

## IG KUNWAR VIJAY PRATAP JOINS AAP



NATIONAL CONVENOR OF THE AAM AADMI PARTY, ARVIND KEJRIWAL (RIGHT) WITH IG VIJAY KUNWAR PRATAP (LEFT) ATTENDING PRESS CONFERENCE IN AMRITSAR.

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## FARMERS TO FIGURE IN THE FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS

DR. S. S. CHHINA

First time in the history of India, such a big exodus of farmers had gathered for such a long time in protest of the three farm laws, but still obscurity is prevailing over its early solution. On the other side it is a common question that how this farm agitation would affect the forth coming election of states in 2022, where it is assumed without exception, that it would severely affect the election scenario. Now the opinion is emerging among farm leaders that they must play the active role in politics instead to depend on the mercy of the politicians for their genuine demands. Some of the farm leaders are precipitous to form an political front of the kissan movement but as yet, this issue had not been discussed seriously, because it involves number of glitches. Farm unions are similar to other professional unions of employees of banks, railways, teachers, doctors, factory workers etc. Not to participate in politics is one of the salient features of the memorandum of these associations. No trade unionist had contested any election on the ticket of the professional union. Some of the unionist had contested elections on the ticket of the political parties. There is no impropriety that farm union leaders may contest the elections, but contesting elections without the ticket of the registered political party they would be assumed as independent candidates and it would create confusion. Many of farm unions are affiliated to certain political parties, these unions are also participating in this agitation. It is again a question mark that whether those would disobey their party direction and would act independently without following the norms of their party direction. Though farm vote bank is largest in India, but farm unions had been too weak compared to other professional unions. There are more than 350 farm unions in India. In many states there are dozen of the unions.

In 2015 Mr. Mohinder Singh Tikait a famous farm leader called a meeting of 52 union leaders at Chandigarh to forge a unity, but he could not accomplish the desired results. While looking on the role of farm unions in the recent held elections in five states, where the anti ruling party feelings were resonated by the masses, in which farm agitation was a big factor. Particularly in West Bengal where Mamta Banerjee dared to force all odels against the ruling party at centre, muster much of the support of farmers, through the propoganda of touring farm leaders against BJP and with the plea, that cast your vote in favor of winning candidates irrespective of the party. The Congress and CPM the parties those had ruled in Bengal for very long time turned the insignificant entities this time, where the TMC emerged as strongest even with higher tally than 2016 elections. The Bharat Band call given by farm leaders was an exceptional success, where the overall response throughout the country was noticed. The farmers along with cross section of the society shut their enterprises and restrained themselves to carry on the mundane activities that must have made the ruling party cautions about the future pit falls of this moment. The public sympathy had enhanced in favor of agitators against the BJP presumption that it would deplete and extinguish with time. It had been observed that politicians of different parties had turned at the site of agitation even being uninvited, ostensibly impressed by the agitation they might be looking their own promotion being the sympathisers of the farmers. Some of the leaders from BJP itself had deserted their party and the others had been suggesting to their bosses to find the way out for its solution. Mr. Jaswant Singh a senior BJP leader and a former Minister in the centre and many other leaders are seen supporting the cause of farmers.

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## ADIEU TO 'FLYING SIKH,' MILKHA SINGH

SANJU GUPTA

"Today, I am 91 plus, but at this age, despite the pain in my back and other health constraints, I still go to functions, and I have told my manager to let me still attend at least four functions a month. Why? because you never know that when I go to these functions, some child or youth boy or girl might take a spark from me and win a gold for India which fell from my hands due to my silly mistake in 1960 in Rome Olympic."- Milkha Singh



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## AMARINDER VS NAVJOT; GANDHI STEPS IN TO RESOLVE INFIGHTING IN PUNJAB UNIT

**NEW DELHI, (IANS)** After Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh met the party panel on the state in the national capital on Tuesday, former Congress President Rahul Gandhi has stepped in to defuse the tension in the state unit.



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## KOTKAPURA FIRING CASE: SIT QUESTIONS FORMER PUNJAB CM PARKASH SINGH BADAL

Former Punjab chief minister Parkash Singh Badal was on Tuesday quizzed by the Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the 2015 Kotkapura police firing incident. The Punjab Police SIT reached Badal's official MLA flat in Sector-4 here. It was there for nearly two-and-a-half hours, sources said.



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## OPPOSITION ALLIANCE AGAINST BJP FOR 2024 POLLS

**NEW DELHI, (IANS)** After representatives of various opposition parties met at Sharad Pawar's house here for over two and a half hours on Tuesday, his NCP said that the meeting was not called by the party supremo but the Rashtra Manch of former Union Minister Yashwant Sinha. NCP's former Rajya Sabha member Majeed Memon said that "speculation is in media that Sharad Pawar has called the meet, which is not correct".

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## SIMRANJEET SIDHU, 27, FOUND DEAD; POLICE REQUESTING INFORMATION

Region of Peel – Investigators from the Homicide and Missing Person Bureau are asking for the public's assistance in investigating the death of a man in the City of Mississauga. On Saturday, June 12, 2021, at approximately 6:10 am, police received a call for a man lying on the ground in the greenspace at Derry Greenway Park located at 3125 Derry Road, Mississauga.



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## LARGEST INTERNATIONAL DRUG TAKEDOWN IN TORONTO POLICE'S HISTORY; NEARLY DOZEN PUNJABIS ACCUSED

The Toronto Police Service have announced the takedown of a major international drug-smuggling ring, which saw more than 1,000 kilograms of cocaine, crystal meth, and marijuana being transported between Mexico, California, and Canada using modified tractor trailers. Dubbed Project Brisa, the six-month investigation led officers to work in partnership with Canadian and American law enforcement agencies as well as agencies throughout southwestern Ontario and across Canada.

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## Y MEDIA COVID & VACCINE REPORT

- Canada Lifts Restrictions For Fully Vaccinated Canadians, Permanent Residents, And Certain Foreign National Travellers Starting July 5.
- Canada's Ban On Flights From India Extended Till July 21. All Ontarians Who Received 1st Vaccine Dose On Or Before May 9 Can Now Book For 2nd Vaccine Dose Appointment.
- Ontarian Adults In 10 Delta Variant Regions Who Received First Shot Of Pfizer/ Moderna Vaccine On Or Before May 30 Can Book Second Dose Starting Wednesday, June 23.
- Canada Expects To Receive 50 Million Vaccine Doses By June End, 68 Million By July.
- All Non-essential Travel Between Canada- Us Remain In Effect Until July 21.

## 3 INDO-CANADIANS IN ONTARIO CABINET



**PRABMEET SINGH SARKARIA**  
MPP FOR BRAMPTON SOUTH,  
BECOMES PRESIDENT OF THE  
TREASURY BOARD



**PARM GILL**  
MPP FOR MILTON, BECOMES  
MINISTER OF CITIZENSHIP AND  
MULTICULTURALISM



**NINA TANGRI**  
MPP FOR MISSISSAUGA STREETSVILLE,  
BECOMES ASSOCIATE MINISTER OF SMALL  
BUSINESS AND RED TAPE REDUCTION

DETAILS ON PAGE 7



**PUNJAB ELECTIONS SPECIAL SERIES**



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## Fully vaccinated travellers entering Canada during COVID-19

Effective July 8, 2021 at 11:59 p.m. ET

If you are fully vaccinated and meet specific requirements, these new measures may apply to you. Fully vaccinated means having received the full series of a vaccine or a combination of [vaccines accepted by the Government of Canada](#) (Pfizer, Moderna, AstraZeneca, Janssen) at least 14 days prior to entering Canada.

### Pre-border

- [Plan your quarantine](#).
- Pre-register for your arrival test.
- Within 72 hours before your arrival to Canada:
  - Take a [COVID-19 molecular test](#)
  - Use [ArriveCAN](#) to enter your information
- Have your [ArriveCAN receipt](#) and documents ready, including digital or paper copy of proof of vaccination.

#### What you need to enter into ArriveCAN:

- Contact & travel information
- 14-day travel history
- Quarantine plan
- Confirmation of a negative pre-entry test (or positive test taken 24-90 days prior to travel)
- Proof of vaccination (must be in English or French, or a certified translation)
- COVID-19 symptom self-assessment

### At the border

- Provide required information and documents, including proof of vaccination, if requested.
- Answer all eligibility, vaccination and health screening questions.
- Complete your arrival test on site if services are available. Otherwise, collect a home test kit to use when you arrive at your destination.
- If you have symptoms or do not meet the exemption requirements, follow the instructions provided by the government representative.

### After entry

- If you meet all the entry requirements and are fully vaccinated, you are exempt from:
  - quarantine
  - government-authorized hotel (air travellers)
  - day B test
- If you got a home test kit, complete and send it to the lab.
- If your arrival test is positive, you must follow the instructions of your local public health authority, including quarantine or isolation.
- Keep your proof of vaccination for 14 days.

For more information visit: [travel.gc.ca/travel-covid](https://travel.gc.ca/travel-covid)

Public Health  
Agence de Santé

Agence de Santé  
Santé Canada

# CANADA LIFTS RESTRICTIONS FOR FULLY VACCINATED CANADIANS, PERMANENT RESIDENTS, AND CERTAIN FOREIGN NATIONAL TRAVELLERS STARTING JULY 5

The Government of Canada is taking a responsible, precautionary approach at the border by continually monitoring available data and scientific evidence to protect the health and safety of Canadians.

The Government of Canada is announcing the details of the first phase of its approach to easing border measures for travellers entering Canada. These cautious adjustments are now possible because of the successes of the vaccine rollout in Canada and Canadians following public health measures.

Beginning July 5, 2021, at 11:59 p.m. EDT, fully vaccinated travellers who are permitted to enter Canada will not be subject to the federal requirement to quarantine or take a COVID-19 test on day-8. In addition, fully vaccinated travellers arriving by air will not be required to stay at a government-authorized hotel.

To be considered fully vaccinated, a traveller must have received the full series of a vaccine — or combination of vaccines — accepted by the Government of Canada at least 14 days prior to entering Canada. Currently, those vaccines are manufactured by Pfizer, Moderna, AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD, and Janssen (Johnson & Johnson). Travellers can receive their vaccine in any country and must provide documentation supporting their vaccination in English, French or with a certified translation. Patty Hajdu, Minister of Health said, “The cautious adjustments announced today are only possible because of the tremendous efforts of Canadians, and additional ones will only happen if we continue to protect each other. Thank you to all those who have stepped up to get their first and second dose. If you haven’t, get vacci-

nated when it's your turn, follow up for your second dose, and continue to follow public health measures." For these new measures to apply to them, fully vaccinated travellers must still meet all other mandatory requirements, including pre-and on-arrival testing. Continued testing will allow public health experts to keep monitoring positivity rates at the border, monitor for variants of concern, and make further adjustments to border measures as needed.

"The safety and security of Canadians remain our top priority as we look to support the careful and safe arrival of new permanent residents to Canada over the next year. These new permanent residents will finally be able to start their new life in Canada and Canada will benefit from their skills when we pivot to post-pandemic economic recovery. At the same time, we'll continue to offer protection to those who need it most, and keep our place as a global leader in providing a safe haven for refugees," said Marco Mendicino, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. Fully vaccinated travellers must also be asymptomatic, have a paper or digital copy of their vaccination documentation, and provide COVID-19-related information electronically through ArriveCAN prior to arrival in Canada. They must still present a suitable quarantine plan, and be prepared to quarantine, in case it is determined at the border that they do not meet all of the conditions required to be exempt from quarantine. As with all other exempt travellers, they will be required to follow public health measures in place, such as wearing a mask when in public, keep a copy of their vaccine and test results, as well as a list of close contacts for 14 days after entry to Canada.

# India says IT Rules framed after consultations



**NEW DELHI, (IANS)** In a rejoinder to the UN Special Rapporteurs who had commented that India's new IT Rules do not meet international human rights norms, India has firmly said that these rules were formulated only after wide ranging discussions in 2018.

In a letter to the UN Human Rights Council, India's Permanent Mission to UN pointed out that India's Ministry of Information Technology and Information and Broadcasting undertook broad consultations in 2018 with various stakeholders, including individuals, civil society, industry associations and organisations and invited public comments to prepare the draft rules.

Thereafter, an inter-ministerial meeting had discussed in detail the comments received and accordingly the Rules were finalised, India said in the letter.

"The Permanent Mission of India would also like to highlight that India's democratic credentials are well recognised. The right to freedom of speech and expression is guaranteed under the Indian Constitution. The independent judiciary and robust media are part of India's demo-

cratic structure", the letter said.

UN Special Rapporteurs at United Nations Office of the Human Rights Commissioner have said in a report that it is concerned that India's Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, in their current form, do not conform with international human rights norms.

"As noted in previous communications sent to your Excellency's Government, we are concerned that these new rules come at a time of a global pandemic and of large-scale farmer protests in the country, where the enjoyment of the freedom of opinion and expression, including the right to receive information, and the right to privacy, is particularly important for the realization of several other civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights", the report said.

"We would like to recall that restrictions to freedom of expression must never be invoked as a justification for the muzzling of any advocacy of multiparty democracy, democratic tenets and human rights", the report said.

## DELTA LIKELY TO BECOME DOMINANT STRAIN IN US: CDC

**WASHINGTON, (IANS)** The Delta coronavirus variant is expected to become the dominant strain in America, Director of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Rochelle Walensky said.

The Delta variant, also known as B.1.617.2, is more transmissible than others, Xinhua news agency quoted Walensky as saying in an ABC News interview on Friday.

As worrisome as this Delta strain is with regard to its hyper-transmissibility, our vaccines work. "Right now, they are working and they require actually two doses to be fully vaccinated, to work well. "So I would encourage all Americans, get your first shot and when you're due for your second, get your second shot and you'll be protected against this Delta variant," she added in the interview. The CDC has elevated the Delta strain from "variant of interest" to "variant of concern", which means the agency officially recognises that it may carry a risk of more severe illness and transmissibility. According to the CDC, the Delta variant accounts for up at least 10 per cent of all the confirmed coronavirus in the US.

On May 22, the variant had made up only 2.7 per cent of cases. In addition to Delta, the CDC has noted five other variants of concern.

**PM TRUDEAU ANNOUNCES THE  
NOMINATION OF MAHMUD JAMAL TO  
THE SUPREME COURT OF CANADA**

Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, announced the nomination of the Honourable Mahmud Jamal to the Supreme Court of Canada. Mahmud Jamal is first South-Asian, first Muslim, first African-born and first person of colour to be appointed to the SC. Justice Jamal had a distinguished career as a litigator with a deep commitment to pro bono work prior to his appointment to the Court of Appeal for Ontario in 2019.

He appeared in 35 appeals before the Supreme Court of Canada on civil, constitutional, criminal, and regulatory issues. He also taught constitutional law at McGill University and administrative law at Osgoode Hall Law School. He is bilingual. The Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and the Chairperson of the Independent Advisory Board for Supreme Court of Canada Judicial Appointments will soon appear before a special hearing of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights to discuss the selection process and the reasons for the nomination.

**TORONTO ANNOUNCES VACCINE DAY AT SCOTIABANK ARENA ON JUNE 27 – ‘OUR WINNING SHOT’ CLINIC PLANNING TO VACCINATE MORE THAN 10,000 PEOPLE**



Team Toronto announced thousands of new COVID-19 vaccination appointments for Toronto Vaccine Day at Scotiabank Arena on June 27. Mayor John Tory said, "This is our winning shot. Toronto Vaccine Day at Scotiabank Arena is one more way Team Toronto and all of our hardworking partners, including Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment, are working to get everyone in our city vaccinated so we can bring this pandemic to an end. If you need a first dose or a second dose, please book your appointment for this record-breaking clinic. Taking part in Toronto Vaccine Day is a win-win. You'll be a part of history and you'll be protecting yourself, your family and our city's progress in fighting COVID-19." The City of Toronto and Team Toronto vaccination partners are joining forces with Maple Leaf Sports & Entertainment (MLSE) and Scotiabank to hold a one-day "Our Winning Shot" vaccination event at Scotiabank Arena. In this full-court press, the all-star vaccination team is hoping to get as many Toronto residents as possible vaccinated while setting a Canadian clinic single-day vaccination dose record in the home of the Toronto Maple Leafs and Toronto Raptors. "Scotiabank Arena has been a home for champions and fans, a kitchen to feed frontline workers, and a place for our healthcare heroes to cheer on the home team. We're now proud to see Scotiabank Arena being used as a mass vaccination clinic to get shots into the arms of a record-setting number of people. Thanks to UHN, Michael Garron Hospital, MLSE and the City of Toronto for being our teammates on this life-saving initiative," Brian Porter, President and CEO, Scotiabank said. Clinic partners, led by University Health Network and Michael Garron Hospital, are planning to vaccinate more than 10,000 people on Sunday, in order to break the Canadian single-day clinic record. All people age 12 and older are eligible to book first dose appointments and be part of history. Kevin Smith, President & CEO, University Health Network (UHN) said, "The people of TeamUHN have been in this from the very first day as part of Team Toronto's vaccination efforts.

**PEEL POLICE ARRESTED AND CHARGED  
25-YEAR-OLD, GURJANT SINGH, FROM  
BRAMPTON FOR A RACING/FAIL TO  
REMAIN COLLISION**

Investigators from the Major Collision Bureau have arrested and charged a second 25-year-old man from Brampton for racing/fail to remain collision that occurred in the City of Brampton. On Monday, May 17, 2021, at approximately 11:13 p.m., a black 2006 Lexus and a black Honda Civic were travelling southbound on Main Street while approaching Queen Street in Brampton. The vehicles were travelling, downtown Brampton, at speeds more than double the speed limit. The Lexus subsequently collided with a cement wall at the intersection of Main Street and John Street, resulting in a 25-year-old man and a 22-year-old woman being transported to a trauma centre. The driver of the Honda Civic continued driving without stopping to assist.

On Wednesday, June 16, investigators from the Major Collision Bureau arrested and charged Gurjant SINGH with the following offence:

- Dangerous Operation causing bodily harm
- The accused will appear at the Ontario Court of Justice in Brampton on Wednesday, August 11, 2021.
- During the investigation, the Major Collision Bureau was able to identify the driver of the Honda Civic and on Tuesday, May 25, 2021, Drumm Lake, 23 from Brampton, was charged with:
- Dangerous Operation cause bodily harm x 2
  - Fail to stop after an accident resulting in bodily harm

Peel Regional Police is working hard to stop aggressive driving in the Region of Peel through many avenues including our newest Safer Roads Team. The Safer Roads Team was developed to specifically target/investigate racing, stunt driving, drivers with multiple licence suspensions and other high-risk driving behaviours that pose a risk to the community.

Investigators continue to ask anyone who has video surveillance, or dashcam footage of the incident, to contact the Major Collision Bureau at 905-453-2121, extension 3710. Information may also be left anonymously by calling Peel Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477) or by visiting [peelcrimestoppers.ca](http://peelcrimestoppers.ca).





# PFIZER COVID VAX PROVIDES HIGHER ANTIBODY LEVELS THAN SINOVAC: STUDY



**HONG KONG, (IANS)** People who got Pfizer's Covid-19 vaccine showed "substantially higher" levels of antibodies compared to those who received China's Sinovac shots, according to a new study. The study, led by University of Hong Kong (HKU), aims to estimate the incidence of natural infections over time and level of population immunity due to infections and vaccinations, the South China Morning Post reported on Saturday. The presence of antibodies is a sign that the vaccine is working to protect an individual, although the quantity of the proteins generated by the body's immune system to identify and neutralise the coronavirus does not directly correlate to the level of immunity, the report said. Some who received the Sinovac vaccine might need a third booster shot as well, lead researcher Professor Benjamin Cowling, an epidemiologist with HKU was quoted as saying by the TRTWorld. The study involved tracking the antibody responses of 1,000 people who received either vaccine.

On June 1, the World Health Organization (WHO) authorised the Sinovac-CoronaVac Covid-19 vaccine for emergency use. The two-dose Sinovac-CoronaVac product is an inactivated vaccine. Its easy storage requirements make it very manageable and particularly suitable for low-resource settings. Based on available evidence, the WHO recommended the vaccine for use in adults 18 years and older, in a two-dose schedule with a spacing of two to four weeks. Vaccine efficacy results showed that the vaccine prevented symptomatic disease in 51 per cent of those vaccinated and prevented severe Covid-19 and hospitalisation in 100 per cent of the studied population. On the other hand, the Pfizer-BioNTech Covid vaccine is based on mRNA technology and has been authorised for emergency use by the US Food and Drug Administration. Studies have shown that the two-dose shot is effective against Covid-19, as well as its variants - Delta, Gamma and Beta.

## DOCTORS TO FACE ACTION FOR FAILING TO CERTIFY COVID DEATHS, INDIAN GOVT TELLS SUPREME COURT

**NEW DELHI, (IANS)** The Centre has told the Supreme Court that any death resulting from Covid-19 infection should have to be certified as Covid death, and if not done so, the certifying doctor will face action. The Ministry of Home Affairs, in an affidavit, said: "It is mandated that any death resulting from Covid-19 must have to be so certified that is, as Covid death, failing which everyone responsible, including the certifying doctor, will be responsible for penal consequences." It emphasised that all deaths with a diagnosis of Covid-19, irrespective of co-morbidities, are to be classified as deaths due to the infection. The MHA affidavit said: "All deaths with a diagnosis of Covid-19 irrespective of co-morbidities are to be classified as deaths due to the infection. The only exception could be where there is a clear alternative cause of death that cannot be attributed to Covid-19 (e.g. accidental trauma, poisoning, acute myocardial infarction, etc) where Covid is an incidental finding." It submitted, that for recording of Covid-19 deaths, that there is a statutory mechanism in place either by way of an Act of Parliament or guidelines having the force of mandate and the law. Any breach of the guidelines mentioned here under would be a criminal offence as stipulated under Section 188 of the IPC, it said. Noting that broad guidelines for recording of Covid-19 related deaths in India were prepared by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), it said: "The guidelines clearly state Covid-positive deaths implicate deaths related to the infection. These guidelines are in sync with the WHO Mortality Coding." The Centre said as per the provisions of the Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969, the contemporary system is state governed and implementation of the statute is vested with the state governments/ Union Territories administration. The state authority (Chief Registrar) has been declared as the chief executive authority in the respective state for implementing the provisions of this Act and rules and the order framed. "The District Registrar for each district within the state is responsible for executing the provision of RBD Act and rules in respective districts. There are more than 2.8 lakh registration centres in rural areas

and nearly 7,500 in urban areas," the affidavit added. According to provisions of the act, at the local area level, the death events are registered by the designated local authority (Registrar) on the basis of information given to him/her by the informant prescribed under Sections 8 or 9 of the RBD Act. The affidavit said under the provisions of Section 10 of the RBD Act, the information related to cause of death is filled up by the medical practitioner attending to the deceased at the time of terminal illness. "The medical practitioner should after the death of the person issue a certificate as to the cause of death in prescribed forms stating to the best of his knowledge and belief the cause of death. This cause of death certificate is sent to the Registrar along with death reporting form on the basis of which the Registrar makes necessary entries related to cause of death in the register of death, at the time of registration of death event," the affidavit added. Under the provision of Section 17 of the RBD Act, "no extract relating to any death, issued to any person should disclose the particulars regarding the cause of death as entered in the register". "Accordingly, the cause of death cannot be disclosed by the Registrar to any person, hence the extract/death certificate does not include any information related to the cause of death of an individual, it is therefore most respectfully said the death certificate does not show the cause of the death of any individual," said the affidavit. On May 24, the Supreme Court had suggested there must be a uniform policy and also some guidelines for issuance of death certificates for those affected with Covid-19. A bench comprising Justices Ashok Bhushan and M.R.Shah had said many times, reasons given in a death certificate can be heart attack or lung failure but these could be triggered by Covid-19. The bench asked Centre's counsel, "So how are death certificates being issued?" The Centre filed affidavit in response to the petitions filed by advocates ReepakKansal and Gaurav Kumar Bansal citing Section 12(3) of the Disaster Management Act (DMA) providing monetary compensation for the families of those who died during a notified disaster. The top court will take up the matter on Monday.

## AMARINDER VS NAVJOT; GANDHI STEPS IN TO RESOLVE INFIGHTING IN PUNJAB UNIT

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Gandhi has given utmost importance to the state, meeting stake holders who have sought time from him, said sources. Some MLAs who met Rahul Gandhi said that they have mentioned issues regarding the state. Pargat Singh, who is among those MLAs critical of the Chief Minister, said: "If CM is ready to address the issues raised by me, then the matter is resolved." Meanwhile, Amarinder Singh expressed his displeasure at being targeted and said that undue pressure is created because of a few individuals, sources said. However, senior party leader Mallikarjun Kharge, who heads the three-member panel, which has got a larger mandate for poll preparation apart from resolving factionalism in the state party unit, said: "Everybody has said that they will fight the polls together and the party is united under the leadership of Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi." Sources say the panel discussed the political situation in the state and also issues related to Navjot Singh Sidhu and a possible way out to resolve the issue. While Sidhu is not relenting in his attack on the Chief Minister, he has insisted on an early resolution of issues. State in-charge Harish Rawat has said that the matter is with Sonia Gandhi and refused to comment on statements made by Sidhu. Apart from Kharge, the central panel comprises Rawat and J.P. Aggarwal.



## ASTRAZENECA ORDERED TO DELIVER 50MN VAX DOSES OR FACE FINES BY BRUSSELS COURT

**BRUSSELS, (IANS)** A Brussels court has ordered AstraZeneca to deliver an additional 50 million doses of Covid-19 vaccines to European Union (EU) member states by September or face a maximum of 500 million euros (\$593 million) in fines. In a ruling on a legal case filed by the European Commission, the Court of First Instance of Brussels on Friday ordered the pharma giant to supply 15 million doses by July 26, 20 million by August 23, and 15 doses by September 27 in addition to the 30.2 million doses it had delivered as part of the original deal, reports Xinhua news agency. In case of non-compliance with the deadlines, AstraZeneca will have to pay a penalty of 10 euros per dose not delivered. The Court's decision is based on the fact that AstraZeneca committed a "serious breach" of its contractual obligations with the EU, the European Commission said in a statement. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen welcomed the decision, saying that the EU's vaccination program was built on a sound legal basis. "This decision confirms the position of the Commission: AstraZeneca did not live up to the commitments it made in the contract. It is good to see that an independent judge confirms this," she said in a statement issued late Friday.

## OVER 23% PEOPLE TO HAVE LASTING POST-COVID SYMPTOMS: STUDY



**WASHINGTON, (IANS)** Among all patients infected with the coronavirus disease, more than 23 per cent continued to suffer from one or more health issues even a month after being diagnosed with Covid-19, according to a large study. Many patients recover from Covid-19 within a few weeks, but some exhibit persistent or new symptoms more than four weeks after first being diagnosed. Patients with such post-Covid conditions are variously referred to as having long-haul Covid, long Covid or post-acute sequelae of Covid-19 (PASC). The study by health care nonprofit FAIR Health analyzed private health care claim records for nearly 2 million people diagnosed with Covid in 2020. The people in the study ranged in age from babies to the elderly; some 53 per cent were female and 47 per cent were male. The study has not been published in a peer-reviewed journal. The five most common post-Covid conditions across all ages were pain, breathing difficulties, hyperlipidemia, malaise and fatigue, and hypertension. Pain, breathing difficulties and intestinal issues were the top conditions among the pediatric population (0-18). More than 25 per cent of young individuals aged between 19 and 29 showed cardiac inflammation post-Covid. Fifty per cent of patients hospitalized with Covid-19 developed a post-Covid condition, while among the symptomatic patients not hospitalized, 27.5 per cent developed long Covid. However, post-Covid symptoms were also present among 19 per cent of patients who remained asymptomatic. Most of the post-Covid conditions that were evaluated were associated more with females than males. Further, anxiety was associated with the highest percentage of patients after Covid-19 in all age groups. It was followed by depression, adjustment and tic disorders. The odds of death 30 days or more after initial diagnosis with Covid-19 were 46 times higher for patients who were hospitalized with Covid-19 and discharged than patients who had not been hospitalized. Among Covid-19 patients with preexisting conditions, intellectual disabilities were associated with the highest odds of death 30 days or more after initial Covid-19 diagnosis, the study showed.

## 'FINANCES STRAINED', CENTRE SAYS CANT PAY 4L TO COVID VICTIMS IN INDIA



**NEW DELHI, (IANS)** The Centre has informed the Supreme Court that the finances of states and Centre are under severe strain, due to the reduction in tax revenues and increase in health expenses on account of the coronavirus pandemic. And Rs 4 lakh compensation can't be paid to all those who died due to Covid-19 as it would exhaust the disaster relief funds, and also impact the Centre and states' preparation to address future waves of COVID-19. In an affidavit, the Ministry of Home Affairs submitted that ex-gratia relief under the Disaster Management Act, 2005, to 12 notified disasters is provided through the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF), and the annual allocation for the year 2021-22 for SDRF, for all states combined is Rs 22,184 crore. The pandemic has caused more than 3,85,000 deaths, a number which is likely to increase further, and it also exceeds the number of deaths in any other natural disaster in the past, in the country, added the Centre. "Therefore, if ex-gratia of Rs 4 lakh is given for every person, who lost life due to COVID-19, the entire amount of SDRF may possibly be spent on this alone, and indeed the total expenditure may go up further", said the 183-page affidavit. The MHA argued that the finances of states and Centre are under severe strain, due to the reduction in tax revenues and increase in health expenses on account of the pandemic. MHA stressed that utilisation of scarce resources for giving ex-gratia, may have unfortunate consequences of affecting the pandemic response and health expenditure in other aspects and hence cause more damage than good. "It is an unfortunate but important fact that the resources of the Governments have limits and any additional burden through ex-gratia will reduce the funds available for other health and welfare schemes", added the affidavit. The MHA contended that unlike floods, earthquake, cyclone, etc, during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, thousands of crores of rupees have been spent by Centre and states on prevention, testing, treatment, quarantine, hospitalization, medicines and vaccination, etc and it is still continuing. "It is not known how much more is required. Thus, Central and State Governments are taking all possible measures to prevent and prepare for future waves of COVID-19", said the affidavit. The affidavit has been filed in response to a PIL seeking "minimum standards of relief" and ex-gratia payment to Covid-19 deceased. The Centre emphasized the compensation of Rs 4 lakh cannot be paid to those who succumbed to COVID-19, as the disaster management law mandating compensation applies only to natural disasters like earthquake, floods etc.



# OVER 300 MILLION SHOTS DONE, PRESIDENT BIDEN DECLARES 'SUMMER OF JOY'



**NEW YORK, (IANS)** In the run up to Americas Independence Day weekend, US President Joe Biden struck a sunny note Friday declaring that the US is heading into a "very different summer compared to last year" after 300 million Covid-19 vaccines in arms in the 150 days since he took office.

"We're heading into a very different summer compared to last year," Biden said. "A bright summer. Prayerfully, a summer of joy."

The White House announced plans to host more than a 1,000 guests - mainly frontline workers and their families - on the South Lawn for a cookout on July Fourth. This is tipped to be one of the biggest in-person events of Biden's presidency so far.

Biden was aiming to have 70 per cent of Americans at least partially vaccinated against Covid-19 by July 4. With the pace of vaccinations now dropping sharply off the highs in April, the current number stands at 65 per cent. Among adults alone, 55 per cent are fully vaccinated. Across America's 50 states, 26 states and Washington D.C. have fully vaccinated 50 per cent or more of adults, according to White House data. Based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

## ‘CONSUMER PRICE INDEX (CPI) ROSE 3.6% ON A YEAR-OVER-YEAR BASIS IN MAY:’ STATSCAN

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose 3.6% on a year-over-year basis in May, up from a 3.4% gain in April. This was the largest yearly increase since May 2011. Excluding gasoline, the CPI rose 2.5% year over year.

Although base-year effects continue to impact the 12-month price movement for some specific consumer goods, such as gasoline, furniture and beef products, the increase in year-over-year price growth in May was led by rising prices for shelter and passenger vehicles. Unlike March and April 2021, when most of the year-over-year gains in the CPI were characterized by the large upward base-year effects caused by price declines falling out of the 12-month movement, base-year effects affected the 12-month price movement for only a few key goods and services in May 2021. While prices began to recover in May 2020 from the initial pandemic-related declines, they remained below pre-pandemic levels. In May 2021, these lower prices were the basis for the year-over-year comparison, contributing to the 3.6% year-over-year increase in the CPI. The monthly CPI rose 0.5% in May 2021, the same growth rate as in April. On a seasonally adjusted monthly basis, the CPI rose 0.4% in May.

### Highlights

Prices rose in every major component on a year-over-year basis. Shelter prices rose 4.2% year over year in May, the largest yearly increase since September 2008. Prices for durable goods rose 4.4% year over year, the fastest pace since 1989, against the backdrop of rising consumer confidence and low-interest rates.

### Gasoline prices rise at a slower pace in May

Year over year, prices for gasoline rose at a slower pace in May (+43.4%) than in April (+62.5%). Higher prices in May 2020, when gasoline prices began to recover from the initial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, were used as the basis for the year-over-year comparison, contributing to the slowdown in year-over-year growth. In May 2020, gasoline prices rose 16.9% month over month, recovering from March (-17.8%) and April (-15.2%), when both supply- and demand-related factors contributed to significantly lower prices at the gas pumps.

On a monthly basis, gasoline prices were up 3.2% compared with April 2021. Much of this gain was driven by supply disruptions to pipelines in the United States and the maintenance of production cuts by international oil producers.

**Homeowners’ replacement cost index rises at the fastest pace since 1987**  
Year over year, the homeowners’ replacement cost index rose 11.3%, the

largest yearly increase since 1987. Prices have risen year over year for 16 consecutive months, as prices for new homes continue to be influenced by shifting consumer preferences and higher construction costs.

**Spotlight on housing prices**  
The housing sector is an integral part of the Canadian economy. Residential real estate accounts for about 1/10 of Canadian gross domestic product. The measurement of shelter costs is one of the more complex components of the CPI. There is no consensus on the optimal approach; instead, a few methods are used internationally, depending on the use of the CPI and the available data. The Canadian CPI uses a variant of the user cost approach, and this means that the CPI does not include the purchase price of a property. This is because a house is considered an asset rather than a consumer good. Instead, the CPI measures all the costs associated with owning and living in a property, such as the homeowners’ replacement cost, the mortgage interest cost, property taxes, homeowners’ home and mortgage insurance, homeowners’ maintenance and repairs, and other owned accommodation expenses, such as commission and legal fees on the sale of real estate.

These costs are captured in the owned accommodation price index, which accounts for 16.80% of the 2017 CPI basket.

Over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, Canadians have sought out more living space and outdoor amenities, as they have adapted to spending more time at home. This change in preferences, among other factors, has in part driven the average Canadian home price up, influencing the CPI in a few ways. For instance, prices for owned accommodation (+3.5%) rose higher year over year. Higher prices for new homes contribute to higher costs associated with the upkeep of a property, or the homeowners’ replacement cost (+11.3%). Higher home prices also tend to raise other owned accommodation expenses (+9.7%). In contrast, lower interest rates bring borrowing costs down. Many Canadians have renewed or initiated mortgages at historically low-interest rates since the onset of the pandemic—measured in the CPI through the mortgage interest cost index (-8.2%), which includes both new and resale home prices. Statistics Canada will continue to monitor developments in the Canadian housing market and their impact on consumer price inflation. For more information and data on home price inflation in Canada, please see the housing and construction price indexes.

## Brampton to be first municipality in Ontario to use an electric-powered fire truck

Brampton City Council approved Brampton Fire and Emergency Service's plans to replace a front-line pumper with a Rosenbauer RT, a fully electric-powered fire truck.

The City of Brampton will be joining a small number of world-class cities like Berlin, Amsterdam, Dubai, Los Angeles and Vancouver as a leader in climate action.

Brampton is a Green City and is dedicated to improving sustainability and being a leader in environmental innovation. The Rosenbauer RT is the first fully electric-powered fire truck available on the market that is able to meet current firefighting standards. Brampton will be the first municipality in Ontario to use an electric-powered front-line emergency response vehicle, joining other world-class cities such as Berlin, Amsterdam, Dubai, Los Angeles and Vancouver.

Mayor Patrick Brown said, "At the City of Brampton, we are working to build an increasingly sustainable community in everything that we do as a Green City. I congratulate Brampton Fire and Emergency Services on their effort to secure Ontario's first fully electric fire truck. Brampton is a world-class city, and we are proud to join others who are working to increase resilience to climate change and lower emissions while keeping our communities safe."

The truck's technology will allow Brampton fire crews to generate zero emissions while responding to emergencies, not only during travel but also while on-site. The elimination of emissions onsite protects both the environment and the health and safety of the firefighters on scene by reducing the intake of carcinogens.

Additional features of the fully electric vehicle include the ability to raise and lower ride heights, similar to a passenger bus, allowing for ease of entry into the vehicle. This feature also reduces the reach height for firefighters to access equipment while on site. The ride height can be lowered to 6.8 inches and raised to a height of 18.5 inches, allowing for flood response with no chance of water entering the engine. The new fire truck will help crews to maneuver more efficiently in tight locations and on narrower roads in new subdivisions and will deploy the latest in ergonomic technologies, improving the health and safety of firefighters.

## ONTARIO SUPPORTS EXPANSION OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION & LONG-TERM CARE IN MILTON



**MILTON-** The Ontario government is supporting the expansion of postsecondary education and long-term care in Milton. The Milton Education Village will include new campuses for Conestoga College and Wilfrid Laurier University, as well as space for a new Schlegel Villages long-term care home. The area also includes room for a potential hospice, residential housing and a village core with a mix of commercial and retail uses.

"The Milton Education Village demonstrates the importance of partnerships and the power of the Ontario spirit in building strong and safe communities," said Premier Ford. "Our government applauds the collaborative approach taken by Conestoga College and Wilfrid Laurier University to expand their respective campuses. The fact that we are also delivering a Schlegel Villages long-term care home and potential hospice is a testament to the leadership of Parm Gill and the entire Milton community."

The new Milton campus is expected to accommodate 6,700 students and will focus on university and college academic programs in high-demand fields such as science, health care, engineering, technology, and business. Conestoga and Laurier will also provide experiential learning and work-integrated learning opportunities for students, as well as micro-credentials that will support up-skilling and re-skilling for the local labour force.

"The Ontario government is committed to growing our province's post-secondary education sector in a fiscally responsible way, and that is why we are proud to support Conestoga College and Wilfrid Laurier University's plans for campus expansion in Milton," said Ross Romano, Minister of Colleges and Universities. "By supporting self-funded campus expansions, we are encouraging independence and accountability, expanding choices and opportunities for our students, and protecting taxpayers."

The Schlegel Villages long-term care home is expected to open in late 2023 and will provide 192 new, modern, safe and comfortable long-term care spaces in Milton. This new development moves the government a step closer to delivering 30,000 much-needed long-term care spaces over the next ten years.

"Our government is committed to making long-term care a better place for residents to live and a better place for staff to work," said Dr. Merrilee Fullerton, Minister of Long-Term Care. "The progress announced today on the Milton Education Village means we are one step closer to building 192 safe, modern spaces for our loved ones to call home."

"We are grateful to the government of Ontario for its support of a post-secondary campus in Milton and the confidence they are demonstrating in Laurier's academic excellence, exceptional student experience, community-building and the strength of our partnerships. The university is excited about what this new campus will mean for students in the Greater Toronto Area and Halton Region, for The Town of Milton, for the future of work in the province of Ontario and for the university's growth and community/industry partnerships — especially in the areas of STEAM and planetary health," said Deborah MacLatchy, President and Vice-Chancellor of Wilfrid Laurier University.

At the request of the Town of Milton, a Minister's Zoning Order was filed today by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to help jump-start the delivery of core development work for the Milton Education Village. The Minister's Zoning Order will help create much-needed homes for approximately 6,500 area residents and permanent jobs for more than 4,000 workers by 2031.

"Today's announcement is a perfect example of how our government is using tools like Minister's Zoning Orders, in partnership with municipalities, to help quickly get shovels in the ground on important projects that will positively impact the community for generations," said Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. "Premier Ford, Minister Romano, my Parliamentary Assistant Parm Gill, and our college and university partners have been true champions for this project, and I am proud to be able to support the Milton Education Village."

"We are delighted by today's announcement and appreciate the ongoing support of the Town of Milton, the province and our partners in the effort to bring post-secondary education to the local community. We look forward to the establishment of a new Conestoga-Milton campus that will deliver relevant, accessible, career-focused learning programs that address local workforce needs, contribute to personal and professional success and support the prosperity and well-being of the region into the future," said John Tibbits, President of Conestoga College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning.

Minister's Zoning Orders have been used to help accelerate the development of critical projects located outside of the Greenbelt. This includes thousands of new long-term care beds, hundreds of housing units, including supportive and affordable units, and a Made-in-Ontario personal protective equipment facility, while helping to create thousands of jobs.

"Our government continues to take strong actions that support our community of Milton," said Parm Gill, Member of Provincial Parliament for Milton. "By facilitating the approval of the development of two post-secondary campuses along with a new long-term care home, the Milton Education Village will soon be a place where education, research, business and community services succeed." Milton's Mayor, Gord Krantz said, "We are very grateful for the support of the Ontario Government to move the Milton Education Village forward with our partners. Today's announcement is the culmination of over a decade's worth of collaboration among the municipality and our partners, and significant public consultation, to develop the vision of the Village. I would like to thank Wilfrid Laurier University, Conestoga College, Schlegel Villages, and the Milton community for the energy, ideas, expertise, and goodwill they have brought to the table."



# IG KUNWAR VIJAY PRATAP JOINS AAP



**CHANDIGARH, (IANS)** A former Indian Police Service (IPS) officer Kunwar Vijay Pratap, who was handling the sensitive probe into police firing after the desecration of Guru Granth Sahib in 2015 when the Akali Dal-BJP government was at the helm, on Monday joined Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in presence of Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal.

The induction ceremony was held in the holy city of Amritsar, some 300 km from the state capital, where Kejriwal came on a day-long visit.

After joining politics, Kunwar Vijay Pratap blamed the accused of the sacrilege case for dictating the state government. "Now we are going to start a revolution from the land of the holy city. People's power must go to the people. We are here to establish a new political sphere where we will be instrumental in bringing reforms," he said.

Kunwar Vijay Pratap took voluntary retirement in April two days after the high court quashed the report of the Special Investigating Team (SIT), led by him, into the sacrilege incidents. The court directed the state government to reconstitute a new SIT without him on board.

Playing a religious card after his induction, Kejriwal said the party's chief ministerial candidate in the state assembly polls slated in early 2022 would be a local from the Sikh community. Parkash Singh Badal was the chief minister of Punjab when the police had opened fire on protesters in Kotkapura on October 14, 2015, killing two and injuring others after the alleged desecration of the Guru Granth Sahib in Bargari village in Faridkot district took place.

The SIT is to ascertain as to who gave the orders to open fire, whether the cops fired in self-defence and if the standard operating procedure was followed.

After the high court order on April 9, the chief minister had refused to accept the resignation letter of Kunwar Vijay Pratap seeking premature retirement from service.

Declining the voluntary retirement plea, the chief minister said that he was a highly competent and efficient officer whose services were needed in the border state, especially at a time when Punjab is faced with various internal and external security threats.

The state needs the expertise and experience of the officer, who has contributed exceptional service to Punjab Police in various important positions, the chief minister had said, describing Vijay Pratap Singh as a skilled, capable and courageous officer with an exemplary track record.

Referring to the high court's order in the Kotakpura case probe, the chief minister had said the officer and his team have done an excellent job of expeditiously investigating the Kotakpura case, which the Akalis had tried hard to stall for the past four years.

Blaming his own government for a 'weak' investigation into the sensitive cases, former cabinet minister Navjot Singh Sidhu has been demanding to make the SIT report public.

## MidWeek

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## FARMERS TO FIGURE IN THE FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS

**CONTD. FROM PAGE 1**

Farmers are having a grudge against the successive governments that farm issues could not be addressed as 60 percent of the population belongs to agricultural sector but still contributing only 14 percent in the National Gross Domestic product. It vindicated the fact that there is large scale underemployment in this sector. Most of the farmers are living in Penury. Really employment must be promoted for this sector by adopting the proper strategy for the resilience of this Sector. Albeit farm sector holds the largest vote bank but could not impress for the redressal of their grievances in the past. Even the large number of representatives in the elected parties had been from the farm sector .It can have big impact on elections but role of the public representative is concerned with the range of issues, between administration and public welfare .The issues about finance, Banking, foreign trade ,exchange, Industry, transport, Science ,health, education are to be addressed. While preparing the manifesto for elections the experts of different departments are to be consulted. It is not only the farm issues but number of issues are the curriculum of the elected bodies. No doubt, politicians need not attend a school, collage, and university for his /her training, particularly with the domination of dynastic politics in India such a training looks absurd but to be conversant with various issues is a conditions for successful political manipulations, otherwise the better results cannot be delivered. As per the emerging opinion among the farmers in general, the farm leaders would not be the supporters of candidates only , rather contestants in the forthcoming elections .But before contextualizing the active participation, the farm leaders have to choose among the probable options like whether to float a party and field the candidates including the experts of other fields with their impeccable record or to contest the election as independent candidates with support of farm leaders participating in the movement. The writer is senior fellow, Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi.

### SHOULD I GET THE PFIZER OR MODERNA VACCINE?

If you are 18+ years of age, take the one that is available to you

Both are mRNA vaccines & are very similar

Both protect you from getting very sick and prevents variant spread

Both were rigorously tested, & approved for safety by Health Canada

[toronto.ca/COVID19](https://toronto.ca/COVID19)

### Take care get vaccinated

1st dose

+

2nd dose

=

full protection

AstraZeneca, Moderna or Pfizer

Any mRNA (Moderna or Pfizer)

HEALTH OFFICIALS RECOMMEND RECEIVING EITHER MODERNA OR PFIZER AS 2ND DOSE FOR STRONG PROTECTION (CITY OF TORONTO & REGION OF PEEL/ TWITTER).



Ontario is accelerating eligibility to book a second dose appointment for those who received a first dose of an mRNA vaccine

MONDAY	WEDNESDAY	WEEK OF JUNE 28
JUNE 21	JUNE 23	
ALL ONTARIANS 1 <sup>st</sup> dose on or before May 9	DELTA HOT SPOTS 1 <sup>st</sup> dose on or before May 30	ALL ONTARIANS 18+

# ACCELERATED SECOND DOSE ELIGIBILITY CONTINUES AHEAD OF SCHEDULE IN ONTARIO

**TORONTO** — With a majority of Ontario adults have received a first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine and over three million doses of the Moderna vaccine arriving in June, the province is continuing to accelerate its vaccine rollout by expanding eligibility for second doses ahead of schedule. “Thanks to the efforts of Team Ontario we are making tremendous progress in our vaccine rollout, protecting communities at greatest risk of COVID-19 and variants,” said Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health. “Every dose administered brings us closer to ending the pandemic and moving to Step Two of our Roadmap, and I encourage everyone to do their part and get their shot as soon as they are eligible.” With a majority of Ontario adults have received their first dose of the vaccine, providing a strong level of protection from COVID-19, the province is accelerating eligibility to book a second dose appointment as follows: As of Monday, June 21, 2021, at 8:00 a.m., all Ontarians who received their first dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine on or before May 9, 2021, will be eligible to book or rebook their second dose appointment at a shortened interval. As of Wednesday, June 23, 2021, at 8:00 a.m., individuals who received their first dose of an mRNA vaccine on or before May 30, 2021, and who live in the catchment area of one of the 10 public health units identified as Delta hot

spots (Durham, Halton, Hamilton, Peel, Porcupine, Simcoe-Muskoka, Toronto, Waterloo, Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph, and York public health units) will be eligible to book or rebook their second dose appointment at a shortened interval. Starting the week of June 28, 2021 (days/sequence to be confirmed) all Ontarians aged 18 and over who have received their first dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine will be eligible to book their second dose appointment. The appointment will be scheduled at least 28 days after the first dose, per the recommended interval. Expanding the number of Delta hot spots and rapidly expanding second dose coverage in these areas will help to minimize the risk of the variant’s spread throughout the province. In addition, effective June 14, 2021, individuals who received their first dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine are also eligible to receive a second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine at an interval of eight to 12 weeks, with informed consent. This can include a second dose of AstraZeneca or an mRNA vaccine. Ontario’s allocation of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine meant to arrive during the first two weeks of July will be lower than initially projected (decreased from approximately 885,000 to 348,000 doses) and is planned to catch up during the last two weeks of July. The government will adjust and mitigate any impacts of this decrease to the provincial vaccine rollout.

## LARGEST INTERNATIONAL DRUG TAKEDOWN IN TORONTO POLICE’S HISTORY; NEARLY DOZEN PUNJABIS ACCUSED



**CONTD. FROM PAGE 1**  
It is alleged that between November 2020 and May 2021, investigators identified those responsible for transporting the illicit substances across borders for sale in Canada. It is further alleged this was made possible by the installation of hydraulic traps in tractor-trailers, capable of smuggling 100 kilograms of substance in a single trip. Twenty people were arrested (including one Young Person) and two suspects are currently outstanding. Collectively, they face 182 charges. Throughout the project, investigators identified a person known as the “Trap Maker.” This man was allegedly responsible for building hidden compartments within the tractor-trailers for the purposes of smuggling large amounts of contraband across borders.  
Jason Hall, 43, of Surrey, British Columbia, also known as the “Trap Maker,” turned himself into police in Toronto last week and is charged with Conspiracy to Commit an Indictable Offence, Participate in a Crimi-

nal Organization  
In total, investigators seized the following: 444 kilos of cocaine, 182 kilos of crystal meth, 427 kilos of marijuana, 300 oxycodone pills, \$966,020 in CDN currency, 21 vehicles, including 5 tractor trailers, 1 firearm  
The street value of the seized drugs is estimated to be more than \$61 million. Nineteen others have been arrested as part of Project Brisa: Ryan Nikolakakos, 28, Zaw Min Htoo, 23, Damoy Searchwell, 24, Samet Hysa, 28, Hanif Jamal, 43, Wei Jie Huang, 28, Nadeem, Lila, 35, Yusuf Lila, 68, Gurbakhash Singh Grewal, 37, Amarbir Singh Sarkaria, 25, Harbaljit Singh Toor, 46, Harwinder Bhullar (female), 43, Sarjant Singh Dhaliwal, 37, Gurveer Dhaliwal, 26, Gurmanpreet Grewal, 26, Sukhwant Brar, 37, Parminder Gill, 33, Andre Williams, 35, and Young Person has been charged in this project.  
Two men are still wanted as part of Project Brisa- William Nhan, 23 years, and Scott McManus, 38.

## GIVING BEGINS AT HOME: OSLER EMPLOYEES RAISE \$1 MILLION TO SUPPORT OSLER HOSPITALS

William Osler Health System Foundation (Osler Foundation) is proud to announce the completion of the \$1 million Osler Employee Giving campaign in support of William Osler Health System’s (Osler) three hospitals: Brampton Civic Hospital, Etobicoke General Hospital and Peel Memorial Centre for Integrated Health and Wellness.  
Ten years ago, Osler Foundation launched the You Have The Power campaign, seeking to raise \$100 million to build and equip Osler’s hospitals. As part of this campaign, in 2013, Osler employees made history with a commitment to donate \$1 million. Thanks to the generosity of more than 34,000 donors, including several hundred Osler physicians and more than 1,100 Osler staff, the You Have The Power campaign raised an overwhelming \$109 million. Employee donations were raised through payroll contributions and events—everything from pumpkin carving competitions, Canada Day Games scavenger hunts, and raffle sales. The funds helped to build and equip Peel Memorial and the new patient tower at Etobicoke General, and also fund much-needed equipment at Brampton Civic like x-ray machines, vital signs monitors, special beds for palliative care, and cardiac monitors for babies.  
“Osler employees make our community better. We are so grateful to every single person who contributed to help fund the best tools that help our staff provide incredible care to our community, especially in these challenging times,” said Ken Mayhew, President and CEO, Osler Foundation. “A special thank you to our Employee Giving campaign committees, and to our team of volunteers who made a difference and continue to make a difference by leading the way and showing that giving begins at home.”  
The \$1 million employee pledge inspired others in the community to support Osler as well. “From corporations to community leaders, individual donors to Board members, donors understood that if the people who work at Osler want to give back to Osler, then it must be a worthwhile investment in our community,” said Dr. Naveed Mohammad, President and CEO of William Osler Health System. While the You Have The Power campaign has officially closed, Osler Foundation continues to fundraise to help support Osler and its teams. For more than a year, Osler’s staff, physicians and volunteers—our Health Care Heroes—have been on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic, providing compassionate care for some of the hardest-hit communities in Ontario. Donations to the Osler Foundation Compassion Fund will help support the most urgent needs of our Health Care Heroes, including resources needed to ensure their emotional and mental well-being as they continue working day and night through the pandemic. Donations can be made at [oslerfoundation.org/covid19](https://oslerfoundation.org/covid19).

## ONTARIO’S PREMIER FORD ANNOUNCES CHANGES TO CABINET

Jill Dunlop, MPP for Simcoe North, becomes Minister of Colleges and Universities.  
Kaleed Rasheed, MPP for Mississauga East-Cooksville, becomes Associate Minister of Digital Government, reporting to Minister Bethlenfalvy.  
Rosario Romano, MPP for Sault Ste. Marie, becomes Minister of Government and Consumer Services.  
Dr. Merrilee Fullerton, MPP for Kanata-Carleton, becomes Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.  
Rod Phillips, MPP for Ajax, becomes Minister of Long-Term Care.  
Dave Piccini, MPP for Northumberland-Peterborough South, becomes Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.  
Greg Rickford, MPP for Kenora-Rainy River, assumes a merged role as Minister of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry, as well as remains Minister of Indigenous Affairs. This new northern and economic focused ministry will enhance development potential and sustainability in the North. Energy will transfer to a new separate ministry.

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## University of Guelph-Humber and the City of Brampton Exploring Partnership in Downtown Brampton; Campus proposed in Brampton’s new Centre for Innovation

**BRAMPTON:** Brampton City Council unanimously supported a motion to work with the University of Guelph and Humber College to bring the University of Guelph-Humber (UofGH) to Brampton’s new Centre for Innovation (CFI). City staff and the institutions will now begin work on identifying required supports and business terms for the potential relocation of the campus as an anchor tenant in the CFI.

“It’s a natural fit for UofGH to be a key partner in the Brampton Centre for Innovation and support current and future students with a unique and proven model that allows them to earn both a degree and a diploma within four years,” said Charlotte Yates, president and vice-chancellor, University of Guelph.

“Given that Brampton generates the largest number of applicants to UofGH out of all Ontario cities, we are excited by the opportunity to have Brampton as the home for an innovative new campus,” said Chris Whitaker, president and CEO, Humber College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning.

The University of Guelph-Humber is a unique partnership between Humber College and the University of Guelph. Through integrated academic and hands-on experiences, students earn both a Humber diploma and a University of Guelph honours bachelor’s degree in four years.

“This exciting partnership with the University of Guelph-Humber will be a pivotal building block of Brampton’s Centre for Innovation and truly help develop our city into a major education and innovation hub,” said Patrick Brown, Mayor of Brampton. “Our students deserve the best opportunities for success and those come with access to high-quality education and skills development options — right here at home.”

UofGH has more than 5,000 full-time students and 400 employer partners in Brampton that provide students with work-integrated learning and on-the-job experience built into all programs. Ninety-five per cent of Guelph-Humber students are employed within two years of graduation. “The University of Guelph-Humber is delighted to be working alongside its institutional partners and the City of Brampton to further explore this exciting opportunity,” said George Bragues, interim vice-provost, University of Guelph-Humber. “We pride ourselves on supporting student success and producing well-educated, experienced graduates who are ready to make an impact on society.” UofGH current and future programs will complement Ryerson’s planned medical school and its cybersecurity research/innovation centre as well as Algoma University and Sheridan College’s existing programs.

## ADIEU TO 'FLYING SIKH,' MILKHA SINGH

**CONTD. FROM PAGE 1**

Milkha Singh, "The Flying Sikh," the Pride of India, left us forever on June 18 in the PGI Hospital, Chandigarh. Milkha Singh was India's legend Track, and Field athlete India has ever produced.

President of India, Ram Nath Kovind, said, "Story of struggle and strength of his character will motivate generations."

He is not the only athlete to win Gold at 400 metres at the Asian Games and the Common Wealth Games but also acquired gold medals in the 1958 and 1962 Asian Games. His 400 metres Indian national record stood for 38 years and the 400m Asian record for 26 years. In 1960 in Rome, he came closest to winning an individual Olympic Games medal as an Indian, in 400m, eventually finishing fourth in a photo finish. On November 20, 1929, in Govindpura in Undivided India, now separated as Pakistan, this legend was brought into the world. He witnessed his parents and siblings being killed by a riot during the Partition of India IN 1947.

At the age of 17, Singh escaped to the forest during the riots. He then managed to find a train and hid under the berth in the Ladies Compartment. The train brought him to Delhi, where he later entered the Indian Army. He got into running initially for a glass of milk in the Army and soon decided to pursue it seriously.

His love for athletics began after he enrolled himself with the Corps of Electronics and Mechanical Engineers (EME) of the Indian Army in Delhi. His talent blossomed while being with the Army. Fortunately for him, his officers encouraged him, which would have played a role in winning the 200m and 400m races at a Services Athletics Meet in 1955.

Milkha practiced with the Army and clinched gold medals in 200m and 400m at the 1956 National Games in Patiala. Two years later, at the Cuttack Nationals, he set national records in both races.

His sporting achievements won him kudos from the Army, and the Indian government awarded him the Padma Shri in 1959. The same year, he was awarded the prestigious Helms Award.

Milkha took premature retirement from the Army and took up the post of Deputy Director of Sports with the Punjab government.

At the later stage in his life, he refused to travel to Pakistan as he was significantly haunted by the painful memories of Partition in 1947. It took the influence of then Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to convince him to go.



in the same week, just five days apart.

Coronavirus pandemic has resulted in the loss of millions of lives. Milkha Singh and his wife Nirmal Kaur were also diagnosed with Corona-19 about one month ago at the beginning of May 2021. They both fought against it very bravely. He was discharged from the hospital on May 30, but on June 3 was re-admitted due to weakness. On June when 13, his wife passed away. Milkha Singh was not given the news of his wife's death as he was still struggling with his life and death. He lacked strength, and his lungs stopped working, and finally, on June 17, the news of his wife's demise was given to him by his son JeevMikha Singh who whispered in his ears, "Dad, you are going to Mom." At that point, he gave up entirely and departed his soul on June 18.

He was cremated with full National Honour. He had a picture of his wife, Late Nirmal Kaur, besides him when he was taken for cremation. The couple is survived by a son, ace golfer Jeev Milkha Singh, and three daughters.

Milkha Singh was not very happy with the current situation of sports. His concern was that all attention had been diverted to Cricket, and other sports are not getting the attention.

His concern was that if you do not make it to the top, you are nowhere. Because of this reason, he discouraged his son Jeev Milkha Singh from becoming an athlete. His son joined Golf and became Golf Champion for India. Jeev was the first Indian to break into the top 50 official world golf rankings in 2007.

He said the biggest regret of his life was even today if he reflects, there are only two incidents that still haunt him - the massacre of his family during Partition and his defeat at Rome.

"I did not miss Gold in Rome. However, also I missed giving dreams to Indian Athletes. Had I won that Gold, there would have been Lots of Milkha Singhs born in every home of India," Singh said.

His 'Fitness Mantra' to everyone is to eat less and always feel light. He emphasizes not to fill up with something that one will get it again in another 4-6 hours. He believed all diseases start from the stomach, so it is essential to keep it a little empty.

Athletes and sportspersons will come and go, but the impact Milkha Singh left and generations will never forget the heights you reached for a long time. The authentic tribute to Milkha Ji will be to fulfill his Unfinished Dream into a Reality.

Here is a list of his most significant achievements:

- He won 77 of 80 national and international races and came first.
- In 1960, in Rome Olympics, he stood forth and lost Gold by 0.1 seconds in 400 meters.
- In 1958, in Commonwealth Games, he won Gold Medal in 400 meters and broke the World Record.
- In 1958, in Tokyo in Asian games, he won double Gold, 400 meter and 200 metres.
- In 1962, in Jakarta Asian Games, he won 2 gold medals.
- In 1959, he was awarded Padma Shri by the Government of India.

### GIVING BEGINS AT HOME: OSLER EMPLOYEES RAISE \$1 MILLION TO SUPPORT OSLER HOSPITALS

On June 22, 2021, William Osler Health System (Osler) will hold a special one-day Medically Complex COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic, from 3:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m. at Osler’s Brampton Civic Hospital COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic. At this one-day clinic, eligible individuals 12–17 years of age will receive their first or second dose (if the first dose was administered on or before May 9) of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, the only vaccine currently authorized for use in this



age group. Family and pediatric physicians will be on-site to help administer the vaccine and answer any questions. Eligible individuals, along with one caregiver, can be identified by their family physician, specialist and/or Osler clinic to be prioritized to receive the COVID-19 vaccine during the Medically Complex Clinic.

Examples of Medically Complex Conditions include:

- \* Down Syndrome
- \* Autism Spectrum Disorder
- \* Chromosomal Syndromes
- \* Physical limitations such as Cerebral Palsy
- \* Intellectual disabilities
- \* Children requiring respiratory support such as the use of tracheostomy tubes
- \* Immunocompromised individuals – oncology population, IBD patients (an immunosuppressant), others on immunosuppressant
- \* Active Cardiac issues – Congenital Heart Disease
- \* Nephrotic Syndrome, renal failure
- \* Diabetes
- \* Neurological issues such as seizure disorders
- \* High BMI (Body Mass Index)

Eligible individuals and their caregivers can self-book online or by phone at 905-494-6685 for the one-day clinic or at any of Osler’s Vaccine Clinics. Since Osler opened its COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic in December 2020, it has administered more than 200,000 COVID-19 vaccinations, in alignment with the Ontario Government’s three-phased Vaccine Distribution Plan and Peel and Toronto Public Health. Osler remains committed to sharing more information about vaccine rollout plans as they become available.

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

Century Gardens Recreations Centre  
360 Vodden Street East Brampton, Ontario  
Hours of operation: 1:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., every day  
Youth Pad Hours of Operation: 4:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m., every day  
Brampton Civic Hospital  
2100 Bovaird Drive East Brampton, Ontario  
Hours of operation: 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., every day  
Osler-Humber College COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic  
207 Humber College Blvd., Etobicoke, Ontario  
Hours of operation: 10:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m., Monday – Friday

### PEEL HOMICIDE REQUESTING INFORMATION FOR 27-YEAR-OLD, SIMRANJEET SINGH SIDHU, OF NO FIXED ADDRESS, WHO WAS FOUND DECEASED IN MISSISSAUGA

**CONTD. FROM PAGE 1**

Upon police arrival, they located a 27-year-old man with vital signs absent. At approximately 6:24 am, the man was pronounced deceased by paramedics at the scene. The victim is identified as Simranjeet Singh Sidhu, a 27-year-old man of no fixed address. He frequented the Malton area. Homicide investigators would like to speak with anyone having contact with Simranjeet Singh Sidhu or who may have observed him from June 10, 2021, to June 12, 2021. Anyone with any information, dashcam or video footage is asked to contact the Homicide and Missing Person Bureau at 905-453-2121, extension 3205.

### AMARNATH YATRA CANCELLED IN WAKE OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC

**SRINAGAR, (IANS)** The annual Amarnath Yatra would be symbolic only this year, in wake of the Covid pandemic, but all the traditional religious rituals will be performed at the cave shrine as per practice, the J&K government decided on Monday.

A detailed discussion was held with the members of the shrine board on the present Covid-19 situation before the decision.

Lt Governor Manoj Sinha, who is also Chairman of Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board, held deliberations with Chief Secretary Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta, DGP, Dilbag Singh, Principal Secretary, Home, Shaleen Kabra, and Principal Secretary to Lt Governor, Nitishwar Kumar, who is also the CEO of Shrine Board, and directed that devotees should be enabled to attend the morning and evening aarti in online mode.

He said it would help them to pay their obeisance while also avoiding travel and exposure.

The meeting was informed that the shrine board has put in place a virtual and televised mechanism for a live telecast of ‘aarti’ from the holy cave.

“It is important to save people’s lives. So, it is not advisable to hold and conduct this year’s pilgrimage in the larger public interest. Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board is aware of and respects the sentiments of millions of devotees, and to keep the sentiments alive, the Board shall continue the live telecast of morning and evening aarti from the Holy Cave shrine,” the Lt Governor said.

He also stressed the need to follow Covid protocol on the significant and pious days like ‘Pratham Pooja’, and the ‘Samapan Pooja’. He further stressed that saints visiting the cave shrine to perform ‘aarti’ as per “Shastras” would follow Covid’s appropriate behaviour.

The shrine board CEO said that arrangements have been made for the ‘Chhari Mubarak’, the mace of Lord Shiva, to be taken to the holy cave on August 22, when the yatra is to conclude, coinciding with the festival of Raksha Bandhan.

“Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board has been assessing the Covid situation in the Union Territory and the country. Our focus is on containing the pandemic and strengthening health infrastructure,” he said.





## 'PM SHOULD TALK TO PAKISTAN TOO': MEHBOOBA MUFTI AHEAD OF ALL-PARTY MEET ON KASHMIR

**PDP LEADER MEHBOOBA MUFTI HAS SAID THAT PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI SHOULD HOLD TALKS WITH PAKISTAN ON THE KASHMIR ISSUE**

Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) leader Mehbooba Mufti has said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi should hold talks with Pakistan on the Kashmir issue. Speaking to reporters after a meeting of the Gupkar alliance, she said that the "Prime Minister should talk to Pakistan too". "If they can go to Doha and talk to the Taliban, they should have a dialogue with us and with Pakistan too in order to bring about a resolution," she said. Mufti said that the alliance leaders will attend the meeting called by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi on June 24. She said that the leaders will put forth their views and press for

demand to restore Jammu and Kashmir's statehood. The leaders of the constituent parties, including Mufti and CPI(M) leader M Y Tarigami, met at alliance chairperson Farooq Abdullah's residence in Srinagar, who is also the National Conference president. Over the past two days, Jammu and Kashmir's political parties held intra-party discussions. PM Modi is slated to chair a meeting in Jammu and Kashmir on June 24 and as many as 14 leaders, including four former CMs of the erstwhile state, have been invited.

## CONGRESS TO CONTEST 2022 PUNJAB POLLS UNDER LEADERSHIP OF SONIA, RAHUL GANDHI: MALLIKARJUN KHARGE

Congress MP and president of Congress panel over Punjab affairs, Mallikarjun Kharge said on Tuesday that the party will fight the 2022 state assembly elections under the leadership of Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi. Speaking to ANI, he said that Congress high command will try to resolve all the issues in the party's Punjab unit. "Committee members met before also and discussed with all. We are preparing for the upcoming elections. High command will try to resolve all the issues and grievances of our leaders. Everything will be fine. We will all together fight the election," Kharge said. Speaking on the ongoing tussle between Congress leader Navjot Singh Sidhu and Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh, Kharge said, "Sidhu has kept his view point, I don't want to say anything on that. We will fight the (Assembly) election under the leadership of Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi," he said. Asked why Sidhu did not come to attend the meeting called by the panel, Kharge said: "It is not like that at all, we have called Captain Amarinder for some clarification." "Everyone in the party said in one voice that they will fight the election together and will again form the government in Punjab. If anyone has any kind of issues, the High command will try to find the solution," he added. The three-member panel, set up by Congress President Sonia Gandhi to end factionalism in the party's Punjab unit, was scheduled to meet today to discuss



certain pointers with Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh raised in the report. According to senior party leader Harish Rawat, interim president Sonia Gandhi has expressed interest in discussing certain pointers and the committee will discuss them with Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh. This will be his first meeting with the panel members after they had submitted a report to party chief Sonia Gandhi. The AICC panel, which includes Mallikarjun Kharge, JP Aggarwal, and Harish Rawat, has met Rahul Gandhi twice after submitting their report. Sources close to the Chief Minister said on Sunday that the meeting is aimed at finding a solution acceptable to him concerning various issues.

## HAVE GANDHIS BEEN VACCINATED? CONGRESS SHOULD CLARIFY: BJP HITS BACK AFTER RAHUL GANDHI'S ATTACK ON PM MODI



Responding to Rahul Gandhi's 'white paper' on the Centre's Covid management, the Bharatiya Janata Party on Tuesday accused the Congress of politicising India's ongoing battle against the Covid pandemic. Interacting with journalists during a press conference in New Delhi, senior BJP leader Sambit Patra said the whenever a 'decisive point comes in India's battle against COVID-19, Congress tries to politicise it'. Patra said the Congress must clarify whether the first family of party - Sonia, Rahul, Priyanka Gandhi, Robert Vadra - have taken the Covid vaccine or not. "I would want to give an unsolicited advice to Rahul Gandhiji...how long will you continue to do virtual press conference. Try and visit the Congress- ruled states and see it for yourself how they have lagged behind in carrying out vaccination. The second wave (of Covid) started from Congress-ruled states and they were the worst affected too," the BJP leader said.

## Rakesh Tikait gives 'Triple T' formula to intensify farmers stir; says 'this will benefit country'



Farmer leader Rakesh Tikait, who is one among those leading the protests on Delhi borders against three farm laws for the last seven months, has given 'Triple T' formula to intensify the agitaion. Tikait has said, "Three things are necessary to save the country. Tanks on the borders, tractors in the fields and Twitter in the hands of the youth." Explaining it further, Rakesh Tikait, spokesperson of the Bhartiya Kisan Union (BKU) said, "The farmer who works in the field and drive tractor, the same farmer also goes to the borders to drive the tank. We have a lot of soldiers, who run tractors in the fields, and tanks on the borders. The same farmer also has Twitter in the phone. This is the 'Triple T' formula. This will benefit not only the farmers movement but also the country." "If the farmer does not drive the tractor, then what will happen to agriculture? And if he forgets to run the military tank on the borders, how will there be peace and security in the country? The way farmer produces the grain and runs tanks on the borders, he will have to learn to use Twitter also, to express his point of view," he further explained. He said that, "All soldiers are sons of the country. This formula will be of great help in future." The BKU leader said, the government has given a tool to the corporates to loot the farmers by implementing three farm laws. He said these are not laws made for the farmers, but for corporates, and that is why the government is ignoring the interest of the farmers. Meanwhile, crowds on the borders have begun to swell once again as thousands of farmers from different states have joined the agitation.

## 'GYANI BABA': SMRITI IRANI SLAMS RAHUL GANDHI OVER HIS CRITICISM OF MODI GOVT'S HANDLING OF PANDEMIC



Union Minister Smriti Irani on Tuesday called Rahul Gandhi a 'gyani baba' who is 'dishing out pearls of wisdom' to others. Irani in a series of tweets said that Rahul should introspect that why Congress-ruled states failed in flattening the Covid curve during the second wave. She said that the second wave began in Congress-ruled states and charged that states, where Congress is in power, have several parameters to check the spread of virus. "While Gyani Baba is dishing out pearls of wisdom to Honourable Prime Minister, he may like to introspect on the following - Where did second wave start? - Congress ruled states. Which states had huge percentage of India's cases and deaths? - Congress ruled states," she tweeted. "State with the highest case fatality rate - Congress ruled state. States with maximum noise against vaccines creating vaccine hesitancy - Congress ruled states. States which had an astronomical positivity rate during the second wave - Congress ruled states," Irani said in another tweet.

## KOTKAPURA FIRING CASE: SIT QUESTIONS FORMER PUNJAB CM PARKASH SINGH BADAL



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Earlier, the SIT had summoned the Akali Dal patriarch for questioning in Mohali on June 16. But Badal had sought a change of the date of appearance, saying he was not keeping well. Earlier, Harcharan Bains, principal adviser to Shiromani Akali Dal president Sukhbir Badal, had said, "Five-time Punjab CM Sardar Parkash Singh Badal will appear before the SIT at his official MLA flat at Sector-4 in Chandigarh at 10.30 am on June 22. Still not in good health, Badal, however, is keen to fulfil his legal and constitutional duties as a law-abiding citizen of the country." Badal was the chief minister of Punjab in 2015 when incidents of the desecration of religious texts and subsequent police firing on people protesting over the issue took place in Faridkot. In May, the state government set up a new SIT led by Additional Director General of Police L K Yadav to probe the Kotkapura police firing incident following the directions of the Punjab and Haryana High Court, which had quashed the report submitted by the first SIT headed by Inspector General Kunwar Vijay Pratap Singh on April 9.

## OPPOSITION ALLIANCE AGAINST BJP FOR 2024 POLLS

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He said this meeting was called by the Rashtra Manch and was only organised at the residence of Pawar. Memon also dismissed as a "wrong perception" that it was an opposition meet, excluding the Congress, or a 'third front' meet. He rejected claims that Pawar is "taking a big political step" and that is why Congress has boycotted it, saying Congress leaders like Kapil Sibal, Abhishek Manu Singhvi, Vivek Tankha, Manish Tewari and Shatrughan Sinha were invited but expressed their difficulty in making it. Leaders of several parties including Trinamool Congress' Sinha, Samajwadi Party's Ghanshyam Tiwari, Rashtriya Lok Dal President Jayant Chaudhary, Aam Aadmi Party's Sushil Gupta, CPI-M's Nilotpal Basu, CPI's Binoy Viswam, National Conference's Farooq Abdullah, former Congress leader Sanjay Jha and former JD-U leader Pavan Verma were present. Other prominent personalities like Justice A.P. Shah, Javed Akhtar and former diplomat K.C. Singh also attended.

## UP POLLS 2022: AIMIM ISSUES 'LOYALTY CONTRACT' FOR CANDIDATES

The All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) has released an application form for party candidates contesting the Assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh next year. The party has also issued a 'loyalty contract' along with the form. The 'loyalty contract' mentions that the applicant will campaign for the party, work honestly even if denied a ticket to enter the poll fray. Applicants will also have to pay an application fee of Rs 10,000 along with the form. The party will soon prepare a list of those filling the application forms to contest the polls. AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi will take the final decision on the ticket distribution. He will visit the state soon. The AIMIM has decided to contest on 100 of 403 seats in Uttar Pradesh. The party has dropped hints that it is open to allying with smaller parties. Owaisi's party is already a constituent of former minister Om Prakash Rajbhar-led Suheldev Bhagidari Sankalp Morcha (SBSM). The alliance has nine smaller parties. The alliance is trying to rope in other OBC, Dalit and minority leaders.

## BJP GOVT HIDING ACTUAL COVID-19 DEATH FIGURES IN UP, ALLEGES AKHILESH YADAV

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav on Tuesday accused the Uttar Pradesh government of hiding the actual number of deaths due to COVID-19. Through this, he said, the BJP government is actually hiding its face. Yadav's remarks came a day after a report claimed that the death toll due to COVID-19 in 24 districts of Uttar Pradesh from July 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021 was up to 43 times higher than the official figures. Its findings are based on a comparison of the official death toll in these districts during the nine-month period with the excess deaths registered in the state's Civil Registration System (CRS). The mortality data was accessed through a Right to Information (RTI) application. In a tweet in Hindi, Yadav said, "According to information accessed through the Right to Information, it has come to light that the death toll in 24 districts of Uttar Pradesh in the nine months of the pandemic till March 31, 2021 is up to 43 times higher than the government figures."





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## Japan to begin issuing ‘vaccine passports’ in July



**TOKYO, (IANS)** Japan plans to allow municipalities to begin issuing “vaccine passports” from mid-July, with its top government spokesperson on Thursday referencing the documents’ “prompt issuance”.

“To prepare for prompt issuance, we will first issue the vaccination certificates by paper but will also make consideration for their issuance in the digital format,” Chief Cabinet Secretary Katsunobu Kato told a regular press conference.

According to sources familiar with the matter, more activities are becoming available overseas to

people who have documents certifying they have been vaccinated against the novel coronavirus, reports Xinhua news agency. The Japanese government wants its citizens carrying the documents verifying their vaccination status to be exempted or only have to undergo a shortened quarantine period when they travel, the sources said. The government here has been asking other countries to comply with this, they added. Some business circles here are calling for the passports to be issued as soon as possible in hopes for increased overseas travel in twine with overseas economies reopening. The certificates, to be issued by local municipalities in Japan, will be free of charge and based on the government’s vaccination records. They will be available to regular passport holders. The vaccine passports will also show the vaccine manufacturer, with the information written in Japanese and English. The government has said it may also issue digital versions of the certificates that can be applied for online, Japan’s public broadcaster NHK said. In the meantime, applications for the vaccination passports will have to be made in person at local government offices.

## 150 MILLION AMERICANS FULLY VACCINATED: US HITS ENCOURAGING MILESTONES ON VIRUS DEATHS AND SHOTS

COVID-19 deaths in the U.S. have dipped below 300 a day for the first time since the early days of the disaster in March 2020, while the drive to put shots in arms hit another encouraging milestone Monday: 150 million Americans fully vaccinated. The coronavirus was the third leading cause of death in the U.S. in 2020, behind heart disease and cancer, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. But now, as the outbreak loosens its grip, it has fallen down the list of the biggest killers. CDC data suggests that more Americans are dying every day from accidents, chronic lower respiratory diseases, strokes or Alzheimer’s disease than from COVID-19.



The U.S. death toll stands at more than 600,000, while the worldwide count is close to 3.9 million, though the real figures in both cases are believed to be markedly higher.

## IRAN'S PRESIDENT-ELECT SAYS 'NO' TO MEETING JOE BIDEN

Iran's president-elect says he's not willing to meet President Joe Biden. Ebrahim Raisi, when asked about possibly meeting Biden, simply said: “No.” Raisi's moderate competitor in the recent election, Abdolnasser Hemmati, said he'd be willing to potentially meet Biden. Meanwhile, Raisi called himself “a defender of human rights” after being asked directly about his involvement in the 1988 mass executions of some 5,000 people. Raisi was part of a so-called “death panel” that sentenced political prisoners to death at the end of the 1980s Iran-Iraq war. Raisi made the comments on Monday in a news conference with journalists, his first since winning Friday's election in a landslide.



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