are due next year. Cricketer-turned-politician Sidhu, who had been lying low since his resignation from the state Cabinet in July 2019, has launched scathing attack this month against the Chief Minister over his government's action over the alleged desecration of the Guru Granth Sahib in 2015 when the Akali Dal-BJP government was in power, and accused him of "shielding the Badals". Charging the Chief Minister with taking action against his own party leaders instead, Sidhu, in a tweet on Thursday, said: "In 2019, I began & ended my Election Campaign in Punjab seeking - Justice for Sacrilege of Guru Granth Sahib Ji & punishing the culprits & the ONE shielding them... Now, Our MLAs & Party Workers must go to Delhi & speak the Truth of Punjab to our High Command, as I regularly do."

As his attacks on Amarinder Singh saw pushback from other ministers, who demanded his suspension from the party for indiscipline, Sidhu had urged the Chief Minister to stop firing from "colleagues' shoulders", and asked "... Who will protect you in court of the Great Guru?" Taking a tough stance last month, Amarinder Singh had said that if Sidhu "wants to contest against him, then he is free to do so but that would only lead to Sidhu meeting the fate of (former Army chief and Akali Dal candidate) General J.J. Singh who had lost his security deposit". He had also challenged Sidhu to clearly spell out whether he is a Congress member or not.

EGYPT-BROKERED CEASEFIRE BETWEEN ISRAEL-HAMAS COMES INTO EFFECT

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The heaviest fighting between Israel and the Gaza militants since 2014 has so far killed 232 Palestinians, including 65 children, and 12 Israelis. After mediation by Egypt, Israel's Cabinet approved the unilateral ceasefire late on Thursday, with a Hamas representative confirming the Islamist organization's agreement shortly afterwards. Taher al-Nuno said the Palestinian "armed resistance" would honour the ceasefire as long as it is upheld by the Israel side.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said his country's political leadership has stressed that the reality on the ground will determine whether fighting continues.

If the Palestinians continue with rocket attacks, the ceasefire will be lifted immediately, he added.

US President Joe Biden welcomed the ceasefire, expressing "sincere gratitude" to Egypt for its role in brokering the deal.

"I extend my sincere gratitude to President al-Sisi and the senior Egyptian officials who played such a critical role in this diplomacy," Biden said at the White House.

He said the US, the UN and other partners stand ready to help the Palestinian Authority with humanitarian aid and reconstruction assistance. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres welcomed the ceasefire and called on all sides to observe it.

Israeli forces and Gaza Strip militants have fired thousands of missiles back and forth since May 10, in response to the rockets fired by Palestinian militants in Gaza to retaliate for Israel's violation of the sacred Islamic holy site of Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem.

According to the Israeli Defence Forces, the Palestinian side fired some 4,070 rockets towards the Jewish state.

But over 90 per cent of the rockets heading toward populated areas were intercepted by Israel's Iron Dome.

About a third fell inside the Gaza Strip.

In response, Israeli fighter jets kept carrying out intensive airstrikes on buildings and infrastructure in the besieged enclave.

RAMDEV DESERVES TO BE PROSECUTED FOR TRASHING MODERN MEDICINE: INDIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION (IMA)

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In a video circulated on social media, Ramdev was heard saying allopathy is "a stupid science" and medicines such as remdesivir, faviflu, and other drugs approved by the Drugs Controller General of India have failed to treat Covid-19 patients. In a letter to Ramdev, Harsh Vardhan said: "The statement disrespects the corona warriors and hurt the sentiments of the country. Your statement on allopathy can break the morale of healthcare workers and weaken our fight against Covid-19. " Allopathic medicines have saved lives of crores of people and comments that it is responsible for death of lakhs is extremely unfortunate, he added. The development comes after the Indian Medical Association (IMA) on Saturday condemned Ramdev's remarks and demanded action against him. In a stinging attack on Ramdev, the Indian Medical Association (IMA) has alleged that the yoga guru is creating a false sense of fear and frustration in the public at large so that he can sell his 'illegal' and 'unapproved' so-called medicines and make money at the cost of the people. "IMA brings to the notice of our Health Minister, a video circulating in social media portraying the celebrated Yoga guruji addressing 'ALLOPATHY EK AISI STUPID AUR DIWALIYA SCIENCE HAI'. In the past too, he had uttered modern medical doctors as murderers in the presence of the Health Minister himself on the pretext of the release of his wonder drugs," the IMA said in a statement. "However, it is a well-known fact that the said yoga guruji and his associate Balkrishna Ji have been taking modern medical allopathy treatment as and when they get into illness. Now to mislead the public at large, he is making all false and baseless acquisitions so that he can sell his illegal and unapproved drugs," IMA said. "In this address, he has further claimed that Remdesivir, Faviflu and all other approved drugs by the DCGI have failed, and stated that 'LAKHO LOGO KI MAUT ALLOPATHY KI DAWAI KHANE SE HUI HAI', challenging the wisdom and integrity of DCGI and the head of all these, our Health Minister," the statement said. Remdesivir and Faviflu have been approved by the Central Drug Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) and were notified for use for Covid patients by the Central government in June-July, 2020. The said notification was made by the Central government u/s 2A of the Epidemic Decease Act, 1897. "Therefore, u/s 3 of the Epidemic Decease Act read with Section 188 of IPC, Ramdev deserves to be prosecuted for disobeying and causing danger to the lives of many by making them believe not to take the advice of allopathy drugs. His quote about Favipiravir as medicine against fever/antipyretic is laughable and childish, and demonstrates his in-depth scientific knowledge," IMA added. "Besides being an internationally adorned yoga guru, he is a corporate giant of a pharmaceutical unit and has made several false acquisitions about his company products time and again to mislead the public. The controversies over Coronil and Swasari are well-known to all, and the criminal complaint in Muzaffarour court by social worker Tamanna Hashmi for misleading and putting to risk the lives of a large number of people is a proof to his misadventures," the statement added.

FRESHCO'S DONATION TO SUPPORT INDIA COVID-19 CRISIS



FreshCo and Chalo! FreshCo Present Cheque for \$50,000 to the Canadian Red Cross, Supporting the India COVID-19 Response.

Today, in an effort to support India's COVID-19 response, senior executives from FreshCo and Chalo! FreshCo presented a cheque for \$50,000 to the Canadian Red Cross at the Chalo! FreshCo Brampton store on Airport Road. These funds will directly support preparedness, response and recovery activities on the ground in India, helping communities that have been affected or are at risk of being affected by the deadly virus. Today's donation cheque was presented by Tony McGrath, VP Operations, Discount Format, Sobeys Inc., Donny Sandher, National Chalo Operations District Operator, Discount Format, Sobeys Inc. and Hamza Rizwan, Chalo! FreshCo Store Owner to Canadian Red Cross. Please see attached pictures for your reference. FreshCo and Chalo! FreshCo's stores across the country will be promoting the Red Cross appeal for donations with in-store communication, encouraging community members to donate directly to this relief effort in the days and weeks to come.

OSLER FOUNDATION RAISES \$109 MILLION OVER TEN YEARS

You Have The Power campaign successfully completed and supported by more than 34,000 donors Ten years after launching the You Have The Power campaign, William Osler Health System Foundation (Osler Foundation) has raised \$109 million in support of William Osler Health System (Osler). The ambitious decade-long campaign set out to raise \$100 million to support evolving health care needs of the community. "Thanks to 34,000 donors, we were able to surpass our ambitious fundraising goal," said Ken Mayhew, President and CEO, Osler Foundation. "We are so grateful to our community, our champions and to every single person who contributed to the campaign. From local fundraisers to multi-million dollar gifts, this was truly a community effort." Funds raised supported the building and equipping of Peel Memorial Centre for Integrated Health and Wellness. This innovative multi-purpose facility opened in 2017 and lays a strong foundation for the recently approved Phase II of the redevelopment and the incredible impact it will have on the community. The campaign also helped open the new patient tower at Etobicoke General Hospital in 2019. With a state-of-the-art emergency department, and critical and intensive care units nearly four times larger than before, this tower has become essential to Osler's ability to navigate patient

care during COVID-19. Additionally, the campaign funded vital and cutting edge equipment for Brampton Civic Hospital, helping staff and physicians save lives and improve health outcomes for patients closer to home.

"Exceptional patient care calls for exceptional and innovative health care facilities and equipment. This campaign has made it possible for Osler staff and physicians to continuously meet the needs of our community especially over the past year," said Dr. Naveed Mohammad, President & CEO, William Osler Health System. "Together, you have truly transformed Osler to be the best we can be, when you needed us most."

While the You Have The Power campaign has officially closed, Osler Foundation continues to fundraise to help support Osler and its teams. For more than a year, Osler's staff, physicians and volunteers—our Health Care Heroes—have been on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic, providing compassionate care for some of the hardest-hit communities in Ontario. Donations to the Osler Foundation Compassion Fund will help support the most urgent needs of our Health Care Heroes, including resources needed to ensure their emotional and mental well-being as they continue working day and night through the pandemic. Donations can be made at oslerfoundation.org/covid19



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CONSUMER PRICE INDEX (CPI) RISES 3.4% IN APRIL, UP FROM 2.2% GAIN IN MARCH: STATISTICS CANADA

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose 3.4% on a year-over-year basis in April, up from a 2.2% gain in March. A significant proportion of this increase was attributable to a steep decline in prices in April 2020, as the monthly CPI rose 0.5% in April 2021. On a seasonally adjusted monthly basis, the CPI rose 0.6% in April. Excluding energy, the CPI was up 1.6% year over year in April, following a 1.1% increase in March.

In April 2020, the headline CPI fell 0.2% year over year—the first CPI decline in over a decade. As a result of the broad decrease in prices in 2020, base-year effects continued to have an upward impact on consumer inflation, contributing to the strong acceleration in April 2021. Base-year effects and the CPI: The COVID-19 pandemic experience The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a standard measure of the price of a representative basket of goods and services. The headline consumer inflation is measured as the percentage change between the CPI in the current month (April 2021) and the CPI in a base month or the same calendar month of the previous year (April 2020). A base-year effect refers to the impact that price movements from 12 months earlier have on the current month's headline consumer inflation. When a large downward price change in the base month stops influencing—or falls out of—the 12-month price movement, this has an upward effect on the headline CPI in the current month. Conversely, a large upward price change in the base month creates downward pressure on the current month's measure. In spring 2020, the global economy was dramatically affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and Canadian consumers experienced a significant decline in prices from February to April 2020. Headline consumer inflation slowed from +2.2% in February 2020 to +0.9% in March 2020 and -0.2% in April 2020, the largest two-month slowdown in year-over-year CPI growth since 1992. The broad decline in prices at the onset of the pandemic, led by energy products, had an upward impact on the year-over-year rate of consumer inflation in April 2021, because significantly lower prices from April 2020 were used as the basis for year-over-year

comparison.

For instance, gasoline prices were 62.5% higher in April 2021 compared with April 2020, when prices reached an 11-year low in the early weeks of the pandemic. The upward impact of these base-year effects will be temporary, as price declines observed in April 2020 will fall out of the 12-month price movement. Users should consider the impact of base-year effects when interpreting the 12-month price movement.

Year-over-year consumer price growth (+3.4%) in April rose at its fastest pace since May 2011 amid the third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, mostly because prices fell sharply during the early months of the pandemic. As some regions extended restrictions to limit the spread of COVID-19, causing employment losses for some Canadians, prices grew 0.5% month over month in April 2021, the same growth rate as in March 2021. Prices rose in every major component on a year-over-year basis. Transportation prices (+9.4%) increased in April, mainly because of higher gasoline prices compared with April 2020. The price of gasoline rose 62.5% on a year-over-year basis in April, the largest year-over-year increase on record. The gain in gasoline prices was mainly driven by steep price declines in April 2020, when gasoline fell 15.2% month over month as a result of limited travel, temporary business closures, and lower levels of international trade, which created an oversupply of gasoline in the market.

In addition, the rise in gasoline prices was partially attributable to the maintenance of production cuts by OPEC+ countries (countries from the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries Plus), amid increased demand. Shelter prices were up 3.2% year over year in April after rising 2.4% the previous month. The homeowners' replacement cost index (+9.1%) continued to trend upwards, posting its largest gain since April 1989. Higher building costs and demand for single-family homes contributed to an increase in prices for newly built homes.



Y MEDIA COVID & VACCINE REPORT

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This includes outdoor gatherings of up to 25 people, outdoor sports and leagues, personal care services where face coverings can be worn and with capacity limits, as well as indoor religious services, rites or ceremony gatherings at 15 per cent capacity.

STEP-3

70 to 80 per cent of adults vaccinated with one dose and 25 per cent vaccinated with two doses.

Expanding access to indoor settings, with restrictions, including where there are larger numbers of people and where face coverings can't always be worn. This includes indoor sports and recreational fitness; indoor dining, museums, art galleries and libraries, and casinos and bingo halls, with capacity limits.

The province will remain in each step for at least 21 days to evaluate any impacts on key public health and health system indicators. If at the end of the 21 days, the following vaccination thresholds have been met, along with positive trends in other key public health and health system indicators, then the province will move to the next step


Based on current trends in key health indicators, including the provincial vaccination rate, the government expects to enter Step One of the Roadmap the week of June 14, 2021. The province will confirm closer to the expected start of Step One.

"While we know that now is not yet the moment to reopen, Ontarians deserve to know the path forward on what we will carefully reopen and when starting with the settings we know are safest," said Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health. "Brighter days are ahead and we believe this Roadmap represents a path out of the pandemic and will encourage Ontarians to get vaccinated and to continue following public health advice."


The province-wide emergency brake restrictions remain in effect while the province assesses when it will be moving to Step One of the roadmap with the Stay at Home order expiring on June 2, 2021. During this time, the government will continue to work with stakeholders on reopening plans to ensure full awareness of when and how they can begin to safely reopen.

Due to the continuing success of Ontario's vaccine rollout and the collective efforts of Ontarians in following public health and workplace safety measures to date, effective May 22, 2021, at 12:01 a.m. the province will reopen outdoor recreational amenities with restrictions in place, such as the need to maintain physical distancing. These amenities include but are not limited to golf courses and driving ranges, soccer and other sports fields, tennis and basketball courts, and skate parks. No outdoor sports or recreational classes are permitted. Outdoor limits for social gatherings and organized public events will be expanded to five people, which will allow these amenities to be used for up to five people, including members of different households. All other public health and workplace safety measures under the provincially funded and private elementary and secondary schools in the province will continue to operate under teacher-led remote learning. Data will be assessed on an ongoing basis and medical experts, including the Chief Medical Officer of Health, and other health officials will be consulted to determine if it may be safe to resume in-person learning.

"Due to the stringent efforts of Ontarians following public health and workplace safety measures, we have reached the point where we can begin preparing to exit the provincially emergency brake and lift the Stay-at-Home order," said Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health. "We must remain vigilant, however, as the fight against COVID-19 is not over and our case counts, ICU capacity and hospitalizations are still concerning. It remains critical that all Ontarians continue to follow all public health and workplace safety measures currently in place to help further reduce transmission and save lives." The government will continue to work with the Public Health Measures Table, Public Health Ontario, and other public health and scientific experts to determine public health guidance for Ontarians to follow, including protocols for masking and outdoor/indoor gatherings, after being fully vaccinated.



Beginning the week of May 24, individuals who received their first dose of AstraZeneca between March 10-19 can book their appointment for a second dose



BEGINNING WEEK OF MAY 24, ONTARIO TO ADMINISTER SECOND DOSE OF ASTRAZENECACOV19 VACCINE, STARTING WITH THOSE WHO RECEIVED THEIR FIRST DOSE BETWEEN MARCH 10 AND 19 (CHRISTINE ELLIOT/TWITTER).

Ontario opening up outdoor visits for long-term care



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HEALTH FRATERNITY NOW CONCERNED WITH COVID-INDUCED WHITE FUNGUS

NEW DELHI, (IANS) As India grapples with alarmingly rising cases of the Black Fungus (Mucormycosis disease) after battling severe oxygen shortage amidst the second wave of the pandemic, the health fraternity is now concerned with White Fungus which is being reported among Covid-recovered patients who are on long-term steroid use and suffer from severe uncontrolled diabetes, among other conditions. White Fungus has generally been seen in immuno-compromised people like those on chemotherapy or undergoing bone marrow transplant. Covid-19 itself is a condition which predisposes body to other added infections via use of high-dose steroids, broad spectrum antibiotics, monoclonal antibodies and industrial oxygen, which can carry mucor during non-sterilised equipment for humidification. Now, a case of White Fungus has been found in a Covid-recovered patient from Mau district in Uttar Pradesh, and the health fraternity fear that many such cases are going unreported. "White Fungus usually referred as to infection from Candidiasis. It is usually seen as an opportunistic infection among immunocompromised host such as patients with HIV, on anti-cancer therapy, on long-term steroid use or severe uncontrolled diabetes," said Harshal R. Salve, Associate Professor at the Centre for Community Medicine, AIIMS, New Delhi. According to Pratibha Dogra, senior pulmonologist from W Pratiksha Hospital in Gurugram, first signs or symptoms could be severe headache and pain in the sinus area, blackish growth or discharge from nose. "Diagnosis is

simple through routine microscopic sample of mucor growth. If not diagnosed early, it has mortality of over 50 per cent," she said. The White Fungus is a condition that may affect not just Covid patients, but any patient with a significant impairment of immunity. "The increased incidents of multi-drug resistant, lethal Candida infections (even in the immunocompetent) had become a growing challenge in healthcare even prior to the Covid pandemic," said Ranjit Mohan, Consultant -Internal Medicine, Infectious Diseases, Manipal Hospitals. The use of steroid medications may predispose to the development of fungal infections. "This is because steroids simultaneously cause immune suppression as well as elevation in blood sugar levels, creating a favourable condition for fungal growth. Prolonged intravenous steroid therapy increases the chances of fungal infections," Mohan suggested. This condition is most frequently encountered among diabetics and among the elderly. "Also, a great incidence is noted when Covid 19 infections occur in patients with pre-existing immune deficiencies," Mohan said. Treatment for White Fungus is Amphotericin B and Voriconazole while Echinocandins and posaconazole medicines can also be used. "Better immunity, good glycemic control, rational steroid use and maintaining personal hygiene and adequate indoor ventilation are keys to prevent this disease," Salve told IANS.

WRESTLER MURDER CASE: SUSHIL KUMAR ARRESTED, SENT TO 6 DAYS POLICE CUSTODY

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Northern Railway spokesperson Deepak Kumar said, "A case against Sushil Kumar, (Adhoc)JAG/ IRTS, on premature repatriation to Northern Railway from NDMC, in respect of a criminal offence, is under investigation. He was detained in police custody on May 23 for a period exceeding forty-eight hours."
"Now, therefore Sushil Kumar JAG/ (Adhoc) IRTS is deemed to have been suspended with effect from the date of detention i.e. May 23, 2021 in terms of Rule 5 (2) of (D&A) Rules, 1968 and shall remain under suspension until further orders," he said.
Kumar was arrested after staying on the run for 18 days after the death of wrestler Dhankar.
According to Delhi Police officials, Kumar had travelled to Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Haryana during the 18-day-long cat and mouse chase game.
He was finally arrested from Delhi's Mundka area on Sunday morning, when he had come to collect some cash and also borrowed a scooter from a national level player. The Delhi Police had also announced a reward of Rs 1 lakh on Kumar and Rs 50,000 on his aide Ajay. Kumar was sent to six days' custody by a Delhi court.
On May 18, Kumar had moved an anticipatory bail plea in New Delhi's



Rohini court, but the court rejected it.
On May 4, two groups of wrestlers clashed with each other at Chhatrasal Stadium leading to the death of 23-year-old Dhankar due to injuries he sustained during the brawl. A Delhi court had also issued a non-bailable warrant (NBW) against Kumar.
The Delhi Police had also issued a lookout notice for Kumar who won a bronze medal in the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games and silver in the 2012 London Olympic Games.

NO HOME ISOLATION TO BE ALLOWED FOR COVID PATIENTS IN 18 MAHARASHTRA DISTRICTS WITH HIGH POSITIVITY RATE

The Maharashtra government has decided to stop home quarantining of COVID-19 patients in 18 districts where the positivity rate is high and all active patients in these areas would be admitted to COVID Care Centers, health minister Rajesh Tope said here on Tuesday. Of 36 districts in the state, Satara, Sindhudurg, Ratnagiri, Osmanabad, Beed, Raigad, Pune, Hingoli, Akola, Amravati, Kolhapur, Thane, Sangli, Gadchiroli, Wardha, Nashik, Ahmednagar and Latur have above-average positivity rates, as per the health department data. Ordinarily, asymptomatic patients or those who have mild symptoms of coronavirus infection are advised home isolation. The state has 3,27,000 active COVID-19 cases and the recovery rate has improved to 93 per cent. The case positivity rate — proportion of positive cases in tested samples — is around 12 per cent while the case fatality rate is 1.5 per cent, Tope told reporters here. But the positivity rate in 18 districts is higher than the state average, he said.
"The state government has decided to stop home isolation completely in these 18 districts. The district collectors have been asked to set up more COVID Care Centers (CCCs) and admit all active patients there," he said.
The collectors have also been asked to utilise the funds from the premium collected on the auction of minor minerals for setting up CCCs in villages, he added. "Testing has to be done in a focused manner. Once a person tests positive for coronavirus, all high- and low- risks persons (who may have come in contact with the patient) should be tested. The collectors of the 18 districts (with high positivity rate) have been instructed to avoid random testing in large numbers to artificially bring down the positivity rate," the health minister said. All district collectors have also been directed to complete fire safety audits of hospitals in their areas, he informed.

‘May 26 protest is not a show of strength but of resistance’: SKM leaders

Even as fresh convoys of farmers have been making their way towards Delhi from Punjab and Haryana for May 26, which is being observed as a nationwide 'Resistance Day' to mark six months of protests at the national capital's borders, leaders of Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) told The Indian Express that they are not aiming at a show of strength but a symbolic protest with Covid protocols in place. Dr Darshan Pal, member of SKM and president of Krantikari Kisan Union, Punjab, said, "We will protest in villages, cities, and on the Delhi borders. However, it will not be a show of strength, but miment. We will do it by wearing black turbans, dupattas or clothes...farmers will erect black flags on their rooftops, tractors, and burn effigies of the Modi government in every village and at pakka dharmas in Punjab and at Delhi borders. No doubt some movement of farmers has taken place but our focus is not on numbers. We will observe the protest by maintaining social distance and other Covid norms." Asked if there is any justification for crowds amidst this virulent second wave, he said, "It is unfortunate that the government is labeling us as villains while taking no responsibility for our plight. They need to better their earlier proposal, farmers are risking their lives for genuine demands." Sukhdev Singh Kokrikalan, general secretary of BKU (Ugrahan), the union with the largest following in Punjab, said they had held village-level meetings to decide the future course amidst the second wave, but the villagers were adamant on carrying on with the dharnas, albeit with reduced strength: "The government is wrongly projecting us as the cause of Covid, we are protesting in open spaces on Delhi borders where our strength has reduced substantially. Even on Sunday, we did not send more than 4,000 persons to be part of the May 26 dharna, and that too in buses with 50 per cent seating capacity." Listing the steps they are taking at the Delhi borders to keep Covid-19 at bay, he said, "We conduct sanitisation regularly, our farmers do gargles, take steam every day, and isolate anyone who develops even a slight symptom.

SONU SOOD ANNOUNCES OXYGEN PLANTS IN ANDHRA PRADESH



MUMBAI, (IANS) Actor SonuSood took to social media on Saturday to announce that he would be setting up a couple of oxygen plants in Andhra Pradesh in June.
"Very happy to announce that the first set of my oxygen plants will be set up at Kurnool Government Hospital and one at District Hospital, Atmakur, Nellore, AP in the month of June! This would be followed by setting more plants in the other needy states! Time to support rural India," SonuSood tweeted.
The actor has been arranging oxygen concentrators and other necessary equipment for Covid patients as India battles the second wave of the pandemic. He also regularly communicates with netizens reaching out to him on Twitter and other platforms seeking oxygen and other necessities.
Sonu recently took to social media to warn netizens again fraudsters using his name to extract money from people.
SonuSood reacted to a user's tweet who shared how she allegedly got calls from SonuSood Foundation asking her to pay Rs 10,000 for membership. Reacting to the post on Friday, Sonu tweeted: "Anyone who asks for money is a fake. Please don't fall in any trap. My services are FREE. @SoodFoundation."

CONGRESS WRITES TO TWITTER ON TOOLKIT CASE; SEEKS 'MANIPULATIVE MEDIA' TAG ON UNION MINISTERS' TWEETS



The Congress on Tuesday wrote to Twitter demanding 'manipulative media' tag on tweets of several Union ministers for allegedly spreading lies and malicious propaganda.
In this regard, Congress general secretary and chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala has written to Twitter's Lead for Legal, Policy and Trust and Safety Vijaya Gadde and Deputy General Counsel and Vice President (Legal) Jim Baker. The Congress leader sought action against several Union ministers in the Narendra Modi-led BJP government at the Centre for spreading forged documents through their official Twitter handles. Surjewala alleged that "the subject matter of the forged Toolkit document was created by certain BJP leaders to gain undue and wrongful political advantage by spreading potentially dangerous, false and fabricated material through their Twitter handles against the Indian National Congress and its leaders".

AS RAMDEV COURTS CONTROVERSY, PATANJAJI'S DAIRY BIZ HEAD DIES OF COVID



NEW DELHI, (IANS) As yoga guru Ramdev continues to stoke controversy with his comments about allopathic medicines and Covid, the head of his Patanjali Ayurveda's dairy business has died due to Covid-related complications. Sunil Bansal, 57, contracted Covid and breathed his last on May 19 in Rajasthan.
Ramdev had sparked an uproar after purportedly calling allopathy a "stupid science". This has led the Indian Medical Association (IMA) to demand that the Union Health Ministry take action against him, but Patanjali denied the allegations against him, saying that he was only reading a "forwarded WhatsApp message".
On Sunday, Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan also wrote to Ramdev, saying his statement was an insult to doctors working on the Covid frontlines and asked him to withdraw it. While Ramdev had complied, in a 140-second clip that went viral last week, he is heard saying that "lakhs have died from taking allopathic medicines for Covid-19".

HARYANA GOVT TO DISTRIBUTE 1 LAKH CORONIL KITS AMONG COVID-19 PATIENTS

One lakh Coronil kits of Patanjali Ayurved will be distributed among coronavirus patients in Haryana free of cost, state Health Minister Anil Vij said on Monday.
The announcement comes amid a row over Yoga guru Ramdev's comments against allopathy. In a strongly-worded letter to Ramdev, Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan said his remarks on allopathic medicine were "extremely unfortunate", following which the yoga guru withdrew his statements. Vij said half of the cost of these kits has been borne by Patanjali and the other half by the Haryana government's 'COVID Relief Fund'. The kit contains three items—Coronil tablets, Swasari Vati and Anu Taila. Ramdev had introduced Ayurveda-based Coronil on June 23 last year, when the pandemic was at its peak. "One lakh Patanjali Coronil kits will be distributed free of cost among the COVID patients in Haryana. Half of the cost of Coronil has been borne by Patanjali and half by Haryana government's COVID Relief Fund," Vij said in a tweet in Hindi. Meanwhile, he said pressure swing adsorption (PSA) oxygen plants will be set up in eight districts of the state in collaboration with the central government.



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