



**FARMERS DATABASE
WILL INCREASE TO 8
CR BY DEC 2021:
TOMAR |P3**



**AROUND 65% NOT
SATISFIED WITH THE
WORK OF PUNJAB CM
|P9**

**KANGANA CONFIDENT 'THALAIVII'
WILL WOO AUDIENCES BACK TO
THEATRES |P16**



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CHINA EMERGES AS WINNER WHILE INDIA SCRIPTS HISTORY AT OLYMPIC PARALYMPIC GAMES WITH A RECORD TALLY OF 19 MEDALS (KIREN RIJIJU/ TWITTER).



CANADA BAGS 21 MEDALS IN THE MOST UNIQUE PARALYMPIC GAMES IN HISTORY (CANADIAN PARALYMPIC COMMITTEE/ TWITTER)

LIBERAL LEADER TRUDEAU DEFENDS ELECTION CALL AMID PANDEMIC IN LEADERS' DEBATE

OTTAWA, (IANS) In the first of three televised leaders' debates during the Canadian election campaign, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau was put on the defensive by his political opponents for calling an early national vote amid the Covid-19 pandemic. An election is needed now to allow Canadians to "weigh in on how we will end this pandemic" and "choose how we finish this", said Trudeau, who positioned his governing Liberal Party as best suited to continue the work it has done, particularly in obtaining enough vaccines for everyone eligible to receive a dose, reports Xinhua news agency.



| CONTD. ON PAGE 7

TALIBAN LEADER MULLAH HASAN AKHUND TO LEAD NEW AFGHAN GOVT

NEW DELHI, (IANS) The Taliban announced on Tuesday that Mullah Mohammad Hasan Akhund will be the leader of the new Afghanistan government. Taliban's chief spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said that Taliban co-founder Abdul Ghani Baradar will be the deputy leader.



| CONTD. ON PAGE 11

INDO-CANADIANS SHOCKED AFTER PRABHJOT SINGH KATRI, 23, SUSPICIOUSLY MURDERED IN TRURO TOWN IN NOVA SCOTIA IN SUSPECTED HATE CRIME

TORONTO, (IANS) A 23-year-old Indian youth from Punjab has been murdered in Canada. Prabhjot Singh Katri was found murdered early on Sunday morning near his residence in the city of Truro in Nova Scotia. The victim came to Canada from India in 2017 for higher studies. After finishing his studies, he was on a work visa and was driving a cab to earn his livelihood.



| CONTD. ON PAGE 11

FRONTRUNNERS LIBERALS, CONSERVATIVES CONTINUE TO CLASP IN A TIE

Y MEDIA EDITOR'S TAKE

Looking at the poll surveys from different polling organizations, I think the race is too close to call. We clearly have the two frontrunners- the Liberals and the Conservatives. The only thing which looks certain at this point, and even that might change, is that we are heading towards another minority government. I am eagerly waiting to watch if the two debates (French and English) affect the support for the two frontrunners."



- YUDHVIR JASWAL,
GROUP EDITOR - Y MEDIA

| DETAILS ON PAGE 8

Y MEDIA COVID & VACCINE REPORT

- *Canada opens its doors for non-essential purposes to foreign travellers who are fully vaccinated with Canada's approved Covid-19 vaccines (Pfizer, Moderna, AstraZeneca/ Covishield and Johnson & Johnson).*
- *Starting September 22, Ontario to require proof of vaccination in select settings such as restaurants, bars, meeting and event space and sporting events.*
- *Most of Ontario students return in person learning in schools.*
- *Over 84% Ontarians 12+ inoculated with first dose of Covid-19 vaccine, 77.3% fully vaccinated. Over 84.3% of Canadians have received one dose of Covid-19, 75.2% fully vaccinated.*

C-VOTER SURVEY PROJECTS 4-1 SCORELINE IN FAVOUR OF BJP IN 2022 POLLS, AAP EMERGING AS SINGLE LARGEST PARTY IN PUNJAB

Punjab is likely to witness a hung Assembly, with AAP emerging as the single largest party in the state in the 2022 state polls, as per the ABP-CVoter-IANS opinion poll. The battle for the throne of Punjab is between INC and AAP. Erstwhile NDA composed of BJP and Shiromani Akali Dal is no more in contention for power in 2022. Incumbent Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh is facing strong anti-incumbency. In the latest round of opinion poll conducted in the state, while 64.8% of the respondents said they were dissatisfied with the performance of sitting chief minister, only 12.6% of those interviewed stated that they were very much satisfied and 19.0 said they were satisfied to some extent with his performance. A strong anti-incumbency sentiment is prevalent not only against the sitting Chief Minister but with the overall Congress government in the state as 60.8% of the respondents expressed strong dissatisfaction with the performance of state government. Similarly, majority of the respondents - 51% expressed dissatisfaction with the sitting MLAs of their constituencies. This anti-incumbency sentiment combined with non-ending feud between Chief Minister Amarinder Singh and PCC chief Navjot Singh Sidhu has created an opening for the AAP to rise as the main challenger. As things stand today, while Congress is projected to win a 28.8% vote share in Punjab, AAP is projected to grab 35.1% votes, SAD is projected to secure 21.8% votes and BJP is projected to win 7.3 % vote share. Translated into seats there is a possibility of hung house in Punjab

Assembly 2022. AAP could be the single largest party as the party is projected to grab 51 to 57 seats. Congress may finish a strong second by winning 38 to 46 seats, SAD is likely to grab 16 to 24 seats and BJP may notch 0 to 1 seats. The total strength of Punjab assembly is 117 seats. The strong anti-incumbency against sitting Chief Minister Amarinder Singh is also reflected in the fact that only 17.9% of the respondents consider him as the most preferred choice for the post of chief minister. The survey revealed that AAP does not have a credible face from Punjab, who can be projected as chief minister face of the party. While 21.6% of the respondents said that Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal is their preferred choice to be the next chief minister of the state, only 16.1% consider Bhagwant Mann, AAP's face in Punjab as the preferred choice for the top job in the state. 18.8% stated that Akali Dal leader Sukhbir Badal was their most preferred choice for the post of chief minister. According to the survey data, price rise and farmers' issues are key issues of concern for the electorate of the state. 33.5% of the respondents said that spiraling price rise was a major issue of concern, 28.6% of those interviewed during the survey stated that issues related to agriculture/farmers was their top concern. The party states, "Impressed by the work done by the Arvind Kejriwal-led Delhi government for the welfare of the people, people of Punjab want to form AAP government in order to develop the state as has been done by AAP in Delhi."

| CONTD. ON PAGE 9

FEDERAL ELECTION DEBATE LIVE ON CHANNEL Y CANADIAN FEDERAL ELECTION 2021



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- Top-rated **climate plan** that will create jobs and reduce pollution;
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- Toughening our laws on **banned assault weapons**;
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2021 Federal Election: Debate Broadcast Group Announces Themes and Format of English-language Debate

OTTAWA: The Debate Broadcast Group today announced the themes and format of this Thursday’s English-language federal leaders’ debate.

The debate will cover five themes (in alphabetical order):

The format of the two-hour, commercial-free debate includes five segments, each corresponding to one of the five themes.

Affordability

Climate

COVID recovery

Leadership and accountability

Reconciliation

These topics were chosen based in part on the 20,201 responses to a questionnaire that was published on the websites of Debate Broadcast Group partners, including APTN News, CBC News, CTV News, and Global News.

The format of the two-hour, commercial-free debate includes five segments, each corresponding to one of the five themes. All five segments will include:

Question from a voter

Question from the moderator or a journalist to each leader

Leader-to-leader-to-leader debate (3 of the 5 leaders)

Open debate (all 5 leaders)

Each leader will be given the chance to speak during each segment.



The five leaders invited by the Leaders’ Debates Commission are (in alphabetical order by last name): Yves-François Blanchet (Bloc Québécois), Erin O’Toole (Conservative Party of Canada), Annamie Paul (Green Party of Canada), Jagmeet Singh (New Democratic Party), and Justin Trudeau (Liberal Party of Canada).

The English debate will take place on Thursday, September 9 at the Canadian Museum of History in Gatineau, Quebec from 9 to 11 p.m. EDT. It will be moderated by Shachi Kurl, President of the Angus Reid Institute, with the participation of journalists Rosemary Barton (CBC News), Melissa Ridgen (APTN News), Evan Solomon (CTV News) and Mercedes Stephenson (Global News).

Last Wednesday, September 1, representatives from the five political parties took part in random draws to determine the following: time of advance visit to the venue, on-stage lectern position, order of questioning during the debate, order of arrival at the venue and order of the post-debate press conferences.

Modi most preferred for PM's post, way ahead of Rahul Gandhi: c-voter survey

NEW DELHI, (IANS) As many as 51.6 per cent of the respondents in the five poll-bound states of Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Goa and Manipur prefer Narendra Modi as the Prime Minister as compared to former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi, whose approval rating is merely 30.2 per cent, as per the ABP-CVOTER-IANS BATTLE FOR THE STATES - WAVE 1 survey.

The survey also disclosed that except for Punjab, Modi is the most-preferred PM candidate in the four other states going to the polls next year.

More than 58 per cent of the respondents in Goa prefer Modi as the PM candidate, as compared to Rahul Gandhi (39.4 per cent).

Similarly, in Manipur, 56 per cent of the voters have preferred Modi over the former Congress president, who got the support of only 6.1 per cent respondents. However, 6.1 per cent have chosen none of the two.

In Uttar Pradesh, 48 per cent of the respondents back Modi as the PM, while 33.5 per cent prefer Rahul Gandhi for the top post. A total of 13.6 per cent of the respondents do not support either of the two.

In the hill state of Uttarakhand, 49 per cent voters support Modi as the preferred PM choice, whereas 30.2 per cent opt for Rahul Gandhi. A total of 9.6 per cent of the people surveyed support neither Modi, nor Rahul Gandhi.

Surprisingly, in the Congress-ruled state of Punjab, 39.4 per cent of voters do not support either Modi or Rahul Gandhi, while 9.8 per cent did not give their preference.



In Punjab, Modi is behind Rahul Gandhi in preference, with 30.0 per cent of the respondents backing Rahul Gandhi and 20.5 per cent supporting Modi.

The overall sample size for the survey was 81,006 in five states covering 690 Assembly seats.

Farmers database will increase to 8 cr by Dec 2021: Tomar

NEW DELHI, (IANS) Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar on Monday asked the states to create their own database, using the federated farmer database prepared by the Centre and allow its linkage to the state land record database.

The ministry has created a database of 5.5 crore farmers and it will be increased to eight crore farmers by December 2021 with the help of state governments, he said at the first day of the two-day Chief Ministers' conference on initiatives and schemes of Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, held via video conferencing.

"Agriculture has to be linked with digital technology, scientific research, and knowledge. The Central and state governments must work together for agriculture to give a boost to the economy," he added.

Tomar said that with the establishment of the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund, FPOs, PACS, Mandis, and start-ups will get loans easily.

About digital agriculture, he urged all states to study the Karnataka Model which was presented during the conference, an Agriculture Ministry release said.

Union Commerce and Industry, Food, Public Distribution and Consumer Affairs and Textiles Minister Piyush Goyal, in his address, said that with an increase in agriculture exports, India is emerging as a trusted export partner and there is further scope for improvement of agri-exports.

He emphasised that the infrastructure needs to be strengthened for

storage and warehousing.

The objectives of the conference were to highlight the salient features of Aatma Nirbhar Krishi and to enable states to enhance farmers' income. It was also an occasion to share innovative initiatives undertaken by the states.

Explaining the concept of farmers' database, the meeting was informed that a national farmer database is being created by taking data from existing schemes like PM-KISAN, soil health card, and the PM Fasal Bima Yojana. The database will have connectivity to state land records data base, the release said.

The first day of the two-day conference saw the participation of Chief Ministers and Agriculture Ministers of states such as Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Bihar Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal, and Goa.



AGITATING FARMERS REACH KARNAL MINI SECRETARIAT AFTER TALKS BREAK DOWN, RAKESH TIKAIT SAYS PROTEST TO CONTINUE INDEFINITELY



KARNAL, (IANS) The Mahapanchayat called by the protesting farmers started early on Tuesday morning ended in front of the Karnal Deputy Commissioner's office with union leaders holding a meeting in front of the mini-secretariat to decide their future course of action.

The Kisan Mahapanchayat was organized to demand an FIR and strict action against SDM Ayush Sinha, who on August 28 had instructed the police to beat the protesting farmers.

A video clip of Sinha ordering the force to hit the farmers had stirred a row after it went viral on social media.

As hundreds of protesters gathered in Karnal to support the farmers' demand, an 11-member farmers' delegation met the Karnal Deputy Commissioner and the Superintendent of Police at the mini-secretariat to submit a memorandum of their demands, which also included compensation of Rs 25 lakh and a government job to the next of kin of Sushil Kajal, a farmer from Gharunda who received head injuries in the lathi-charge and died later due to a heart attack, along with a compensation of Rs 2 lakh for the wounded persons.

The delegation was led by farmer union leader Rakesh Tikait, political activist Yogendra Yadav, Karnal-based Bhartiya Kisan Union (BKU) leader Gurnaam Singh Chaduni, BKU president Balbir Singh Rajewal, BKU (Sidhupur) member Jagjit Singh Dallewal, Ajay Rana and Darshan Pal, among others.

However, the meeting with the district officials ended inconclusively as they turned down all of the farmers' demands.

Post the meeting, Yogendra Yadav told the media, "Our talks with the DC and the SP were held in three rounds. It was attended by 15 representatives. All we demanded was strict action against the IAS officer who ordered lathi charge on August 28. We didn't seek any compensation. However, the authorities didn't agree to even that."

Quoting Mahabharata, Yadav said, "Just like the Pandavas in Mahabharata, who asked for five villages, we asked the authorities to at least suspend the SDM for his August order.

"However, the authorities are supporting the IAS officers' move. They said 'theek hi kiya unhone ne' (he did the right thing). In the end, we asked them to at least suspend the officer before an enquiry is completed, but they didn't even agree to this demand of ours."

It was after the farmer union leaders reached the Mahapanchayat site that they unanimously decided to march towards the mini-secretariat to gherao the area, which was followed by hundreds and thousands of protesters beginning the 7 km journey from the Anaj Mandi to the district administration building.

A heavy traffic jam was witnessed in Karnal due to the march, as farmers flooded the NH44.

The protesters were first stopped by the police at Namaste Chowk. However, they were allowed to move ahead following a short discussion with the police.

Riding on tractors, the farmers were seen carrying 'lathis' (sticks) to the gherao area.

On their way to the secretariat, some protesters also removed a barricade obstructing their path. However, after reaching the mini-secretariat in Karnal, the farmers staged a 'dharna' (sit-in) in front of the district administration office.

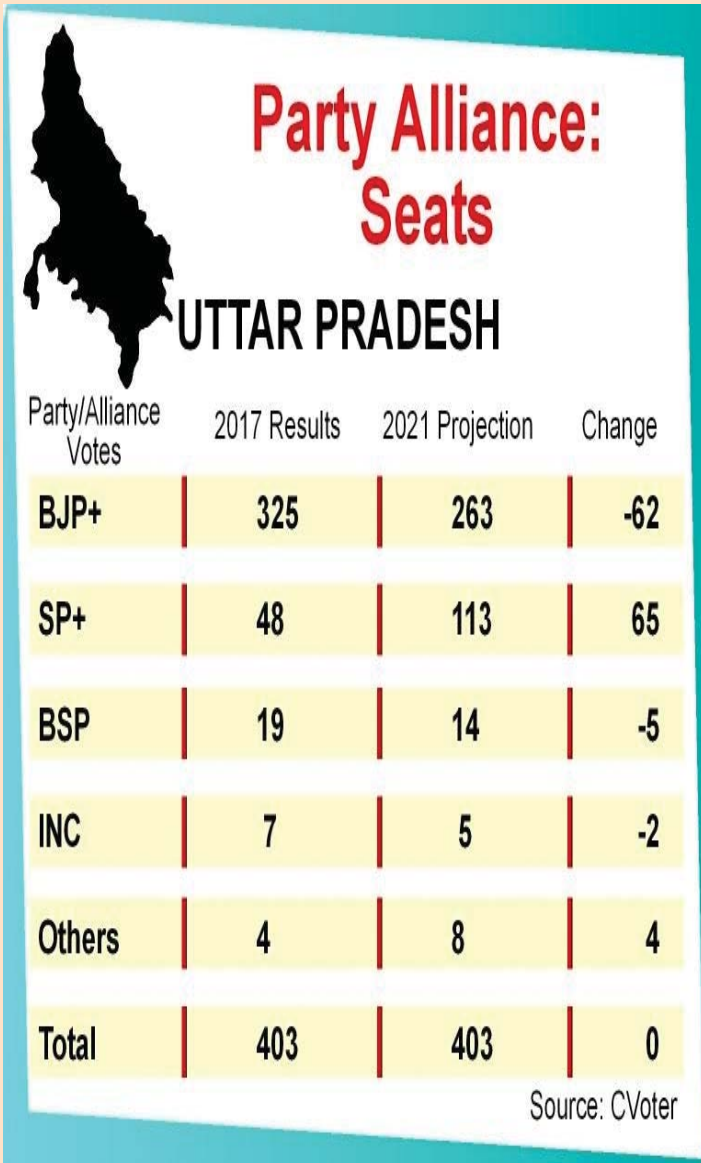
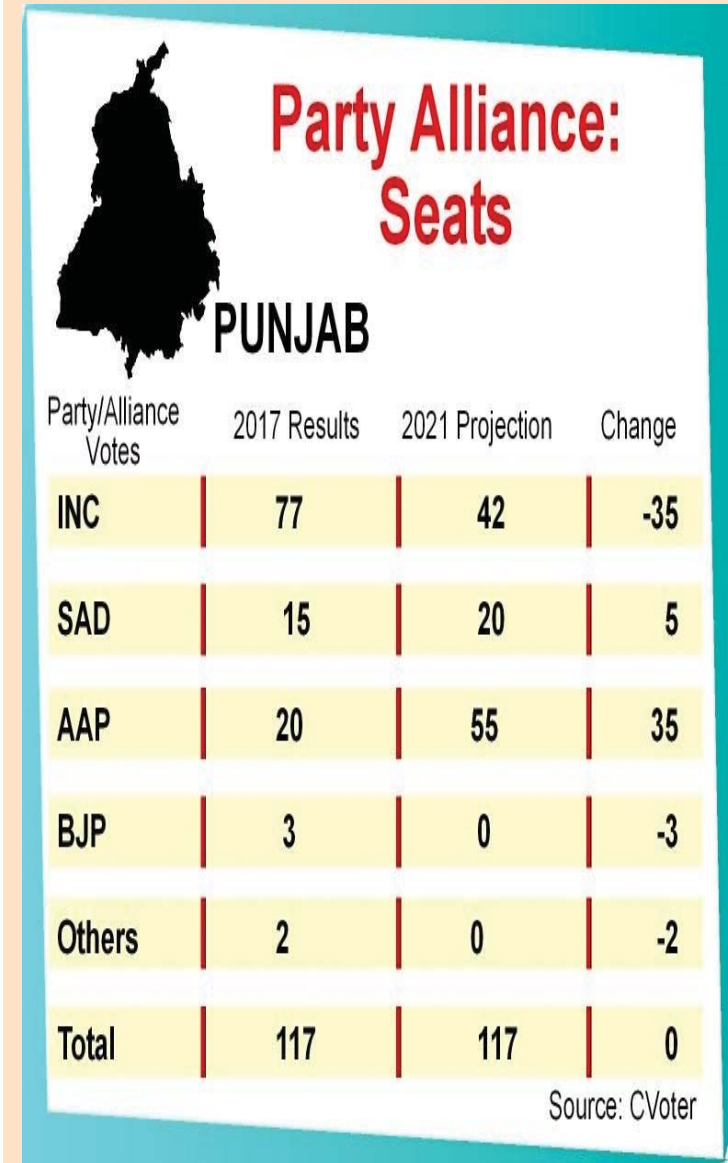
Despite the news of arrests and detention of farmer union leaders at Namaste Chowk, they maintained that no one was arrested or detained by the police on their way to the secretariat.

Meanwhile, in what could only be referred to as an act of kindness, local residents living nearby Karnal's mini-secretariat area distributed water bottles and food to the protesting farmers.

The farmers have been protesting against the three farm laws passed by the Centre in the Parliament last year for over nine months now.

Taliban omits Ministry for Women, UN body says it's a violation of international treaty

NEW DELHI: UN Women, the United Nations entity for gender equality, has criticised the Talibans decision to drop the Ministry for Women from among the institutions of government in Afghanistan. "“I am disappointed by the apparent decision to no longer include a Ministry for Women among the institutions of government. Such ministries are found around the world and reflect governments' commitment to ensure respect for women's human rights. To no longer have such a ministry in Afghanistan is a further step backwards," Pramila Patten, the acting head of UN Women, said in a statement. "“I reaffirm my call on the Taliban leadership to fully comply with its legally binding obligations under international treaties to which Afghanistan is party as well as with relevant constitutional provisions," Patten said. "“These demand unambiguously the guarantee of equality for all citizens, including the full participation of women in political and decision-making processes. The international community has been clear and will continue to be so: women's rights, including the right to full and meaningful participation in public and political life, are non-optional, non-negotiable human rights, the statement adds. "““The world's gaze rests firmly upon Afghanistan. The course currently set by the Taliban authorities for women's human rights must change immediately if the growing fears of the international community are to be addressed and the future of women and girls assured," Patten said. "“Taliban leaders have stated that women will play a prominent role in society in Afghanistan and have access to education. But they have not been involved in talks over forming a government. In recent weeks, the Taliban has signaled women should stay at home, and, in some instances, militants have ordered women to leave their workplaces. "“There was no mention of a ministry for women in Tuesday's announcement, and the Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid merely said that the Taliban would be dealing with that issue.



Y MEDIA COVID & VACCINE REPORT

Proof of vaccination will be required in higher-risk indoor public settings



Restaurants and bars



Sporting events



Nightclubs and casinos



Concerts, music festivals, theatres, and cinemas



Meeting and event spaces



Racing venues



Gyms, fitness and recreational facilities

And more...



STARTING SEPT. 22, ONTARIO TO REQUIRE PROOF OF VACCINATION IN SELECT SETTINGS

TORONTO — To further protect Ontarians as the province continues to confront the Delta-driven fourth wave of the COVID-19, the government, in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health, will require people to be fully vaccinated and provide proof of their vaccination status to access certain businesses and settings starting September 22, 2021. Requiring a proof of vaccination in these settings reduces risk and is an important step to encourage every last eligible Ontarian to get their shot, which is critical to protecting the province’s hospital capacity, while also supporting businesses with the tools they need to keep customers safe, stay open and minimize disruptions. “As the world continues its fight against the Delta variant, our government will never waver in our commitment to do what’s necessary to keep people safe, protect our hospitals and minimize disruptions to businesses,” said Premier Ford. “Based on the latest evidence and best advice, COVID-19 vaccine certificates give us the best chance to slow the spread of this virus while helping us to avoid further lockdowns. If you haven’t received your first or second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, please do so today.”

As of September 22, 2021, Ontarians will need to be fully vaccinated (two doses plus 14 days) and provide their proof of vaccination along with a photo ID to access certain public settings and facilities. This approach focuses on higher-risk indoor public settings where face coverings cannot always be worn and includes:

Restaurants and bars (excluding outdoor patios, as well as delivery and takeout);

Nightclubs (including outdoor areas of the establishment);

Meeting and event spaces, such as banquet halls and conference/convention centres;

Facilities used for sports and fitness activities and personal fitness training, such as gyms, fitness and recreational facilities with the exception of youth recreational sport;

Sporting events;

Casinos, bingo halls and gaming establishments;

Concerts, music festivals, theatres and cinemas;

Strip clubs, bathhouses and sex clubs;

Racing venues (e.g., horse racing).

These mandatory requirements would not apply to outdoor settings where the risk of transmission is lower, including patios, with the exception of outdoor nightclub spaces given the risk associated with the setting. In addition, these requirements will not apply to settings where people receive medical care, food from grocery stores, medical supplies and the like. Aligned with public health measures currently in place, indoor masking policies will continue to remain in place.

“We know vaccines provide the best protection against COVID-19 and the Delta variant,” said Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health. “To protect the health and well-being of Ontarians, our government will offer one more tool to encourage even more Ontarians to receive the vaccine and provide further protection to fully vaccinated Ontarians as they safely enjoy activities with their loved ones and support their local businesses.” Individuals who cannot receive the vaccine due to medical exemptions will be permitted entry with a doctor’s note until recognized medical exemptions can be integrated

as part of a digital vaccine certificate. Children who are 11 years of age and younger and unable to be vaccinated will also be exempted from these requirements.

For the period between September 22 and October 12, 2021, it is intended that people attending a wedding or funeral receptions at a meeting or event spaces will be able to provide a negative rapid antigen COVID-19 test from no more than 48 hours before the event as an alternative to proof of vaccination. These rapid antigen tests would have to be privately purchased. Ontario will develop and provide additional tools to improve user experience, efficiency and business support in the coming weeks, including establishing alternative tools for people with no email, health card or ID. The government will work to support the implementation of vaccine certificates for Indigenous communities whether or not they have opted to enter their data into COVaxON while maintaining Indigenous data governance, control, access and possession principles.

Ontarians currently have access to a paper or PDF vaccine receipt that includes all relevant information to prove that they are fully vaccinated. As of September 22, Ontarians will be required to show their vaccine receipt when entering designated settings along with another piece of photo identification, such as a driver’s licence or health card. This is a similar initial implementation approach announced in British Columbia. Ontario will also introduce an enhanced digital vaccine receipt that features a QR code, which is safe, more secure and with you wherever you go. This digital vaccine receipt can be kept on a phone and easily used to show that you’ve been vaccinated if you need to. In addition, the province will launch a new app to make it easier and more convenient for businesses and organizations to read and verify that a digital vaccine receipt is valid while protecting your privacy. As the 2021-22 school year begins, it is critical to keep Ontario schools safe and students learning in person. The province will work with trusted public health units to use the existing COVaxON system to safely and securely confirm the vaccination status of students. The province is committed to keeping parents informed about how their child’s COVID-19 vaccine information and enrollment data are being used to keep schools safe. This will equip local public health units with the information they need to ensure rapid case and contact management if required to limit disruptions in the event of cases or outbreaks and keep kids in class.

“We are already seeing a rise in the number of cases of COVID-19 as we head into the fall,” said Dr. Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health. “As we enter the last mile push to increase vaccination rates, the introduction of a vaccine certificate is an important step to give people the tools to limit further spread of the virus so that we can ensure the safety of all Ontarians while keeping the province open and operational.”

“Combining the use of a QR code with a trusted, made in Ontario verifier app will help support the province’s health measures,” said Kaleed Rasheed, Associate Minister of Digital Government. “These tools will provide a simpler, faster, and better way to prove vaccination status that is both convenient and secure – while also supporting businesses with an easy validation process.”

Pfizer vax antibody levels decreased over 80% after 6 months: Study

NEW YORK, (IANS) Antibodies produced by the Pfizer vaccine against Covid-19 decreased more than 80 per cent after six months in some elderly people, according to a study that emphasises the need for booster shots. Researchers from the Universities of Case Western Reserve, Brown and Harvard studied blood samples of 120 Ohio nursing home residents and 92 health care workers. In particular, they looked at humoral immunity, also called antibody-mediated immunity, to measure the body’s defenses against the coronavirus. The findings, published on online preprint medRxiv and being peer-reviewed, showed that individuals’ antibody levels decreased more than 80 per cent after six months; the results were the same in older adults (median age 76) and caregivers (median age 48) and old alike. The results support the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendation for booster shots, especially for the elderly, due to fading immunity, David Canaday, professor at the School of Medicine at Case Reserve. He added that boosters are even more important as the Delta variant spreads. The team also presented their unpublished results directly to CDC and were urged to get the data out in the public domain as soon as possible “so we could enter conversation and the decision-making process for booster vaccine recommendations”, Canaday said. The sharp decline is particularly problematic for the elderly because previous research by Case Reserve showed that within two weeks of receiving the second dose of vaccine and being considered “fully vaccinated”, older adults who had not previously contracted Covid-19 already showed a reduced response in antibodies that was substantially lower than the younger caregivers experienced. By six months after vaccination, the blood of 70 per cent of these nursing home residents had “very poor ability to neutralise the coronavirus infection in laboratory experiments”, Canaday said.

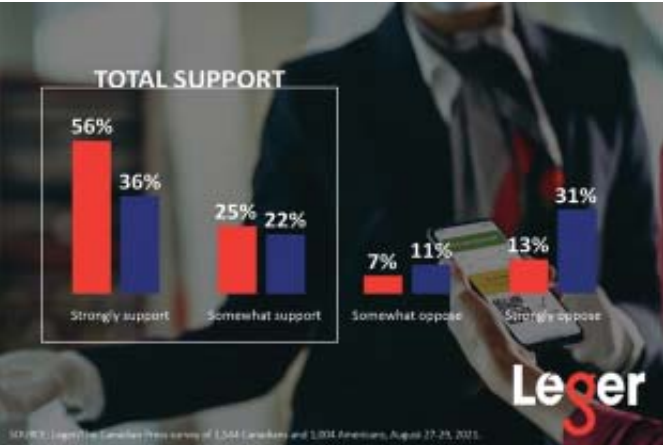


SURGICAL MASKS MORE EFFECTIVE AT CURBING COVID SPREAD THAN CLOTH: STUDY



NEW YORK, (IANS) Widespread wearing of surgical masks can limit the spread of coronavirus in communities, more than masks made of cloth, finds a large study. Researchers from Yale University, US, tracked more than 340,000 adults across 600 villages in rural Bangladesh. The findings, published as a preprint, showed that mask-wearing can have a significant impact on limiting the spread of symptomatic Covid-19, the Washington Post reported. “I think this should basically end any scientific debate about whether masks can be effective in combating Covid at the population level,” Jason Abaluck, an economist at Yale, was quoted as saying. Abaluck called the study “a nail in the coffin” of the arguments against masks. Mask wearers saw a 9.3 per cent reduction in symptomatic Covid-19 seroprevalence, meaning the virus was confirmed by bloodwork, as well as a further 11.9 per cent reduction in Covid-19 symptoms. However, the team emphasized that this did not mean masks were only 9.3 per cent effective. “I think a big error would be to read this study and to say, ‘Oh, masks can only prevent 10 percent of symptomatic infections,’” Abaluck said. The number would probably be several times higher if masking were universal, he said. The study is under peer review with the journal Science, the Post reported. Further, the researchers found that while cloth masks clearly reduced symptoms, they “cannot reject” the idea that, unlike surgical masks, they may have only a small effect on symptomatic coronavirus infections, and possibly none at all. Abaluck emphasized, however, that research did not produce evidence that cloth masks are ineffective. The results “don’t necessarily show that surgical masks are much, much better than cloth masks, but we find much clearer evidence of the effectiveness in surgical masks”, he said.

'80% OF CANADIANS SUPPORT THE INTRODUCTION OF A VACCINE PASSPORT IN THEIR PROVINCE': LEGER SURVEY



BACK TO SCHOOL

- * Now that elementary and high schools will be reopening soon, 44% of Canadians and 41% of Americans are more worried about personally contracting the Delta Variant of COVID-19.
- * If there is a significant increase in cases of COVID-19 in their community, 60% of Canadians and 59% of Americans believe that classes should be suspended and transferred entirely online.
- * 50% of Canadians and 54% of Americans believe that, even where vaccination is possible, high school students 12 years of age or older should still wear masks or face shields at all times on school premises.

COVID-19

- * When Canadians are asked their opinion on the COVID-19 crisis ...
- * 38% believe the worst of the crisis is behind us (-25 percentage points*)
- * 26% believe the worst of the crisis is yet to come (+15 percentage points*)
- * 17% believe we are currently living through the worst of the crisis (+8 percentage points*)

VACCINE PASSPORTS

- * 80% of Canadians support the introduction of a vaccine passport in their province. In the United States, though, this rate decreases to 59%.

METHODOLOGY

This web survey was conducted from August 27 to August 29, 2021 with 1,544 Canadians and 1,004 Americans, 18 years of age or older, randomly recruited from LEO's online panel. For comparison, a probability sample of 1,544 respondents would have a margin of error of $\pm 2.49\%$, 19 times out of 20, while a probability sample of 1,004 would have a margin of error of $\pm 3.09\%$, 19 times out of 20.

PFIZER COVID BOOSTER SHOT LIKELY TO START BY SEP 20 IN US: FAUCI

WASHINGTON, (IANS) The US' booster shot campaign against Covid-19 will likely start with only the Pfizer vaccine from September 20, the country's top infectious disease expert has said. The rollout for Moderna's booster vaccine could, however, be delayed, CNBC news quoted Anthony Fauci as saying on Sunday. Although both drugmakers have applied to US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for authorisation of a third dose either six months or eight months after getting the second dose, they haven't been officially approved by the agency. Even as the approvals are pending, the Joe Biden administration has announced plans to offer third doses to people who received the Pfizer and Moderna shots. "Only the Pfizer vaccine booster may get FDA and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) approval in time for a rollout the week of September 20," Fauci was quoted as saying on CBS' aceFace the Nation." "Looks like Pfizer has their data in, likely would meet the deadline," the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases told CBS. "We hope that Moderna would also be able to do it, so we could do it simultaneously." "But if not, we'll do it sequentially," he continued. aceSo the bottom line is, very likely, at least part of the plan will be implemented, but ultimately the entire plan will be." He was not in favour of mixing doses and said that for people who got two doses of the Moderna vaccine, "it's better to wait" for a third Moderna dose than get a Pfizer shot, CNN reported. The booster doses of Pfizer and Moderna doses are based on CDC data that showed protection against infection waned several months after the second shot.



AFGHANISTAN HEADS TOWARDS DEVASTATING ECONOMIC AND HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

ISLAMABAD, (IANS) The Afghan Taliban announced an interim-government setup on Tuesday, listing the newly-appointed cabinet of ministers comprising veteran old guards from their previous tenure in the 1990s. Among the top leadership, Mullah Muhammad Hasan Akhund has appointed as the caretaker Prime Minister of Afghanistan with Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar as his deputy. Interestingly, the list of ministers also include veteran Taliban leader Sirajuddin Haqqani, who has been given the important Interior Ministry. Sirajuddin Haqqani is on the FBI's most wanted list with a bounty of \$5 million on his head. Haqqani headed the widely feared Haqqani network of the Taliban and has been accused of many deadly attacks and kidnappings in the past. It is pertinent to mention here that the cabinet and the interim setup announced by the Taliban comprises mostly Pashtun ethnic group, which is expected to be another issue that would become a hurdle in seeking international support for the Taliban. There are many factors in the interim setup that may inject uncertainty and distrust among the international community, which is looking towards the Taliban to walk the talks and fulfil their commitment of an inclusive government in Afghanistan. However, it seems that the Taliban have opted to stick to their top leadership and old guards to take over control of the country, as they look towards immediate inflow of aids and funds to help Afghanistan weather the cited economic and humanitarian meltdown. It should be noted that about 80 per cent of Afghanistan's budget comes from foreign aids. At the moment, flights from Qatar are landing in Kabul on a daily basis with aid supplies. However, the immediate needs are much more and the country needs immediate aid from the global community. The United Nations (UN) has estimated about \$660 million as immediate relief aid, needed on urgent basis to cater to the desperate needs of Afghanistan for at least four months. The Taliban takeover of Afghanistan is being seen with focused concern as reservations over the newly-elected interim government in Afghanistan has raised eyebrows. "The world is watching closely," read a statement issued by the US

State Department, expressing concerns over the selection of cabinet members being only Taliban. The US State Department has expressed its reservations over no female representation in the Taliban-led interim government in Afghanistan, along with personalities like Sirajuddin Haqqani, who what they call has a troubling track record. "The administration would be judged by its actions," the US State Department statement added. As far as the appointment of Haqqani is concerned as the country's top cop, it is also believed that the Haqqani group still holds a US civilian contractor Mark Frerichs in its custody. Frerichs was abducted in January 2020. Even though the interim government led by the Taliban leadership is dominated by ethnic Pushtuns, inclusivity and representation of other ethnic groups may have been catered by some ranks of the cabinet, which have been given to ethnic Tajik and Uzbeks.



DEMAND TO DECLARE BATALA AS DISTRICT UNDER REVIEW: PUNJAB CM

CHANDIGARH, (IANS) Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh said the demand for declaring Batala as a district was already under consideration and a final decision would be taken after due consideration of various issues involved. He had received a similar representation from another Congress leader last month and was looking into the matter, said the Chief Minister on Monday, in response to the demand raised by his cabinet colleagues Tripat Rajinder Singh Bajwa and Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa. Further, there have been some reports in the media over the past few days indicating that citizens of Batala have also publicly raised the demand for a new district to be carved out of their region, he pointed out. The Chief Minister expressed surprise that neither Tripat nor Sukhjinder had seen the reports in the public domain nor deemed it fit to discuss the issue with him before shooting off a joint letter in this manner. "Had they come to me and spoken about it, I would have told them that I am already looking into the matter, and would have even consulted them in this regard," said Amarinder Singh in a statement, taking a dig at the two ministers. Amarinder Singh said MP Pratap Bajwa had already demanded a district status for Batala, in his letter dated August 11 and had cited Batala's historic importance and its connection with Guru Nanak Dev, who had married Mata Sulakhni in Batala in 1487. The Chief Minister said he was cognisant of Batala's significance to the state's history and culture, as well as the public sentiment. He would discuss the issue with various stakeholders before taking a decision, he added.



His government, said Amarinder Singh, had identified 103 places in 79 villages and 24 towns, blessed with Guru Sahib's visit (CharanChhoh) during his lifetime. Funds had been allocated and efforts were being made to ensure development of each of them in different ways, he said, adding that a lot of thinking and consultation had gone into the process. The Chief Minister further said steps were continuously being taken to explore ways to ensure the infrastructural development and progress of all historic towns and places in the state, especially those which are in any way linked to any of the Gurus. He would do everything in his power to ensure that Batala also gets its due, he added.

SONIA TO TAKE FINAL CALL ON PRASHANT KISHOR'S INDUCTION INTO CONG

NEW DELHI, (IANS) Congress President Sonia Gandhi will take a final call on inducting election strategist Prashant Kishor in the party as Congress leaders are divided over the issue. According to party sources, Sonia has already started the consultation process. Kishor has more recently worked with the Trinamool Congress and has been credited as the man behind the thumping victory of the party in the West Bengal assembly elections. As Kishor wants a full-fledged role and decision making authority on election related issues, party leaders are averse of giving free hand to one person on the selection of candidates. After two poll debacles, the Congress is in search of advisors. With the demise of seasoned leader Ahmed Patel, Congress has already lost an ace strategist. Kishor has met Congress leader and party's former president Rahul Gandhi quietly a few times to discuss the party's revival ahead of several Assembly elections -- including Uttar Pradesh, scheduled to be held next year, sources said. Rahul has informally discussed the plan with the Congress leaders and sought their view for Kishor's entry into the party, and to what extent he can be given responsibility for the party's poll strategy, said party leaders who were part of these deliberations. Kishor who has also met General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi and interim chief Sonia Gandhi in these deliberations, has given a plan to the Congress leadership and the talking points are being discussed among the senior leaders. Kishor is likely to take political plunge soon in the Congress. Sources said that Kishor may be appointed as General Secretary in charge of election management, but party seniors insist that giving sole responsibility of elections to one person is not a good idea as Kishor cannot be trusted in totality. However, nobody is against his induction in the party. Since Kishor met Rahul Gandhi on July 13 and submitted his plan, many rounds of meetings have taken place within the Congress setup, and some party leaders feel his skills may be used in the elections. The Congress is preparing for polls in Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Goa and some northeastern states next year. Kishor has recently handled campaigns of the Trinamool Congress, the DMK and the YSRCP and has relations across party lines.

BRAHMINS WILL GET FULL SECURITY IF BSP COMES TO POWER IN UP: MAYAWATI



Political developments have intensified in Uttar Pradesh with the upcoming Legislative Assembly elections. In this episode, BSP is organizing a 'Prabuddh Sammelan' across the entire state. Party supremo Mayawati, while addressing one such program in Lucknow, said that if the BSP government is formed in UP, then the Brahmins will be provided security. Mayawati alleged that atrocities on Brahmins have increased in the BJP government and the action taken against them will be investigated. Mayawati said that when the BSP was in power in the state, every word of Brahmins has been heard. She said that Kalpana Mishra, wife of Satish Mishra, has been given the responsibility of preparing the women's team. The former UP Chief Minister said that BSP is the only party to follow the thinking of 'Sarvajna Hitay and Sarvajna Sukhay'. "BSP also implements what it says with honesty and integrity, we have also shown it by running the government four times in UP and have paid full attention to the progress of people of all castes and religions," she said. Mayawati said that in the previous BSP government, all castes were treated equally and the party established the rule of law. "Earlier also, the Brahmin society was given the same protection and respect as other castes, but in 2012, due to the difference in the words and deeds of the SP government, caste-based discrimination took place.

PANJSHIR RESISTANCE REFUTES TALIBAN CLAIM



NEW DELHI, (IANS) The Panjshir resistance has denied Taliban's claim of having captured the province. "Taliban's claim of occupying Panjshir is false. The NRF forces are present in all the strategic positions across the valley to continue the fight. We assure the people of Afghanistan that the struggle against the Taliban and their partners will continue until justice and freedom prevails," the National Resistance Front (NRF) said in a tweet. Taliban fighters have fully captured the very last holdout, Panjshir province, it has been claimed. Acting minister of culture and information and spokesperson of the Taliban, Zabiullah Mujahid said in a statement said that their efforts for the establishment of nationwide security has paid off and the province has been taken by the help of 'Allah' and the support of the people, Khaama News reported. The defiant Panjshir province has been witnessing heavy conflicts between the Taliban and the resistance forces for the last seven days during which both sides have inflicted casualties. As per the statement, some of the resistance forces have been killed while others fled the province, the report said. "We assure the people of Panjshir not to be subject to discriminatory behavior, they are our brothers and will jointly work for the development of Afghanistan", the statement said. In the last night's conflict in Panjshir province, a key commander of the resistance forces, General Abdul Wodod, and the spokesperson of the forces, Fahim Dashti, were killed. Earlier, co-leader of the resistance Ahmad Masoud had offered negotiations with the Taliban that were refused by the Taliban.

EC ANNOUNCES CRUCIAL BYPOLL FOR MAMATA ON SEP 30



KOLKATA, (IANS) After much speculation, the Election Commission of India announced the date for the bye-elections in Bhabanipur and elections in two other assembly constituencies - Samsergunj and Jangipur in Murshidabad district on Saturday. The elections in these three constituencies will be held on September 30 and counting will be held on October 3. The elections in Samsergunj and Jangipur were withheld because of the death of the candidates before polls during the recently concluded assembly election in West Bengal. On the other hand, a bye-election in Bhabanipur assembly constituency is scheduled because the existing MLA Sovondeb Chattopadhyay resigned to make room for chief minister Mamata Banerjee. Banerjee lost to the Leader of Opposition Suwendu Adhikari in Nandigram in the recently concluded polls and is still not an elected member of the legislative body. The commission in its notification quoting chief secretary H.K. Dwivedi said, "under Article 164(4) of the Constitution of India, a Minister who is not a member of the Legislature of the State for a period of six consecutive months shall at the expiration of that period cease to be a Minister and there will be a constitutional crisis and vacuum in the top executive posts in the Government unless elections are held immediately". "He has also informed that in view of administrative exigencies and public interest and to avoid vacuum in the state, bye-elections for Bhabanipur, Kolkata from where Mamata Banerjee, the Chief Minister intends to contest elections may be conducted," the notification said. "Taking into consideration the inputs and views of the Chief Secretaries of the concerned States and respective Chief Electoral Officers, while the Commission has decided not to hold bye-elections in other 31 Assembly constituencies and 3 Parliamentary Constituencies and considering the exigency and special request from the State of West Bengal, it has decided to hold bye-election in 159- Bhabanipur AC," the notification said. "Further, the Commission has also decided to hold polls in 3 Assembly constituencies namely 56-Samserganj, 58- Jangipur of West Bengal and 1 Assembly Constituency 110-Pipli of Odisha where the adjourned poll was deferred," the notification said.

Why is Communist China suddenly so inclusive?

BY CLAUDE ARPI

Beijing wants everyone to believe that Tibet has been part of China since antiquity — but Tibetans cannot accept this because 'China did not even exist then, contrary to what the new Emperors would like us to believe.

What is China is a question which has some relevance today, and the answer is important not only for the Communist Party of China (CPC), but the world at large too.

On September 1, Xinhua reported that a series large exhibitions centered on the theme 'Ethnic Unity — Casting a Firm Consciousness of the Chinese National Community' sponsored by the National Culture Palace, had officially been launched in Beijing.

It included several displays centred on a multi-ethnic China; the exhibitions were entitled: 'Treasures of Nationalities'; 'People of All Ethnic Groups – Hearts to the Party'; 'National Ethnic Minorities' Gifts to the Party', and 'Cultural Relics in the Collection of the Palace of Nationalities'.

Why suddenly this emphasis on China's 'ethnic unity' and this after 100 years of the CPC's existence? As always in China, the propaganda's stress is put on something which is missing ('unity').

Already in August, President Xi Jinping addressed a Central Ethnic Work Conference pleading for solid ethnic work and 'casting a firm sense of Chinese ethnic community'.

He mentioned 50,000 precious cultural relics, more than 200,000 ancient books, some 400,000 other books and more than 3,000 paintings and works of art, kept in the National Culture Palace "fully reflecting the connotation of national unity and progress, and letting history speak and letting culture speak." Whether these 'relics' were forceful taken away from minorities' areas, is of course not mentioned. Has it not been the habit of colonisers to loot their new colonies? Remember the Kohinoor?

Xi spoke of "the beautiful interaction and exchanges among the various ethnic groups in China."

According to the party's General Secretary, the intermingling of the different 'nationalities' focused on "showing the sons and daughters of all ethnic groups to listen to the Party, feel the Party's grace, follow the Party, hand in hand, to build a great revival of the Chinese dream of the glorious course."

Why wait 100 years to remember that the 'nationalities' exist?

It further raises another issue, is China a nation or only an amalgam of different nationalities recently assembled together, in which case why have the nationalities not been given their due place during the last century?

To give a concrete example, why are so few members of the 'nationalities' members of the CPC's Central Committee and not a single one is in the Politburo or the Central Military Commission? Examples could be multiplied. Many see this as Han Chauvinism. Today, Beijing would like us to believe that China a unified entity which since immemorial times included the Periphery of the



Middle Kingdom; it is simply not true.

Already in 2015, in a 'White Paper on Tibet', Beijing argued that "the only sensible alternative is for the Dalai Lama and his supporters to accept that Tibet has been part of China since antiquity".

Why should the Tibetans accept a lie?

The Chinese publication mentioned: "The wheels of history roll forward and the tides of the times are irresistible. Tibet's path of development is one imposed by history and chosen by the people. Experience proves to us that only by upholding unity and opposing separatism, only by upholding progress and opposing retrogression, only by upholding stability and opposing turmoil, can the future of Tibet be assured. Any person or force that attempts to resist the tide will simply be cast aside by history and by the people." Any serious student of history is aware that tides come and go; where is the mighty British Empire today? But for the sake of argument, let us accept the Chinese contention, then one should ask: what is China? A few years ago, Professor Ge Jianxiong, Director of the Institute of Chinese Historical Geography at Fudan University in Shanghai stated in an article in The China Review: "It would be a defiance of history to claim that Tibet has always been a part of China since the Tang Dynasty (7th to 10th century)."

Jianxiong went further and questioned the notion of China: "When discussing the peaceful rise of China and the history of the great powers of the world, it is natural to think of ancient China. Can ancient China be considered a Great Power? If so, how big was it? This is a prerequisite for knowing the history and comparing development." For the professor, there was no such thing as China, but dynasties who ruled over small or larger areas: "First of all, China ('Zhongguo') only officially became the name of our country with the founding of the Republic of China in 1912. Before this, the idea of China ('Zhongguo') was not clearly conceptualised."

Jianxiong said: "The concept of China has continued to expand. From referring specifically to the central plains of China, the concept has since grown to now refer generally to a whole nation. Even during the late Qing, China would sometimes be used as a name to refer to the Qing State, including all the territory within the boundaries of the Qing

Empire, but other times it would only refer to the '18 Interior Provinces' and not include Manchuria, Inner Mongolia, Tibet, and Xinjiang. Therefore, if we want to understand the extent of ancient China's territory, we can only speak of how large was the actual territory controlled by a particular dynasty at a particular moment."

Jianxiong gave Tibet as an example: "If we ask: How big was 8th century China and if we speak about the borders of the Tang Dynasty, we cannot include the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau. This was ruled by Tubo/Tufan [dynasty] and so does not count. Tubo/Tufan was sovereign, independent of the Tang Dynasty. At least it was not administered by the Tang Dynasty; there would have been no need to erect the Tang-Tubo/Tufan alliance tablet [Tibet-Tang Treaty of 821 [AD]. It would be a defiance of history if we claim that since the Tang Dynasty, Tibet has always been a part of China – the fact that the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau subsequently became a part of the Chinese dynasties does not substantiate such a claim."

Jianxiong continued: "Moreover, we must differentiate between territory that was actually under administrative control of a dynasty, that which was a vassal state, and that which was within the reaches of our prestige."

Tibet has been part of China since antiquity— Tibetans cannot accept this contention, simply because China did not even exist then, contrary to what the new Emperors would like us to believe.

The present leadership in Beijing should do their homework and start studying the history of their 'empire', before asking the Tibetans, the Uighurs or the Mongols to sign on a dotted line.

And sooner or later, the Communist Dynasty will also collapse, like all other dynasties before; then, the Middle Kingdom will probably shrink again behind the Great Wall.

So why all this noise about 'ethnic unity' in the Middle Kingdom in the Chinese media?

Disclaimer: The writer is an author, journalist, historian, Tibetologist, and China expert. The opinions expressed within this article are the personal ideas of the author. The facts and conclusions appearing in the article do not reflect the views of Y Media and Midweek Newspaper, and Y Media does not assume any responsibility or liability for the same.

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GTA Housing Demand Remains Strong In August As Toronto Regional Real Estate Board (TRREB) Reports 8,596 Sales



The Toronto Regional Real Estate Board (TRREB) is reporting the third-best sales to result on record for the month of August. While the market has taken its regular summer breather, it is clear that the demand for ownership housing remains strong. At the same time, the supply of listings is down. The result has been tighter market conditions and sustained competition between buyers, resulting in double-digit annual increases in selling prices. Greater Toronto Area REALTORS® reported 8,596 sales through TRREB's MLS® System in August 2021 – down by 19.9 per cent compared to the August 2020 record of 10,738.

The condominium apartment market segment bucked the overall sales trend, with year-over-year growth in sales, continuing a marked resurgence in 2021. The number of new listings entered into the System was down year-over-year by 43 per cent. "The fact that new listings were at the lowest level for the past decade is alarming. It is clear that the supply of homes is not keeping pace with demand, and this situation will become worse once immigration into Canada resumes. The federal parties vying for office in the upcoming federal election have all made housing supply and affordability a focal point. Working with provincial and municipal levels of government on solving supply-related issues is much more important to affordability than interfering with consumer choice during the home buying and selling offer process or revisiting demand-side policies that will at best have a

short-term impact on market conditions," said TRREB President Kevin Crigger. The August 2021 MLS® Home Price Index Composite Benchmark was up by 17.4 per cent year-over-year. The average selling price for all homes combined was up by 12.6 per cent year-over-year to \$1,070,911. The strongest annual rates of price growth are still being experienced for low-rise home types. However, average condominium apartment price growth is now well above inflation as well. On a seasonally adjusted basis, the average selling price continued to trend upward in August. "Sales have accounted for a much higher share of new listings this year compared to last, and the story was no different in August. There has been no relief on the supply side for home buyers, in fact, competition between these buyers has increased. As we move toward 2022, expect market conditions to become tighter as population growth in the GTA starts to trend back to pre-COVID levels," said TRREB Chief Market Analyst Jason Mercer. "With a federal election just weeks away, we are calling on all political parties to continue focusing on housing policies that address supply and affordability across the country. Bold action, not promises, is needed to ensure that Canada has a stable and sustainable housing market now and in the decades to come. This will ensure that the Greater Golden Horseshoe remains competitive on the global stage, in terms of attracting businesses and households to the region," said TRREB CEO John DiMichele.

STUDENTS IN ONTARIO HEAD BACK TO CLASS IN SAFER SCHOOLS

Ontario's safer return to school is supported by significant investments, and the province is making available more than \$1.6 billion in targeted COVID-19 resources. Supported by the province's COVID-19 strategy, as well as other provincial funding, \$80 million in funding is being provided for mental health supports to protect students, teachers, and school staff this coming school year.



In preparation for the return of in-person learning, the province has also invested substantially in improvements to air ventilation at schools. These improvements mean that:

- * 99.8% of the systems have been assessed;
- * 99% of schools are using higher grade filters and/or have increased frequency of filter changes;
- * 99% of schools are running ventilation systems longer;
- * 99% of schools have increased fresh air intake; and
- * Over 70,000 standalone HEPA filter units and other devices are now in place in schools across the province, including JK/SK classrooms, all classrooms and learning environments without mechanical ventilation.

These improvements to school ventilation build on the \$1.4 billion the Ontario government invests every year to maintain and renew school facilities across the province.

"I am proud of all Ontario students heading back to class, be it in-person or online. In keeping with the expert advice of Ontario's pediatric hospitals and the Chief Medical Officer of Health, we have invested heavily in ventilation improvements to support safer schools. We have deployed standalone HEPA units into every kindergarten class, into every learning space without mechanical ventilation, and some school boards have gone even further by placing HEPA units in every classroom.

LIBERAL LEADER TRUDEAU DEFENDS ELECTION CALL AMID PANDEMIC IN LEADERS' DEBATE

CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

The three opposition leaders who participated in the debate accused Trudeau of being opportunistic and reckless in calling an election two years before he was required to do so under a fixed-election-date law. Conservative Party Leader Erin O'Toole, whose party served as the official opposition in the last Parliament, said that Canadians should not be heading to the polls on September 20 during a Covid-19 health crisis that is entering its fourth wave in parts of the country, along with forest fires ravaging Canada's west coast and the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan, where 1,250 Canadians await extracation.

At a news conference following the two-hour debate in Montreal, Trudeau said that there are "very, very different perspectives among the different parties on how we make sure we end this fight against Covid". He singled out O'Toole and his opposition to mandatory vaccination for travellers, which Trudeau's Liberal government has imposed. The Conservative leader would rather do rapid tests on people who are unvaccinated rather than force them to get a shot.

Earlier this week, the global research firm Ipsos released the results of a survey that found the Conservatives would receive 32 per cent of the national popular vote, or a point ahead of the Liberals at 31 per cent. That could result in a minority government for either the Liberals, which they formed following the 2019 election, or the Conservatives. Trudeau's Liberals were hoping to repeat their majority win from 2015 for a third mandate in government. An Ipsos poll conducted in June found the party holding a clear lead at 38 per cent support, with the Conservatives behind by 12 points at 26 per cent.

TRUDEAU SAYS GRAVEL THROWING INCIDENT 'ABSOLUTELY UNACCEPTABLE,' SLAMS 'ANTI-VAXXER MOBS'



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on Tuesday condemned protesters who hurled gravel at him during a campaign stop and tore into those rallying against public health measures.

On Monday, Trudeau was pelted with small stones during a campaign stop in London, Ontario, the latest incident in an increasingly inflammatory national election season.

"It is absolutely unacceptable for people to be throwing things and endangering others at a political rally," Trudeau said during a campaign stop in Montreal, noting that protesters' actions put Liberal Party supporters, journalists and first responders at risk of injury.

The Prime Minister also had harsh words for protesters vocally campaigning against public health measures aimed at combating the novel coronavirus disease, including near-mandatory vaccination and implementation of vaccine passports across the country, which Trudeau supports.

"That's not how we do things in Canada," Trudeau told supporters and members of the press, branding dissenters at his rallies and those impeding work at hospitals around the country "anti-vaxxer mobs." Trudeau has been besieged by vocal, and often rowdy, protesters at many of his campaigns since the August 15 election call and was forced to cancel an event in Bolton, Ontario last month to avoid a sizable crowd of protesters hurling obscenities directed at the Prime Minister and the governing Liberals.

In recent weeks, protesters have also descended upon hospitals in protest of the existing and proposed public health measures and reportedly accosting healthcare workers.

Monday's incident received condemnation from across the political spectrum, including People's Party of Canada leader Maxime Bernier, who has vocally opposed the measures and has been on the receiving end of an attack himself, having been "egged" last week. Canadians go to the polls on September 20. (ANI/Sputnik)

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New region owners in Pakistan and Guyana seek to leverage the international presence of RE/MAX to “build a bridge” between their respective countries and global audience of buyers, investors RE/MAX, LLC today announced it has closed the sale of Master Franchise Rights in Pakistan to American International Partners, LLC, owned by Muhammad Saleem, Rafay Qamar and Imran Gondal, three ambitious and experienced entrepreneurs. With the sale, RE/MAX, which already has a presence in more countries and territories than any other real estate franchise brand, expands into the fifth most populous country in the world. The global real estate franchisor also announced it has closed the sale of Master Franchise Rights in Guyana to Canadian RE/MAX veteran Shiv Misir and his two partners. “As a business that builds businesses, RE/MAX is constantly seeking to expand opportunities for entrepreneurship around the globe,” says Shawna Gilbert, RE/MAX Vice President, Global Growth and Development. “We are thrilled to see the hallmark professionalism and unmatched service of RE/MAX agents brought to two new markets of real estate buyers and sellers.”

According to Pakistan region co-owner Qamar, he and his business partners are seeking to bring new standards and ethics to a country where real estate is currently an unregulated industry. “Our mission is to streamline the process of buying and selling real estate in Pakistan while elevating the level of trust and confidence during a transaction.” He says the decision to work with RE/MAX was “unanimous,” citing the brand’s proven business systems and global reach. “RE/MAX is in countries all over the world, which means we are able to tap into a global network of potential clients,” says Qamar. He adds that the educational resources and commitment to excellence that is core to the RE/MAX culture will help create new opportunities for Pakistanis seeking a career in real estate. “This will completely revolutionize the way real estate is practiced and viewed currently as a career in Pakistan.”

Saleem, another region co-owner, says, “We want to build a bridge from east to west and open up opportunities to Pakistanis that have immigrated to or were born in other markets, and are interested in investing in Pakistan real estate.”

He further said that their plan is for the Global RE/MAX listing website to be the first and only authentic source of information in Pakistan and “to become #1 in market share in Pakistan.”

Imran, another Pakistan region co-owner, believes RE/MAX will be the first real estate franchise available in Pakistan. “This is our opportunity to introduce one of the largest real estate brands to Pakistan,” he says. “Due to the lack of regulation, there is currently a mistrust of the real estate industry among Pakistanis. We want to help people to feel safe and comfortable in their real estate transactions, and we knew we needed a well-recognized brand like RE/MAX to help us achieve that.”

“Right now, in Pakistan anyone can be an agent – you can be selling tea in the morning and selling real estate at night,” Imran says. “We want to elevate real estate as a respected profession through education and training, and the RE/MAX brand will help us accomplish this.”

The grand opening of RE/MAX of Pakistan headquarters in Lahore is currently being planned for the fall, with the group anticipating opening the first franchises in Spring 2022. Possessing a wealth of natural resources, the Co-operative Republic of Guyana is located in the northeastern corner of South America. Until now, Guyana was the only South American country without a RE/MAX presence.

Shiv Misir, Canadian Partner of the RE/MAX Guyana Master Franchise and Guyana native, had long hoped to leverage his decades-long real estate skills into the service of his former homeland. “I’ve traveled back to Guyana from Canada many times since leaving my homeland nearly 40 years ago, and over time, I’ve seen the need for an organized, reputable real estate brand to come into Guyana to serve its homebuyers and sellers,” Misir says. “RE/MAX can contribute to the economic development of this area, providing an invaluable real estate resource to locals as well as play an important role in raising the international profile of Guyana by attracting the attention of international clientele to this beautiful country.”

The RE/MAX Master Franchise’s initial entry into Guyana is anticipated by the end of September 2021 in the capital city of Georgetown. About the RE/MAX Network

As one of the leading global real estate franchisors, RE/MAX, LLC is a subsidiary of RE/MAX Holdings (NYSE: RMAX) with nearly 140,000 agents in more than 110 countries and territories. Nobody in the world sells more real estate than RE/MAX, as measured by residential transaction sides. RE/MAX was founded in 1973 by Dave and Gail Liniger, with an innovative, entrepreneurial culture affording its agents and franchisees the flexibility to operate their businesses with great independence. RE/MAX agents have lived, worked and served in their local communities for decades, raising millions of dollars every year for Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals® and other charities. To learn more about RE/MAX, to search home listings or find an agent in your community, please visit www.remax.com. For the latest news about RE/MAX, please visit news.remax.com.

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INDO-CANADIANS SHOCKED AFTER PRABHJOT SINGH KATRI, 23, SUSPICIOUSLY MURDERED IN TRURO TOWN IN NOVA SCOTIA IN SUSPECTED HATE CRIME

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The victim was returning home after work when he was murdered, not far from the apartment he shared with his sister and her husband. The relatives and friends of the victim claim it to be a hate crime. The small Indo-Canadian community in the town is in shock.

Maninder Singh, the victim’s cousin, said that his murder was hate-motivated. He said Prabhjot did two jobs to help his family in India and was waiting to apply for permanent residency in Canada. “He was an innocent guy returning back from his job. He drove a taxi,” the victim’s friend, Jatinder Kumardeep, was quoted as saying.

Agampal Singh, another friend of the victim, said that he had no enemies. “We don’t have any idea why this happened. He was a very innocent guy. He didn’t talk with people he didn’t know. And then this thing happens, which has totally destroyed his family and us also. We come to this country for a good future. We are not safe here. I can’t even sleep.” An online fundraiser has raised more than \$50,000 to send the body to India.



FRONTRUNNERS LIBERALS, CONSERVATIVES CONTINUE TO CLASP IN A TIE

POOJA LUTHRA

The recent Nanos poll survey conducted shows that the Liberals and the Conservatives have neck-to-neck support in the federal election. The ballot support for the Conservatives lies between 32%- 35%, while support for the Liberals sits between 32%-35%. The NDP has managed to retain support between 17%- 20%. The poll suggests the Bloc Quebecois may come under the range of 5%- 8%, the Green Party to have support within 4%- 7% and the People’s Party to receive votes between 1%- 4%

“Trudeau and O’Toole remain close on the preferred PM tracking,” said Nik Nanos, founder and chief data scientist at Nanos Research.

Liberal leader Justin Trudeau with 29.9% support, remains the preferred choice for Prime Minister among respondents, followed by Conservative leader Erin O’Toole (26.3%), according to Nanos’ survey. NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh ranks third with 22.1% as the preferred choice for Prime Minister of Canada.

NANOS’ METHODOLOGY- The survey conducted between Wednesday, September 1 and Monday, September 6, interviewed 500 eligible voters. The margin of error for a survey of respondents is ± 2.8 per centage points, 19 times out of 20.

Angus Reid’s latest data shows both leading parties, i.e. the Liberals and the Conservatives, are picking up slight support, but not enough to change the dynamics of the race.

Nik Nanos told CTV News that the party leaders might have the opportunity to shift the momentum on their side at the two official debates are all set to start on September 8 (French) and September 9 (English).

Y Media will broadcast full coverage of the English National debate on Channel Y from 9 pm to 11 pm on Thursday, September 9. It will be followed by a panel discussion led by Group Editor Yudhvir Jaswal. The panel members will present a complete and in-depth analysis of the ongoing federal government election.

27 Fast and Easy Fix Ups to Get the Best Price for Your GTA Home

TORONTO - Because your home may well be your largest asset, selling it is probably one of the most important decisions you will make in your life. And once you have made that decision, you’ll want to sell your home for the highest price in the shortest time possible without compromising your sanity. Before you place your home on the market, here’s a way to help you to be as prepared as possible.

To assist homesellers, a new industry report has just been released called “27 Valuable Tips That You Should Know to Get Your Home Sold Fast and for Top Dollar.” It tackles the important issues you need to know to make your home competitive in today’s tough, aggressive marketplace.

Through these 27 tips you will discover how to protect and capitalize on your most important investment, reduce stress, be in control of your situation, and make the best profit possible.

In this report you’ll discover how to avoid financial disappointment or worse, a financial disaster when selling your home. Using a common-sense approach, you will get the straight facts about what can make or break the sale of your home.

You owe it to yourself to learn how these important tips will give you the competitive edge to get your home sold fast and for the most amount of money.

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NEW ZEALAND SUPERMARKET ‘TERROR ATTACK’ LEAVES PERPETRATOR DEAD



UCKLAND, (IANS) New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern on Friday confirmed that the violent attack that took place at the New Lynn supermarket in Auckland was a “terrorist attack” carried out by a Sri Lankan national who was shot dead by the police. A spokesperson of ambulance service St Johns said at least six people were injured during the attack that occurred at around 2.40 p.m., including three in critical conditions, reports Xinhua news agency.

“A violent extremist undertook a terrorist attack on innocent New Zealanders at a New Lynn Countdown in Auckland,” Ardern told a press conference in Wellington.

“This was a violent attack. It was senseless and I’m sorry it happened,” she said, adding that the police shot the offender within roughly a minute of the attack happening.

The attacker was a Sri Lankan national who arrived in New Zealand in 2011 and has been closely monitored by the New Zealand Police from 2016 for his Islamic State-inspired ideology, according to Ardern.

However, it is unknown whether this man is a New Zealand citizen. New Zealand Police Commissioner Andrew Coster also confirmed at the press conference that the individual behind the attack was under heavy surveillance over “concerns about his ideology”. The offender was acting alone and there was no further threat to the public, said Coster.

The person travelled from where he lived in Glen Eden to Countdown at LynnMall in Western Auckland and was closely watched by surveillance teams. He entered the Countdown supermarket where he obtained a knife. Surveillance teams were as close as they could be, and when the commotion began they acted, according to Coster. When the man approached them with the knife, he was shot and killed, said Coster. Armed police have blocked off the roads nearby and at least 10 police vehicles were currently around the mall, where the supermarket is located. Friday’s attack comes two years after New Zealand saw its worst terror attack when a white supremacist gunman murdered 51 Muslim worshippers across two mosques in Christchurch in 2019.

OVER 200 HEALTH JOURNALS CALL FOR EMERGENCY ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

LONDON, (IANS) More than 200 health journals across the world have, for the first time, come together to simultaneously publish an editorial calling on world leaders to take emergency action to limit global temperature increases, halt the destruction of nature, and protect health. In a year of Covid-19, the editorial warns that the greatest threat to global public health into the future is the continued failure of world leaders to take adequate action to keep the global temperature rise below 1.5 degrees Celsius as decided in the UN-mandated Paris Agreement in 2015 and to restore nature.

The editorial has been published in leading titles from every continent including The BMJ, The Lancet, the New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM), the East African Medical Journal, the Chinese Science Bulletin, the National Medical Journal of India, the Medical Journal of Australia, and 50 BMJ specialist journals including BMJ Global Health and Thorax. “As health professionals, we must do all we can to aid the transition to a sustainable, fairer, resilient, and healthier world,” the experts wrote in the editorial.

“We, as editors of health journals, call for governments and other leaders to act, marking 2021 as the year that the world finally changes course,” they added. According to a recent report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, every fraction of a degree hotter endangers our health and future. The editorial, published ahead of the UN General Assembly next week, urged wealthier nations to act faster and do more to support those countries already suffering under higher temperatures. “The impact on health and survival of extreme temperatures, destructive weather events, and the widespread degradation of essential ecosystems are just some of the impacts that we are seeing more of due to a changing climate. “They disproportionately affect the most vulnerable, including children and the elderly, ethnic minorities, poorer communities and those with underlying health conditions. “The environment and health are inextricably intertwined. The changing climate is endangering us in many ways, including its critical impacts on health and health care delivery. As medical and public health practitioners, we have an obligation not only to anticipate new health care needs but also to be active participants in limiting the causes of the climate crisis,” said Eric J Rubin, Editor-in-Chief of NEJM, and one of the co-authors of the editorial.

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Around 65% not satisfied with the work of Punjab CM

NEW DELHI, (IANS) While overall around 40 per cent people in the five poll-bound states of Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Manipur and Goa are very satisfied with the work of their respective Chief Ministers, in Punjab, 65 per cent are not satisfied with the work their Chief Minister Amarinder Singh, ABP-CVOTER-IANS BATTLE FOR THE STATES - WAVE 1. The five states will go to the polls next year. The survey revealed that overall, 39.7 per cent are very much satisfied with work of their respective chief ministers, while 27.2 per cent are satisfied to some extent and 27.4 per cent are not satisfied at all. Responding to a query as to 'how much satisfied are you with the work of your chief minister', about 64.8 per cent respondents in Punjab said they are not satisfied, while only 12.6 per cent said they are very much satisfied with the work of Amarinder Singh, and 19 per cent said are satisfied to some extent. In Goa, about 24.7 per cent said they very much satisfied, while 53.6 per cent said they are satisfied to some extent. About 20.7 per cent respondent said that they are not satisfied at all with Chief Minister Pramod Sawant. In Manipur, about 30.1 per cent respondents said

they very much satisfied with Chief Minister N. Biren Singh, while 26.6 per cent said they are satisfied to some extent, and 43.4 per cent said they are not satisfied at all. About 43.6 per cent respondents are very much satisfied with the work of Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, while 19.1 per cent are satisfied to some extent. About 37 per cent respondents in Uttar Pradesh said that they are not satisfied at all with their chief minister. In Uttarakhand, where the ruling BJP has changed two chief ministers in four months, about 36.4 per cent respondents are very much satisfied with the work of Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami. A total of 10.9 per cent of the people surveyed said they are satisfied to some extent, while 35.8 per cent said they are not satisfied at all. The overall sample size for the survey was 81,006 in five states covering 690 Assembly seats. This state poll is part of the largest and definitive independent sample survey tracker series carried out in India over the last 22 years, conducted by independent international polling agency CVoter.

C-VOTER SURVEY PROJECTS 4-1 SCORELINE IN FAVOUR OF BJP IN 2022 POLLS, AAP EMERGING AS SINGLE LARGEST PARTY IN PUNJAB

CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

The ABP-CVOTER-IANS BATTLE FOR THE STATES - WAVE 1 is projecting a 4-1 scoreline in favour of the BJP in the five states going to the polls in early 2022 -- Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Goa, Manipur and Uttarakhand.

The BJP is ahead of the pack in Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Goa and Manipur. The Aam Aadmi Party is currently leading as the single largest party in Punjab, slightly short of the majority mark. AAP has emerged as a principal challenger or a close third party in Punjab, Goa and Uttarakhand.

The Congress is facing severe infighting across all the state units with Punjab and Manipur being the worst-hit states. Uttar Pradesh has Samajwadi Party and Bahujan Samaj Party vying for second and third spot, respectively, while the BJP being comfortably ahead of both.

The poll shows that anti-incumbency sentiments and the Covid pandemic have not dented the relative vote catching ability of the BJP. The Congress, the only other national party, continues to be crisis-ridden and is unable to form a cohesive organisation that can offer a meaningful challenge, the survey found.

Uttar Pradesh

In Uttar Pradesh, the BJP (NDA) is notching 42 per cent vote share as per the survey figures. This is despite the anger from certain section of influential Brahmin voters. SP is a distant second with a vote share projection of 30 per cent votes and BSP is projected to poll 16 per cent votes. The Congress remains a marginal player with 5 per cent projected vote share.

The BJP is slated to comfortably cross the majority mark with a projected 263 seats. This number is 62 less than its 2017 tally. Therefore, there is some anti-incumbency, but that loss is not enough to unseat the party. SP will emerge as the principal opposition party with a projected 113 seats. BSP's vote share to seat share conversion remains poor, it is projected to win only 14 seats.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is the most popular leader in the state with 40 per cent of those surveyed naming him as the preferred CM choice. Akhilesh Yadav of SP is the second most popular leader at 28 per cent affirmation. Former CM Mayawati is placed at the third spot with 15 per cent affirmation rate. The UP BJP is led by a leader who leads his closest rival by close to 13 per cent popularity rating points. Also, UP BJP is projected to lead nearest rival SP by approximately 12 per cent vote share. The BJP, therefore, enjoys advantage of popular leadership and strong vote bank in UP.

Punjab

Aam Aadmi Party is projected to become the single largest party in Punjab with a seat share of 55 and vote share of 35 per cent. Faction ridden incumbent, the Congress is currently in the second position with 29 per cent vote share and 42 seat share projection.

In a striking observation, Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal is projected as the most popular leader in Punjab at 21.6 per cent affirmation. It is pertinent to note that this is partly due to non-projection of a CM face by AAP. Akali Dal chieftain Sukhbir Singh Badal is the second most popular leader (19 per cent), closely followed by incumbent CM Amrinder Singh (18 per cent).

The new PPCC President Navjot Singh Sidhu has not cut much ice with the electorate as his popularity number (15 per cent) for CM choice trails that of Bhagwant Mann of AAP (16 per cent). Sidhu currently is the least popular among the Big 5 of Punjab's leadership. The Punjab unit of BJP is staring at its worst performance in recent decades owing to the anger generated by farmer protests and loss of alliance with the Akali Dal. The party will gain marginal vote share to notch 7 per cent of total votes but it may fail to win a single legislative assembly seat.

Sidhu, the big bold gambit of Congress in Punjab has not shown tangible gains. Rather this move has divided the party. Aam Aadmi Party is clearly benefiting from farmer protests and anti-incumbency, but an absence of CM face is leaving the party just short of majority mark. Akali Dal and the BJP are unable to find a winning formula after their rancorous fallout.

Uttarakhand

Despite following a revolving door policy vis-a-vis its CMs, the BJP is projected to win the state. The BJP is projected to win 43 per cent vote share and 46 seats. The Congress is projected to poll 33 per cent vote share despite a spirited fight by its local unit. This vote share may translate into 21 seats.

Key reason for this surprise performance by the BJP is AAP's rise in the hill state. AAP is projected to poll 15 per cent vote share thus taking away a large share of anti-incumbency votes that were to head the Congress way. Although this rise in the vote of share of AAP may not result in significant number of seats as the party is projected to win two seats in the survey. Ironically enough, while the Congress is placed in the second spot, its leader continues to be the most popular leader as CM choice. Harish Rawat is preferred by 31 per cent of the state as CM choice, incumbent CM Pushkar Singh Dhami is placed second at 22.5 per cent popularity points. Anil Baluni of the BJP is placed a close third with 19 per cent popularity points. Colonel Kothiyal of AAP is preferred CM choice of roughly 10 per cent of Uttarakhandis. The projected numbers highlight the issue of falling brand equity of Congress as a credible challenger to the BJP. If Congress were to be seen as the one and only challenger to the BJP, then AAP would not be able to cut away anti-incumbency votes. Hence despite a popular leader in its fold and a blundering incumbent party, Congress is unable to take pole position.

Unless Congress can re-establish itself as the primary contender to BJP in the state, it is advantage BJP in Uttarakhand.

Goa

Goa is just like the case of Uttarakhand when it comes to BJP-INC-AAP dynamics. BJP is in the pole position with a projected vote share of 39 per cent and a seat share of 24 seats. Except that BJP's lead in the state is also reinforced by a popular leader.

BJP CM Pramod Sawant leads his nearest rival from the AAP by a full 19 per cent points. Currently he is preferred by 33 per cent Goans as the most preferred candidate for CM's post.

AAP is projected to emerge as the principal opposition party dethroning the INC. AAP is projected to win 15 per cent vote share and 5 seats. While the INC is projected to win 15 per cent vote share and 5 seats.

CM Sawant has done a competent job of managing anti-incumbency and is benefiting from complete disintegration of Goa Congress. The anti-incumbent votes are therefore getting split between AAP and Congress. This bodes well for the BJP.

BJP is gaining Goa on the back of non-controversial local leadership and a split in the anti-incumbency vote due to disintegration of Congress. This disintegration seems to be a national trend within smaller states.

Manipur

BJP alliance is slated to win the state with 41 per cent vote share and 34 seats. It is significant as it signals the geographic diversity of BJP's ability to beat anti-incumbency across many regions of India. Currently, the BJP is able to beat back anti-incumbency in North, East and West of India, this could be indicative of a larger subterranean trend that is not being picked up by political observers currently.

In Manipur Congress is holding onto its status of the principal opposition party, its former state unit chief Govindas Konhoujam defected to the BJP a few days ago.

This sums up the state of the Congress. From a potentially easy win the party would have to make do with runners up status. BJP continues its golden run in Northeast India. Congress is facing a leadership deficit and crisis of credibility in line with rest of India. The sample size for the survey was 81,006 in five states covering 690 Assembly seats. This state poll is part of the largest and definitive independent sample survey tracker series carried out in India over the last 22 years, conducted by independent international polling agency CVoter.

INDIA LIKELY TO SEE FIRST WOMAN CHIEF OF FINANCIAL REGULATOR

NEW DELHI, (IANS) India may well get the first female chief of a financial regulator as two women feature among the top candidates for the post of IRDAI Chairperson.

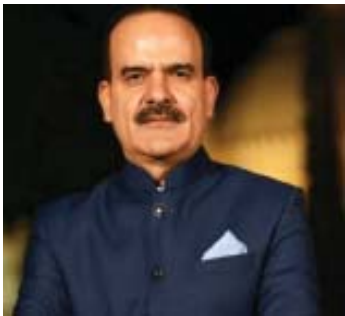
Former Telecom Secretary Aruna Sundararajan and the Securities and Exchange Board of India's (SEBI) Whole Time Member, MadhabiPuri Buch, are in the race for the next Chairperson of the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India, highly-placed sources told IANS. The Centre has shortlisted few former and current bureaucrats and officials for the post of the insurance regulator. The selection process is gathering momentum as the post has been vacant for around four months now. The post was last held by Subhash Chandra Khuntia, who was appointed in 2018.

Several concerns have been raised by industry participants as the top post at the insurance regulator remained vacant for a considerable period amid the pandemic. Sundararajan is currently an Independent Director on the Board of Larsen & Toubro Infotech. A 1982 batch Kerala cadre officer of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Sundararajan superannuated on July 31, 2019 as Chairman of the Digital Communications Commission, and the Secretary, Telecom. As Secretary DOT, she was the a key architect of the National Digital Communications Policy 2018 which aims to propel India as a global leader in digital communications. Key achievements during her tenure were the launch of the country's 5G roadmap, establishment of indigenous test bed, launch of the National Frequency Allocation Plan-2018, and completion of the first phase of BharatNet.

Buch, on the other hand, got a one-year extension as whole-time member (WTM) at SEBI in October 2020. The only female board member at SEBI, she took charge of the post on April 5, 2017. She handles Investment Management Department, Collective Investment Schemes, Integrated Surveillance Department, Department of Economic & Policy Analysis, and the Information Technology Department. Earlier, she served as consultant to the New Development Bank in Shanghai. She also served as the head of private equity firm, Greater Pacific Capital's Singapore office. She also served as the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer at ICICI Securities Ltd and as Executive Director on the Board of ICICI Bank. Buch also served as a non-executive director on the Boards of various companies. A Graduate in Mathematics from St Stephen's College, New Delhi, she went on to do an MBA from the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad.

MAHARASHTRA PROBE PANEL ISSUES BAILABLE WARRANT AGAINST EX-MUMBAI COMMISSIONER PARAM BIR SINGH

MUMBAI, (IANS) In a major development, an enquiry commission in Maharashtra on Tuesday issued a bailable arrest warrant against former Mumbai Police Commissioner Param Bir Singh, currently the Commandant-General of the state Home Guards, officials said here. The warrant was issued by retired judge K.U. Chandiwal, who is probing the March 20 letter written by Singh to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, levelling charges of corruption against former Maharashtra Home Minister Anil Deshmukh, who was later forced to step down. The arrest warrant for Rs 50,000 has been issued against Singh for non-appearance before the probe commission for the enquiry, despite repeated summons served to him. Singh was also fined Rs 5,000 in June and Rs 25,000 twice in August. Singh had deposited the amounts in the CM's Relief Fund. The Commission has now posted the matter for further hearing on September 22. Singh, a 1988 batch IPS officer, is under the scrutiny of the Chandiwal enquiry commission appointed by the state government in March to probe the allegations of bribery and misuse of office levelled against Deshmukh, a senior Nationalist Congress Party leader and the then Home Minister.



UTTAR PRADESH: 31 DISTRICTS COVID-19 FREE, ZERO NEW CASES IN 64 DISTRICTS



Uttar Pradesh has done a great job in controlling the coronavirus and many global agencies including the World Health Organization (WHO) have praised the state for this. Now, the pace of infection has slowed down in the state and due to the continuous efforts, life is now becoming normal. As many as 2,17,846 samples were tested in UP in the last 24 hours and not a single new case of infection was found in 64 districts. Similarly, only single-digit corona case reports have been reported in 11 districts. At present, the number of active COVID-19 cases in the state has been reduced to 214. At the same time, there is not a single corona patient in Aligarh, Amroha, Ayodhya, Baghpat, Ballia, Balrampur, Banda, Basti, Bahraich, Bhadohi, Bijnor, Chandauli, Chitrakoot, Deoria, Etah, Fatehpur, Ghazipur, Gonda, Hamirpur, Hapur, Hardoi, Hathras, Kaushambi, Lalitpur, Mahoba, Muzaffarnagar, Pilibhit, Rampur, Shamli, Siddharth Nagar and Sonbhadra districts. These districts have now become coronavirus free. So far 7,40,38,991 Covid samples have been tested in Uttar Pradesh. In the last 24 hours, 16 new patients were confirmed in the testing, while 28 patients were discharged after recovering during this period. So far, 16,86,417 residents of the state have become healthy after getting free from corona infection. While reviewing the COVID-19 situation with Team-9 on Wednesday, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that the mantra of aggressive tracing, testing and quick treatment is yielding good results. To improve this situation, all necessary arrangements should be made according to the policy of trace, test and treat. Reviewing the availability of the COVID-19 vaccine, the Chief Minister has expressed satisfaction over the vaccination process. The Chief Minister was told that on the previous day, over 14.51 lakh people got the protection cover of the vaccine. According to the guidelines of the Government of India, more than 45 per cent of the people eligible for vaccination have received the first dose of the vaccine.



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Taliban leader Mullah Hasan Akhund to lead new Afghan govt

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Sirajuddin Haqqani, the son of the founder of the Haqqani Network, designated as a terrorist organization by the US, will be the new interior minister. Akhund is presently the head of the Taliban's powerful decision-making body, Rehbari Shura or the leadership council. He belongs to Kandahar, the birthplace of the Taliban, and was among the founders of the armed movement, The News reported. "He worked for 20 years as the head of Rehbari Shura and earned himself a very good reputation. He is a religious leader rather than having a military background and is known for his character and devotion," said a Taliban leader. He added that Akhund remained close to Sheikh Hibatullah Akhunzada for 20 years. According to the Taliban, Akhund had worked in important positions during the previous Taliban government in Afghanistan. He was the foreign minister before being made the deputy prime minister when Mullah



Mohammad Rabbani Akhund was the prime minister, the report said. Similarly, the Taliban said that the name of another veteran leader, Sirajuddin Haqqani, head of the Haqqani Network, has been proposed for the federal interior minister's post, the report said. He has also been authorized to nominate governors for the eastern provinces, from where the Haqqani Network used to draw its force, including Paktia, Paktika, Khost, Gardez, Nangarhar and Kunar. Similarly, Mullah Yaqoob, the son of

Taliban founder Mullah Mohammad Omar, has been approved as Afghanistan's defence minister. Mullah Yaqoob was a student of Sheikh Hibatullah Akhunzada in his madrasa and remained close to him. According to the Taliban sources, Sheikh Hibatullah Akhunzada has always respected Mullah Yaqoob due to his father and Yaqoob's dedication to his work. It was Sheikh Habibullah who appointed Mullah Yaqoob as commander-in-chief of their armed fighters and then chose him as head of the powerful military commission, the report said.

Argentina urges G20 to bolster cooperation, solidarity amid pandemic

BUENOS AIRES, (IANS) Argentine Health Minister Carla Vizzotti has called on members of the G20 to strengthen international cooperation and solidarity amid the Covid-19 pandemic. Vizzotti made the appeal during a conference of G20 health ministers in Rome, Italy, Xinhua news agency reported, citing the ministry's statement. She stressed the need to turn the Covid-19 crisis into an opportunity to strengthen preparedness and management in a coordinated and equitable response to future health emergencies, with a special emphasis on low-and middle-income countries. "For a sustainable, inclusive and resilient recovery, all countries must implement measures in line with the principles of international solidarity, collaboration and equity, ensuring access for all people to vaccines against Covid-19," she said.

Aus should change current vax strategy to achieve herd immunity

CANBERRA, (IANS) A new Covid-19 pandemic tracking model revealed on Monday that Australia's current vaccination strategy should now prioritise administering the Pfizer jab to people aged between 12 and 40 years old to achieve herd immunity. The findings, published in the Medical Journal of Australia (MJA), were made from a new model developed by James Cook University (JCU), reports Xinhua news agency. The model incorporated age-specific mixing, infectiousness, susceptibility, and severity to assess the impact of the epidemic under different public health intervention scenarios, and it also examined different vaccination programs, such as AstraZeneca only, Pfizer only, and the mixed program of vaccinating. Epidemiologist Professor Emma McBryde from JCU's Australian Institute of Tropical Health and Medicine said the modeling showed Australia's current strategy of vaccinating the vulnerable older age groups first is the optimal strategy for reducing hospitalisations, deaths, and years of life lost, but it may be "unlikely to achieve herd immunity" due to the uncertain effective reproduction number of the Delta strain.



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