



AS IMRAN KHAN'S FATE HANGS IN BALANCE ALL **EYES ARE ON PAKISTAN'S** KINGMAKER BILLIONAIRE JAHANGIR TAREEN | P5

YAMI GAUTAM TIES UP WITH NGOS TO SUPPORT VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT |P13



NEWS WEEKLY

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BOXER SUKHDEEP SINGH CHAKRIA FROM ONTARIO REMAINS UNDEFEATED, BEATS JORDAN BALMIR FROM MONTREAL AT CAA CENTRE, BRAMPTON



BJP TO THROW ALL MIGHT FOR LAST PHASE OF UP POLLS

As the campaign for sixth phase of the Uttar Pradesh assembly polls came to end on Monday, the BJP is all set to intensify its campaign for the seventh phase and its top leadership including Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be on the ground to seek support for the saffron party candidates.

Sources said that for the last three days of campaigning, Prime Minister Modi is likely to camp in Varanasi, his parliamentary constituency and is also likely to hold a road show.

"Prime Minister Modi is likely to stay in Varanasi and to hold road shows in support of party candidates as he did in the last assembly polls five years ago. The Prime Minister will also address election rallies in other poll bound districts," a senior Uttar Pradesh BJP leader said.

Polling will be held in 54 assembly constituencies in the last and seventh phase of UP polls on March 7.

Another Uttar Pradesh BJP functionary said that the Prime Minister's presence in Varanasi will help the party in winning all the seats in the district in his parliamentary constituency and neighbouring districts. It is learnt that BJP chief J.P. Nadda, union ministers Rajnath Singh and Amit Shah are also expected to visit Varanasi to participate in the party's election events.



HAVE BIG POWERS PUSHED UKRAINE TO DISASTER?

Russia has declared war on Ukraine on February 24, 2022, and is executing a plan meticulously prepared and war-games. NATO appears to have overrelied on the potency of its sanctions to deter Putin, which appears to be a major strategic error because it has not worked in the past and does not appear to be working now. Instead, it has emboldened Russian leadership's resolve that NATO will be unable to respond to a quick offensive beyond condemnation, Ukraine's capacity building, and sanctions on Russia. It has pushed Ukraine to disaster, as its President's loud demand to join NATO was neither acted upon by West, nor provided him any assurance that anyone else would do the heavy lifting or put boots on the ground in Ukraine to fight Russians, despite a massive military force imbalance in Russia's favour. I CONTD. ON PAGE 6

Y MEDIA COVID & VACCINE REPORT

- Ontario Youth 12-17 Now Eligible For A Covid-19
- Negative Rapid Antigen Or PCR Test Results Are Accepted To Meet Entry Requirements In Canada.
- Ontario Premier Ford Says 'We Aren't Far Away' From Lifting Ontario's Mask Mandate.

- Ontario Scraps Vaccine Certificate System As Part Of Its Reopening Plan.
- Booster Dose.
- Canada Needs To Adopt A 'More Sustainable' Approach To Covid-19, Dr. Tam Says.





BATTS ATHLETIC CLUB PLAYER BRINDHA WINS SILVER MEDAL IN ONTARIO LEVEL HIGH-PERFORMANCE TOURNAMENT AT STRATFORD CONDUCTED BY BADMINTON ONTARIO IN GIRLS SINGLES U15 CATEGORY.

RE/MAX CANADA REPORT FINDS TORONTO AREA HOME PRICES UP 453% SINCE 1996

Exceptional gains in Greater Toronto housing market fuelled by rapid population growth, land scarcity and low interest rates

Average price increased more than 450 per cent, while unit sales have doubled since 1996. Residential unit sales in the Greater Toronto housing market have doubled and average price has increased more than 450 per cent since 1996, as strong demand and limited supply continue to drive rapid price escalation throughout the 416 and 905 area codes, according to a new report released by RE/MAX Canada.

I CONTD. ON PAGE 7

INDIAN-AMERICAN STUDENT JASKARAN SINGH WINS \$250K PRIZEIN COLLEGE QUIZ CONTEST

In a three-contest winning streak by Indian-American students, Jaskaran Singh has won the premiere quiz tournament for students, the National College Championship Jeopardy with a prize of \$250,000. The 22-yearold red-turbaned Sikh studying at the University of Texas at Austin on Tuesday beat out 35 other students selected from about the 26,000 who competed for a chance to be on the tournament held over two weeks.



I CONTD. ON PAGE 3

NAVEEN SHEKHARAPPA, INDIAN STUDENT, KILLED IN SHELLING IN KHARKIV, UKRAINE

An Indian student was killed in Ukraine's Kharkiv or Tuesday morning in shelling as the war between Russia and Ukraine reached big cities' streets. India's Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Arindar Bagchi said, "With profound sorrow we confirm that a Indian student lost his life in shelling in Kharkiv this morning. The Ministry is in touch with his family."



I CONTD. ON PAGE 9

KAVITA CHODHARY, 24, OF BRAMPTON KILLED IN MISSISSAUGA HIT-AND-RUN

Investigators from the Major Collision Bureau continue to investigate a fatal fail to remain collision that occurred at the intersection of Derry Road East and Cattrick Street in the City of Mississauga, claimed the life of a Brampton woman. On Sunday, February 20, 2022, 24-year-old Kavita Chodhary was walking along Derry Road East and began to cross the road at Cattrick Street, when she was struck by a dark coloured vehicle. I CONTD. ON PAGE 7

MODERNA SAYS PANDEMIC WILL END IN 2022 BUT ANNUAL BOOSTERS NEEDED

Even as the number of Covid cases are declining in several parts of the world, US drug maker Moderna has said that the pandemic will end in 2022, yet annual vaccinations are needed, the media reported. Although Covid is entering an endemic phase, Moderna Chief Medical

Officer Paul Burton said the virus will continue to circulate but at a more static and predictable rate, CNBC reported. I CONTD. ON PAGE 7

WITH DEBT OF RS 2.82L CR, INCOMING **GOVT FACES DAUNTING TASK IN PUNJAB**

With a whopping public debt of Rs 2.82 lakh crore, the incoming government in one of the most fiscally stressed states, Punjab will be faced with the daunting task to usher in much-needed economic reforms as a major component of government earning and borrowing is meant for servicing debt rather than capital expenditure. Twenty per cent of the annual budget is being spent only to pay the interest on the loans. I CONTD. ON PAGE 9



RAJESH VASHISTH, PRESIDENT OF HARYANVI ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA(HANA)& WIFE KAMLESH VASHISTH CELEBRATED 25TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY. I DETAILS ON PAGE 11



EVERY SUNDAY 10 AM, 4 PM, 10 PM

Bell Fibe: Channel 828 Telus: Channel 2418 Rogers: Channel 857 Ignite TV: Channel 707

CHANNEL Y

RADIO Y FM 91.9

MIDWEEK

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GET YOUR DESIGN ON FOR BREAST CANCER RESEARCH



In celebration of our **Million Steps to Mother's Day** fundraising event, we're inviting you to create and submit an original sock design in support of life-saving breast cancer research.

There will be two winning sock designs - one selected by online consumer voting; the other decided by a panel of judges. The two winners will

have their sock designs produced by our sponsor, Collins Clothiers and sold across Canada – just in time for Mother's Day gifts! Plus, they'll receive a prize pack and a \$1,500 donation made in their honour to their local cancer treatment centre.

For full contest details, please visit: collinsclothiers.com/bcscdesign

To submit your design visit collinsclothiers.com/bcscdesign

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



Design submission by March 6, 2022

Online voting March 10 - 20, 2022



BREAST CANCER SOCIETY
of Canada

#bcscdesign

No purchase necessary. Open to age of majority residents of Canada (excluding Quebec). Starts February 14, 2022 at 12:00:00 a.m. ET and ends March 20, 2022 at 11:59:59 p.m. ET. Entry period closes March 6, 2022 at 9:00:00 a.m. ET. 22 prizes available: (i) 1 consumer's choice prize and 1 judge's choice prize, each consisting of winner's sock design produced and sold in Canada, a merchandise gift bag and a \$1,500 donation to a cancer treatment centre determined at sponsor's sole discretion (total ARV \$1,675 CAD each); and (ii) 20 finalist prizes, each consisting of a \$100 CAD donation to a cancer treatment centre determined at sponsor's sole discretion. Limit 1 entry per person. Odds of being selected as a finalist depend on number and calibre of entries. Odds of winning consumer's choice prize depend on number of votes per finalist (math skill-testing question required). Odds of winning judge's choice prize depend on number and calibre of finalist entries. Full rules and entry details at collinsclothiers.com/bcscdesign

Support with the Situation in Ukraine: **How to Contact IRCC**



Phone Number: 613-321-4243



IRCC WebForm: **Add Keyword** "Ukraine2022"

CANADA'S IMMIGRATION SUPPORT FOR THOSE AFFECTED BY THE SITUATION IN UKRAINE (IRCC/TWITTER).

ONTARIO GAINED 344,800 JOBS IN 2021, LARGEST INCREASE ON RECORD: FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE OF ONTARIO REPORT

The Financial Accountability Office of Ontario (FAO) released a report that provides an update on Ontario's labour market performance in 2021, highlights major challenges facing the province's workers, and includes a brief overview of the impact of the COVID-19 Omicron variant on employment in January 2022.

In 2021, Ontario's labour market rebounded strongly, adding 344,800 jobs, the largest annual increase on record. This brought employment essentially back to the 2019 pre-pandemic level, following a record drop in 2020. With this rebound, the unemployment rate declined to 8.0 per cent in 2021, down from 9.6 per cent in 2020.

Despite strong overall job growth, the pace of recovery was uneven, with some groups remaining far below their 2019 pre-pandemic employment levels. Employment among young workers and those in low-wage industries with close customer contact, including accommodation and food services and wholesale and retail trade, remained below 2019 levels. In 11 of Ontario's 16 major cities, employment in 2021 was lower than pre-pandemic levels.

More broadly, lingering effects of the pandemic continue to pose challenges to many workers. Some workers have struggled with unemployment for long periods of time, others are affected by a shift in skill requirements to softer and more advanced technical abilities, and there are hiring difficulties despite record job vacancies, notably in accommodation and food services.

Find our full report on our website, here.

QUICK FACTS:

Female workers experienced larger job gains (181,200 or 5.5 per cent) than male workers (163,600 or 4.4 per cent) in 2021.



Youth employment (15-24 years) remained 69,800 jobs (or 6.9 per cent) below 2019 pre-pandemic levels. The youth unemployment rate declined from a record 22 per cent in 2020 to a still elevated 15.7 per cent in 2021.

Jobs for core-age workers (25-54 years) increased by 197,400 (or 4.3 per cent) in 2021, bringing employment slighly above the 2019 pre-pandemic level.

Jobs in the service-producing sector grew by 289,000 (5.2 per cent) in 2021. About two-fifths of this growth was driven by industries where jobs can be performed remotely, such as:

professional, scientific and technical services (73,700 or 11.1 per cent), public administration (23,800 or 6.2 per cent), and

finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing (18,100 or 3.0 per cent). Employment remained below 2019 levels in several industries highly affected by the pandemic, including accommodation and food services (-92.600 or -20.6 per cent), and business, building and other support services (-25,300 or -8.1 per cent).

Only five (London, Peterborough, Guelph, Toronto, and Ottawa-Gatineau) of Ontario's 16 major cities saw employment recover to pre-pandemic levels.

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE: MAN & WOMAN FACING HUNDREDS OF CHARGES; TORONTO POLICE CALL IT THE 'MOST PROLIFIC AND DISTURBING CASE OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE' IN HISTORY

In January 2020, the Toronto Police Service began an investigation into a man and woman. The nature and scope of the allegations led to a joint investigation with members from the Child & Youth Advocacy Centre, Child Exploitation Section, and 55 Division.

It is alleged that: - over the last 17 years, a man and a woman committed multiple sexual and physical assaults against men, women and children

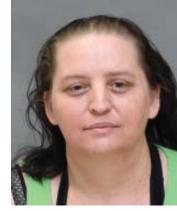
 these offences took place in the Danforth Avenue/Dawes Road and Danforth Road/Eglinton Avenue East areas of Toronto

- many of these assaults were recorded and uploaded to the Internet Martin "Mark" Wettlaufer, 37, of Toronto, and Kathleen Wardlaw, 42, of Toronto, have been arrested and charged with hundreds of offences

relating to the allegations listed above.

To date, charges have been laid in relation to 41 victims. Police have a number of unidentified victims and are seeking the public's assistance in identifying them. Anyone who believes they were victimized or has information about the accused is asked to contact police by calling services can be found by visiting YourChoice.TO.





416-808-7521. The Toronto Police Service also respects the right of sexual assault survivors not to report incidents to police. Information about the investigative process or community/healthcare support

Ontario Establishes General Minimum Wage for Digital Platform Workers

The Ontario government is introducing the Working for Workers Act, 2022 (Working for Workers Act 2), which would, if passed, continue to lead the country in building a stronger economy that works for everyone. Included in the legislation are changes that would make Ontario the first province in Canada to establish a minimum wage and other foundational rights for digital platform workers who offer rides or deliver food and other items for companies such as Uber, Door Dash and Instacart.

"As part of our plan to build a stronger economy that works for everyone, we want all workers to have every opportunity to earn a good living and provide for their families," said Premier Doug Ford. "It doesn't matter if you work for a big company, a small business or for a rideshare app. Our government won't leave any worker behind."

Data shows as many as one in five Canadians work in the gig economy, a number that is predicted to increase. However, these workers often face uncertain working conditions and lack necessary protections, including finding it difficult to predict paycheques or resolve complaints.

The government's proposals would enshrine the following rights and protections for digital platform workers:

Earning at least the general minimum wage for time worked;

The right to keep their tips along with regular pay periods;

The right to information and clarity around algorithms including:

how pay is calculated; and

how and why a worker might be penalized in the allocation of work;

Written notice if they are being removed from the platform and why:

The right to resolve their work-related disputes in Ontario; and Protection from reprisal should they seek to assert their rights.

"No one working in Ontario should ever make less than minimum wage for an hour's work," said Monte McNaughton, Minister of Labour Training and Skills Development. "No one working in Ontario should be dismissed without notice, explanation, or recourse. No one should have to travel out of the country to resolve a workplace dispute or sign a contract they do not understand. These core rights are a foundation in our mission to help all workers earn bigger paychecks to take care of their families, not an endpoint."

This announcement follows the province's commitment to design a health care benefits plan tied to millions of workers who currently don't have access to them, including digital platform workers. Also included in Working for Workers 2 is a requirement for employers to disclose their electronic monitoring of employees and several red tape reductions to encourage out-of-province workers to help fill the generational labour shortage. These measures are part of Ontario's ambitious plan to attract the best workers from across Canada – and around the world – by making the province the best place to live, work and raise a family. They follow legislation in the fall to remove unfair and discriminatory barriers against foreign-trained professionals, introducing the "Right to Disconnect" and the banning of non-compete clauses.

HURAIMA KABIR, 34, OF HAMILTON CHARGED WITH ATTEMPTED MURDER

Investigators from the 21 Division Criminal Investigation Bureau have arrested and charged a 34-year-old Hamilton woman regarding a "murder for hire" investigation.

On February 16, 2022, investigators initiated an investigation into allegations that a woman had attempted to hire someone to murder a man known to her. On February 25, 2022, police conducted a search warrant at a Hamilton address, and the suspect was taken into custody without incident.

On February 26, 2022, 34-year-old Huraima Kabir of Hamilton appeared before the Ontario Court of Justice in the City of Brampton and faced the following charges: Counselling to Commit Murder and Attempted Murder. Anyone with information is asked to call investigators at the 21 Division Criminal Investigation Bureau at 905-453-2121, extension 2133. Information may also be left anonymously by calling Peel Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477).

VIOLENCE OVER BLASPHEMY CHARGES AGAINST ISLAMIC PRINCIPLES: PAKISTAN RELIGIOUS BODY



Pakistans Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) has declared the violence against a person on allegations of blasphemy contrary to Shariah and Islamic principles, according to a statement issued by the forum, which also suggested the constitution of a national commission that would make recommendations for preventing such acts, Dawn reported. The statement was issued after the CII held a meeting that was presided over by the body's chairperson, Qibla Ayaz.

It said the participants revisited the discussions of a CII meeting on December 20, 2021, which was called over the Sialkot lynching incident in which Sri Lankan factory manager Priyantha Kumara was tortured to death and his body was set on fire by a mob over allegations of blasphemy. The need for improving the judicial system to prevent the recurrence of Sialkot-like incidents was stressed in the December 20 meeting. In Wednesday's meeting, CII members "again declared that subjecting any person to violence on allegations of dishonouring religion, desecration of the Holy Quran and Namoos-i-Risalat was against Shariah, inhumane and contrary to Islamic principles", the statement read, Dawn reported. The Council members called for taking to task the elements involved in the Sialkot lynching at the earliest so that "the nation's confidence in the law and judicial system is restored". In this regard, they further pointed out that the "bigger issue is that of implementation of the law and uncertainty about [the suspects] being punished".

INDIA'S FY22 GDP NOW EXPECTED TO **GROW AT 8.9%**

India's economy is estimated to clock a real GDP growth of 8.9 per cent in FY22 down from the earlier estimate of 9.2 per cent, official data showed on Monday. In 2020-21, India's economy had contracted by 6.6 per cent. On Monday, the 'Second Advance Estimates of National Income for financial year 2021-22', estimated that 'Real GDP' or 'GDP at Constant Prices' (2011-12) in the year 2021-22 will rise to Rs 147.72 lakh crore from the 'First Revised Estimate of GDP' for 2020-21 at Rs 135.58 lakh crore, "The growth in GDP during 2021-22 is estimated at 8.9 per cent as compared to a contraction of 6.6 per cent in 2020-21," the National Statistical Office (NSO) said. As per the estimate, real GVA at basic prices is estimated at Rs 136.25 lakh crore in 2021-22, as against Rs 125.85 lakh crore in 2020-21, showing a growth of 8.3 per cent.

In terms of sectors, the estimates showed growth from agriculture, forestry and fishing, mining and quarrying, manufacturing and construction at 3.3 per cent, 12.6 per cent, 10.5 per cent and 10 percent, respectively. The GVA at basic prices for 2021-22 from the electricity, gas, water supply and other utility services sector is expected to grow by 7.8 per cent. In addition, the GVA from trade, hotels, transport, communication and services related to broadcasting, financial, real estate and professional services, and public administration, defence and other services grew at 11.6 per cent, 4.3 per cent, and 12.5 per cent, respectively. "The growth estimates for the full fiscal are broadly in line with expectations. However, to achieve 8.9 per cent growth, the Q4 GDP has to grow by 4.8 per cent. This looks challenging given the fact that the third wave of the pandemic had caused considerable restrictions," said M. Govinda Rao, Chief Economic Adviser at Brickwork Ratings.

INDIAN-AMERICAN STUDENT JASKARAN SINGH WINS \$250K PRIZEIN COLLEGE QUIZ CONTEST

CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

After winning the championship, Singh was modest about his success. "I just sort of just buzzed fast and know things, pretty much. I don't think there's much more," he told an interviewer from the show.

The quarter million dollars win will pay for his college fees "and a lot more", he said. The college tournament is an offshoot of Jeopardy,



the most popular daily quiz show, which uses the unusual format of the quizmaster or host stating an answer for which the contestant has to frame the right question.

The puzzle given by the host, TV actor Mayim Bialik, in the final round of the contest was, "An 1873 book title gave us this phrase for the period in the late 1800s of growth & prosperity & also greed & corruption". Singh gave the correct solution in the form of a question: "What is the gilded age"? Nibir Sharma from the University of Minnesota won the 2019 tournament and was a semi-finalist in the Jeopardy Tournament of Champions going again the big winners in the main Jeopardy programme next year. Dhruv Gaur from Brown University bagged the championship in 2018 and there were no collegiate contests in the last two years because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Before them, Vinita Kailasanath had won the championship in 2001. This time four of the students contesting against Singh were of Indian origin and one was of Sri Lankan heritage. Singh who is in the final year studying finance and economics said on the show that he had worked for a civil rights organisation in Washington after his first year of college. He credited his parents for his victory, telling the Austin Statesman newspaper that they "are really amazing, They supported me throughout the whole thing".



After Omicron infection, risk of BA.2 is rare, says study

People infected with the highly contagious Omicron variant of Covid are less likely to contract BA.2 subvariant, according to a study. Omicron, which has rapidly spread worldwide, carries numerous mutations in key regions and is associated with increased transmissibility and immune escape.

The variant has recently been divided into three subvariants with substantial genomic differences, in particular between Omicron BA.1 and BA.2. While Omicron is on the decline, many countries in Europe and Asia have seen an increase in BA.2 cases.

With the surge in BA.2, a large number of reinfections from earlier cases has been observed, raising the question of whether the subvariant specifically can escape the natural immunity acquired shortly after a BA.1 infection.

"We provide evidence that Omicron BA.2 reinfections do occur shortly after BA.1 infections but are rare," said corresponding author Morten Rasmussen, from the Department of Virus and Microbiological Special Diagnostics, at Statens Serum Institut, Denmark.

While the reinfection rate appears to be low given the high number of induced immunity only, Rasmussen said.

positive SARS-CoV-2 tests during the study period, it "still highlights the need for continuous assessment of length of vaccine-induced and/or natural immunity", Rasmussen said.

To explore, a team of several Danish and Australian researchers selected a subset of samples from more than 1,8 million cases of infections in the period from November 22, 2021, until February 11, 2022. They selected individuals with two positive samples, more than 20 and less than 60 days apart.

From a total of 187 reinfection cases, they identified 47 instances of BA.2 reinfections shortly after a BA.1 infection, mostly in young unvaccinated individuals with mild disease not resulting in hospitalisation or death.

Further, the study showed that Omicron BA.2 reinfections after either Delta or BA.1 initial infections, were mainly observed among young individuals below the age of 30 and the majority of these cases were not vaccinated. This emphasises the enhanced immunity obtained by the combination of vaccination and infection compared to infection

CANADA TO REFER THE SITUATION IN UKRAINE TO INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT



The Honourable Mélanie Joly, Minister of Foreign Affairs, issued the following statement:

"Canada has decided to refer the situation in Ukraine to the International Criminal Court (ICC). We are working with other ICC member states to take this significant action as a result of numerous allegations of the commission of serious international crimes in Ukraine by Russian forces, including war crimes and crimes against humanity."

"We do not take this decision lightly. We have repeatedly called on Russia to cease its unprovoked and completely unjustifiable attacks on Ukraine and engage in meaningful dialogue. However, as the horrific events in Ukraine unfold before our eyes, it is now clear that more must be done. "The ICC has our full support and confidence. We call on Russia to cooperate with the court.

"We firmly stand with Ukraine and the brave men and women fighting to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity. The perpetrators of these serious international crimes must face justice."

FOURTH COVID WAVE IN INDIA FROM **JUNE, SAYS STUDY**

The Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur (IIT-K) researchers have predicted that the fourth wave of Covid-19 may set in around June 22 in the country. According to the study, India is likely to witness the fourth Covid wave in mid-June, and the surge is to continue for about four months.

However, the severity of the wave will depend on the emergence of new variants, vaccination status and administration of booster doses, the study said.

The research was led by Sabara Parshad Rajeshbhai, Subhra Sankar Dhar and Shalabh of IIT Kanpur's Mathematic department using a mixture of Gaussian distribution based on the data on Zimbabwe. This IIT-K study has been published as a pre-print in MedRxiv and is yet to be peer-reviewed.

According to the researchers, the data indicates that the fourth wave of Covid in India will arrive after 936 days from the initial data availability date, which is January 30, 2020. "Therefore, the fourth wave starts from June 22, 2022, reaching its peak on August 23, 2022 and ends on October 24, 2022," the study said.

COVID VAX EFFECTIVENESS DECLINES AFTER 6 MONTHS WITHOUT BOOSTERS: STUDY

The effectiveness of the Covid-19 vaccine may substantially decline after six months if booster shots are not taken, according to a new study published in The Lancet Respiratory Medicine.

The study indicated that vaccines were 94 per cent effective at preventing hospitalisation 50-100 days after receiving the shot but fell to 80.4 per cent 200-250 days later, with even more rapid declines after 250 days. "This data helps us understand differences in waning protection by vaccine type and identify the key risk factors for severe breakthrough infections to help inform the targeting of potential vaccine booster programmes," said Amy Compton-Phillips, Providence chief clinical officer. "Unlike most other studies, our data stretched beyond six months, where we found evidence of rapidly waning protection, especially for patients 80 or older," Compton-Phillips added. In addition to examining the effectiveness of vaccines over time, the Providence study was also able to identify factors associated with reduced vaccine effectiveness. Key risk factors for a severe "breakthrough" infection included advanced age (80+), comorbidities such as cancer, transplants, chronic kidney disease, hypertension, or heart failure, the amount of time that had elapsed since being vaccinated, and the type of vaccine one received. For the latter factor, the study found that the Moderna vaccine offered the best overall protection over time, while the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine offered initial protection equivalent to Moderna's but declined more rapidly over time. Persons receiving the Janssen vaccine also had higher odds of experiencing a severe breakthrough infection compared to Moderna. For the study, the research team examined data from nearly 50,000 hospital admissions between April and November of 2021.

CROSS LIMITS OF HUMAN SURVIVABILITY: IPCC REPORT At the current emission cuts promised, many parts of northern and predicted to reach wet-bulb temperatures of 35 degrees Celsius if

WITHOUT EMISSION CUTS, HEAT AND HUMIDITY WILL

coastal India would reach extremely dangerous wet-bulb temperatures - a measure combining both health and humidity - of over 31 degrees Celsius towards the end of the century, a new UN report has warned. A wet-bulb temperature of 31 degrees Celsius is extremely dangerous for humans, while a value of 35 degrees Celsius is unsurvivable for more than about six hours, even for fit and healthy adults resting in the shade. Even below these levels, heat can be deadly, especially for old or young people or those doing hard physical work. These are the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) Working Group II (WRG II) report - titled IPCC AR6 WGII 'Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability' - that pointed out the range of impacts India is vulnerable to: heat stress, which can increase beyond the threshold of human survivability, impacts on food production due to climate change, which includes food crops, fisheries, compounding disasters, and disasters elsewhere that will impact international supply chains, markets, trade, and result in economic shocks among others. Citing a study, the IPCC report said, if emissions are cut, but only by the levels currently promised, many parts of northern and coastal India would reach extremely dangerous wet-bulb temperatures of over 31 degrees Celsius towards the end of the century. However, if emissions continue to rise, wet-bulb temperatures will approach or exceed the unsurvivable limit of 35 degrees Celsius over much of India, with the majority of the country reaching wet-bulb temperatures of 31 degrees Celsius or more.

The study also mentions that under the high emissions scenario, the end of the century, Lucknow and Patna would be among the cities

emissions continue to rise, while Bhubaneswar, Chennai, Mumbai, Indore, and Ahmedabad are all identified as at risk of reaching wetbulb temperatures of 32-34 degrees Celsius with continued emissions. Overall, Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, and Punjab will be the most severely affected, but if emissions continue to increase, all Indian states will have regions that experience wet-bulb temperatures of 30 degrees Celsius or more by the end of the century, the report said. Not just in India, in fact, in South Asia particularly, intense heat waves of longer durations and higher frequency are projected with medium confidence over India. At the city-level, these projections could translate into significant impacts: at 1.5 degrees Celsius, on average, Kolkata will experience heat equivalent to the 2015 record heat waves every year, and under 2 degrees Celsius warming, it could expect such heat annually. Critically, the impacts of extreme heat are experienced disproportionately within cities with the poorest populations and those with lower access to green spaces affected most, the report said. According to Katja Frieler, a lead author of the IPCC report's chapter on observed cross-sectoral impacts, and co-chair of the Transformation Pathways Research Department at the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, "Exceeding 1.1 degrees Celsius of global warming today doesn't sound like much, yet the impacts of human-induced climate change on people and nature become more and more visible." The IPCC, a United Nations body solely dedicated to looking at the science behind climate change, released this major report on the impacts of the climate crisis and why it is imperative that we act now to address the growing risks later.

Behind migration of Indian medical students, less fees or fake biz model?

NEW DELHI, (IANS) Around thousands of Indian Medical Students every year go outside the country to pursue medical education. China, Ukraine, Philippines, Russia are some most favoured destinations where Indian students prefer to study the

War-torn Ukraine ranks fourth in Europe for having the largest number of graduate and post-graduate medical students. Around 18,095 Indian students are in Ukraine, some of them have been evacuated, as per Ukraine's Ministry of Education and Science. In 2020, 24 per cent of its overseas students were from India. The paucity of medical seats in India's government colleges

and higher level of fees in private medical colleges can be the main reasons behind the migration of Indians. But, some say that there is a fake business model running parallel where agencies are working with foreign universities in different countries on around Rs 50,000 to Rs 1 lakh per candidate.

Omkar Jilla, hailing from Maharashtra, is third year medical student in Ivano-Frankivsk National Medical University. Talking to IANS, he said that students prefer to come here because of its affordable fees. "Where we have to spend Rs 10 lakh to Rs 15 lakh per annum in private medical colleges in India, here it costs Rs 3 to Rs 4 lakh only. However, I agree the studies here

less than in India, but also is of a higher quality. The only catch is that they have to pay hefty sums of money to agents in India. 24% Percentage of Indians among all overseas students studying Rs 3-4 lakh The annual cost of medical education in Ukraine Rs 10-15 lakh The annual cost of education in a private medical ☐ FMGE Students bound for Ukraine have to clear the Foreign Medical

WHY UKRAINE IS BIG FOR INDIAN STUDENTS

Indian students say medical education in Ukraine not only costs far

are not that good as compared to India, but still we get our degree of MBBS after 6 years when we clear MCI/NEET," he said. "In India, we waste several years in preparations for NEET. In Ukraine, there are three options - National University, State University and Private university, for students. The fee structures are more or less the same at all three levels", he added.

However, Omkar says that on the quality parameter of the education, not much difference is there between India and outside. "We have to study 80 per cent by ourselves from video lectures and book, which is mostly similar to India. Even in practical studies, no more options are available as India has", he says. "Most importantly, we get the MBBS degree here," he told IANS. Omkar is stranded at the Bucharest airport at the moment. On the contrary, Federation of All India Medical Association President, Dr Rohan Krishnan says main reasons for migration is not just the high fees of private medical colleges in India but there is a fake business going on in the country where many of the agencies are working with colleges in Ukraine, Russia, China and Phillipines. "They are getting a good cut of around Rs 50,000 to Rs 1 lakh per candidate. So mainly they try to hack the mindset of young people. They show a delightful world of myths and fables to these teenagers and tell them that education quality is good there and they will pass Foreign Medical Graduate Examination in one go which is conducted by the Indian Government National Medical Commission (NMC).

MODERNA SAYS PANDEMIC WILL END IN 2022 BUT ANNUAL BOOSTERS NEEDED

CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

"We do believe that we are transitioning into an endemic phase marked by a period of stability in case counts, hospitalisations and deaths at least in the Northern Hemisphere," he was quoted as saying to analysts after the company reported fourth-quarter earnings.

North America, Europe, most of Asia and much of Africa are in the Northern Hemisphere. However, Burton said Moderna is closely monitoring the trajectory of the virus in the Southern Hemisphere, which includes large nations such as Brazil and South Africa, as winter approaches there. Burton said Covid will likely follow seasonal patterns like other respiratory viruses, such as the flu. However, he warned people will still get sick and die from Covid even when the virus becomes endemic.

He noted that other endemic coronaviruses cause 340,000 hospitalisations and 20,000 deaths annually for people older than 65 years old, citing data from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

According to Moderna CEO Stephane Bancel, there is still a need for another booster shot in the fall, particularly for individuals over 50 and those who are at high risk due to underlying health conditions.

"I got a flu shot every year, not that I was worried of dying or getting hospitalised – I just don't want to get sick," Bancel was quoted as saying. On Thursday's earnings call, Bancel said he expects Covid shots will have a similar role in the future as the virus becomes seasonal, the report said. Moderna has also announced that it is developing a booster vaccine that targets Omicron and other Covid variants such as Delta. Burton said the current booster protects against hospitalisation from Delta and to a lesser extent from Omicron. However, he said the effectiveness of the vaccine declines over time, the report said. Burton said the disease burden and deaths have declined from their highest levels during the first wave of infection, when no one had immunity to the virus. "With each subsequent wave in mid-2021 with delta and late 2021 and early 2022 with omicron, the morbidity observed from these waves tended to be less severe, certainly relative to the first wave, as our immune systems became more experienced at fighting the SARS-CoV-2-virus," Burton said.











Battle for UP: Caste war comes into play in Chillupar

The legendary Thakur-Brahmin war in eastern Uttar Pradesh has come into full play in Chillupar assembly seat of Gorakhpur.

Chillupar is the stronghold of erstwhile mafia don and former minister Hari Shankar Tiwari.

Though Tiwari, 86, has retired from active politics, he has handed over the baton to his sons -- Bhisham Shankar Tiwari, former MP, and Vinay Shankar Tiwari, a legislator.

Vinay Shankar Tiwari, who quit BSP to join SP, is now a candidate

The hostility between the Tiwari family and Yogi Adityanath is an extension of the Thakur-Brahmin divide which widened further when. after coming to power, Yogi Adityanath's police raided the home of Hari Shankar Tiwari, ostensibly to look for an accused in a theft case. The incident intensified the caste war that has been strongly simmering in the region for the past five years.

Chief minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday said in Chillupar, "In the five years of BJP rule, a new Uttar Pradesh has emerged, where there is no place for mafia and criminals."

The reference was obviously to the Tiwari family.

He further said criminals running organised gangs were on the run and people in rural and urban areas of the state were living without any fear. He said that the mafia had sullied the image of Gorakhpur. "Earlier, youths from Gorakhpur were not given jobs. The mafia misguided them and lured them into their gangs. The BJP government checked the trend by launching a drive against criminal gangs. The people of the region also busted the myth that mafia cannot be defeated in the elections," he said.

The BJP candidate in Chillupar is Rajesh Tripathi, who had defeated Tiwari in 2007 and 2012 assembly elections.

Among Brahmins, the Tiwari family is the most respected in Purvanchal and local people claim that Brahmin candidates in the region continue to take the blessings of Hari Shankar Tiwari to win

"Yogi Adityanath proudly claims to be a Thakur and represents the Thakur lobby in the region. This time, the elections have divided the two communities and their leaders are making no bones about supporting candidates from their communities," says Rishu Singh, a local journalist.

Before the emergence of Yogi, it was gangster turned politician Virendra Pratap Shahi, who belonged to the Thakur community, who had challenged the might of Tiwari. Later, the two called for truce and Shahi was murdered in 1997.

After brutal murder of Shahi, the Thakur community members rallied behind young Yogi Adityanath, whom then was designated as successor to Mahant Avaidyanath.

Yogi Adityanath launched the 'Hindu Yuva Vahini (HYV)' to win support of the upper caste, backwards and Dalits and counter the muscle power of Tiwari and other political rivals.

Fate of 5 Yogi ministers hangs in balance in 6th phase of UP polls

Five ministers of the Yogi Adityanath government will face acid test in the sixth phase of the Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls to be held on March 3. The ten districts going to the polls in the sixth phase are Gorakhpur, Ambedkarnagar, Ballia, Balrampur, Basti, Deoria, Kushinagar, Maharajganj, Sant Kabir Nagar and Siddharthnagar.

The prominent faces in the fray in this phase are Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Agriculture Minister Surya Pratap Shahi, Basic Education Minister Satish Chandra Dwivedi, Health Minister Jai Pratap Singh, state Ministers Shree Ram Chauhan and Jai Prakash Nishad. A total of 2,14,62,816 electorate -- 1,14,63,113 males, 99,98,383 females and 1,320 third genders -- are expected to exercise their right to franchise to seal the fate of 676 candidates in 57 seats of which 11 are reserved for Scheduled Caste.

In the 2017 Assembly polls, BJP won 46 seats and two by its allies Apna Dal and Suheldev Bharatiya Samaj Party (SBSP). However, this time the SP has stitched an alliance with the SBSP.

Of the 57 seats, 37 are under red alert (polling areas where more than

three candidates have criminal cases registered against them). Despite only two phases of polling left, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is holding back-to-back rallies in Purvanchal. His rallies are scheduled from February 27 to March 4.

Once again BJP's Satish Chandra Dwivedi will be contesting from Siddharthnagar's Itwa Assembly constituency. The seat will witness a two-pronged contest between SP's Mata Prasad Pandey and Dwivedi. In Bansi, Jai Pratap Singh will be contesting against SP's Monu Dubey. Congress candidate from Bansi, Kiran Shukla and BSP candidate Radhe Shyam Shukla are also in the fray from here.

From Gorakhpur's Khajani Assembly seat (Reserved), Minister Shree Ram Chuahan is in the fray. Chauhan is a lawmaker from Dhanghata in Sant Kabir Nagar district.

Khajani will witness a three-corner contest, though the rivals are terming Chauhan as an outsider.

From Deoria's Rudrapur seat, Jai Prakash Nishad is a BJP candidate, pitted against SP's Ram Bhual Nishad and BSP's Suresh Tiwari.

Disappointed over not getting a ticket from the saffron party, Tiwari, a BJP MLA from Barhaj, had joined the BSP.

From Pathardeva, Surya Pratap Shahi has locked horns with SP's Brahma Shankar Tripathi.

The sixth phase has 27 per cent tainted candidates, 38 per cent crorepatis while 182 candidates have criminal cases registered against them.

BJP candidate Vinay Shankar Tiwari from Gorakhpur's Chillupar tops the list of crorepatis.

Rakesh Pandey, SP candidate from Ambedkarnagar's Jalalpur, has assets of over Rs 63 crore while BSP's Umashankar Singh from Balia's Rasra has declared assets of Rs 54 crore.

The candidates with least asset is Deepak Shrivastav of the AAP who has declared assets of Rs 500 only. He is contesting from Mahrajganj's

Shimon Prakash, an independent candidate from Ballia's Belthara Road (SC) seat, has declared assets of Rs 6,600.

Narsingh Pal, AAP candidate from Deoria's Rudrapur seat, has declared assets of over Rs 10,000.

Uttar Pradesh Election Watch Association for Democratic Reforms has analysed the affidavits of 670 candidates.

Among the tained candidates, 23 per cent have 151 cases of serious nature registered against them.

BSP candidate from Sahjanwa, Sudhir Singh has the maximum number of cases, 26, registered against him, followed by SBSP candidate from Kushinagar's Khadda seat is Ashok Chauhan, who has 19 cases registered against him. Azad Samaj Party candidate from Gorapkhpur, Chandrashekhar has 16 cases against him.

Eight candidates have crime against women cases registered against them, while two have rape cases, murder charges against eight, attempt to murder against 23.

Party-wise, 40 of the 48 SP candidates, 23 of the 52 BJP candidates, 22 of the 56 Congress candidates, 22 of the 57 BSP candidates and seven of the 51 AAP candidates are tainted.

ILLEGAL SAND MINING CASE: JUDICIAL CUSTODY OF CHANNI'S NEPHEW EXTENDED TILL MARCH 10



A local court on Friday extended till March 10, the judicial custody of Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi's nephew Bhupinder Singh Honey in connection with an illegal sand mining case. Honey was produced before the court by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) after the expiry of his 14-day judicial custody in connection with a Prevention of Money Laundering case pertaining to the illegal mining in Punjab. Earlier on two occasions, the court had granted ED the custody of Honey. Honey was arrested on the intervening night of February 3 and 4 by the ED which got his custody till February 8. It was later extended till February 11. During this eight-day questioning, the ED confronted him with various documents and recorded his statements. "Honey was evasive and did not cooperate with the probe agency," sources said. His counsel Harneet Singh Oberoi was allowed to meet him on alternate days. According to a few documents accessed by the IANS, Honey allegedly used to take money from officials in lieu of their choice of transfer and posting. "Moreover, Bhupinder Singh has explicitly stated in his statement during search, inter-alia, that all cash which was seized from his residential premises at Ludhiana (Rs 4.09 crore, Sandeep Kumar's premises at Ludhiana (Rs 1.99 crore) and from the Homeland House Premises at Mohali (Rs 3.89 crore) actually pertained to him. He admitted to have generated such proceeds of crime through mining related activities including clearance of mining files and transfer of officials," read the document. Sources have claimed since Bhupinder was close to Channi, he was using the political connection to earn huge profit.

According to the documents, Honey has confessed that the ten crore rupees recovered by the ED during raids belonged to him. The ED has alleged that he was getting money from illegal mining too.

On January 18, the ED conducted raids at ten different locations, including Homeland Heights -- Honey's residence. The ED continued with its raids at different places for two days and recovered incriminating documents. It had recorded the statement of Kudrat Deep Singh, the business partner of Honey. Incriminating documents pertaining to illegal sand mining, property transactions, cell phones, gold worth above Rs 21 lakhs and a watch worth Rs 12 lakhs and cash Rs 10 crore were seized during the raids. A source said that the documents recovered by them have confirmed that Kudrat Deep Singh was running two firms and Bhupinder was joint director in them.

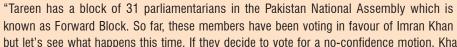
'CAN GRAVER CHARGES BE IMPOSED', SC SEEKS SIDHU'S RESPONSE IN ROAD RAGE INCIDENT



The Supreme Court on Friday sought response from Punjab Congress chief Navjot Singh Sidhu on a plea, filed by the kin of deceased, that he should be punished for an offence of more serious category than causing hurt, therefore leading to enhancement of punishment. Sidhu has urged the apex court not to punish him with a jail term in a 1988 road rage case in which he was let off with a meagre fine of Rs 1,000. Senior advocate Siddharth Luthra, representing Gurnam Singh's family, submitted that he has moved an application seeking enlargement of the scope of the notice issued. Luthra contended before a bench comprising Justices A.M. Khanwilkar and S.K. Kaul that a blow was delivered on the victim, and the death due to cardiac arrest is not correct. The bench asked, "You are asking for a review, then you are also asking for a whole review of the judgment...you want us to reappreciate the evidence?" The bench told Luthra that he cannot keep expanding the scope of the notice. Senior advocate P. Chidambaram, representing Sidhu, contended that to review the judgement after 4 years in respect of the incident, which took place in 1988 especially if the notice has been restricted, and the scope of review should not be enlarged. Citing the apex court judgment, Chidambaram added that the court came to a conclusion after analysing the evidence, and it is not a case where his client has caused the death of the deceased.

AS IMRAN KHAN'S FATE HANGS IN BALANCE ALL EYES ARE ON PAKISTAN'S KINGMAKER BILLIONAIRE JAHANGIR TAREEN

NEW DELHI: Jahangir Khan Tareen, one of the richest persons in Pakistan, is in the news these days as it is believed that he will decide the future of Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan. The latest news about Imran Khan's "estranged" friend, Tareen is that he flew to London in his own aircraft on Saturday for a "health" check-up but insiders say he has gone to meet former prime minister Nawaz Sharif to discuss the opposition's no-confidence move against Imran Khan and his government.



but let's see what happens this time. If they decide to vote for a no-confidence motion, Khan is gone," says an insider. But who is Jehangir Tareen? Is he really a king maker?

According to media reports, Jahangir Tareen is among the top three richest politicians of Pakistan who has assets worth 80 billion Pakistani rupees and thousands of acres of agricultural land. He owns some of the biggest sugar mills of the country and is thus known as the sugar baron of Pakistan. Apart from this Tareen owns mines and breweries as well. Tehreen has been a member of Pakistan National Assembly thrice between 2002 and 2017. He was also the Minister of Industries in the cabinet of former PM Shakat Aziz before he joined Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) and soon became his closest friend. In an interview with Dawn last year after the "break-up" with Imran Khan, Tahreen "admitted" that he was the second-most powerful person in Imran Khan's party and his government. In fact after the 2018 elections, It was Tahreen who got the required numbers of support from independents and allies to support Imran Khan to form his government and all was done with the approval of the powerful Pakistani military establishment. Jahangir Tahreen's closeness to the establishment is a well known fact in Pakistan. On their nudge he played an important role in getting numbers whenever Khan's government faced a crisis. "Tareen's role in the wooing of independent MNAs and MPAs is hardly a secret. Until last year, Tahreen was the main problem-solver, firefighter and political dealmaker. In fact, he was long believed to have been the party's kingmaker and bankroller," says the report published in Dawn. In 2020, when Tareen's name came up in the money laundering scam and sugar crisis, the relation between Khan and Tareen turned sour, the billionaire blamed close advisors of Khan for this. "An inquiry against me, relating to the sugar crisis, has been going on for the last 12 months. I am asking for justice from PTI. I am a friend, but I am being pushed towards enmity," he told the media.

AKHILESH FINALLY SAYS CRIME CONTROL HIS TOP AGENDA

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav has finally sent out a strong and clear message that crime control will be the top agenda for the Samajwadi Party if it forms the government after the Assembly elections. Akhilesh said that those who want to encourage crime and criminals should not vote for the SP.

Talking of 'poor law and order under the BJP regime', Akhilesh said those who don't want to follow the law or encourage crime and criminals, should not vote for Samajwadi Party."

"If anyone here does not want to follow law or encourage crime and criminals, those who want to break the law or want to go beyond the law, please do not vote for us," he said.

Akhilesh, while addressing election meetings on Sunday evening in Deoria, Kushinagar and Gorakhpur, said no one will be allowed to do anything that is insulting or disrespectful for any fellow human being. Attacking the BJP leadership over its claims of addressing the concerns of the backward castes and deprived sections of the society, Akhilesh said if the BJP was concerned about OBCs and Dalits then the Centre should not have stonewalled the demand for caste census. "They don't want to get the caste census done because the reality will come to the fore as to which section of the population they are catering more," he said giving an example of the Centre making provision to allow lateral entry in Civil Services cadres.

"Through this lateral entry they have appointed BJP workers as IAS officers but none belonging to the sections that we or you belong to or any of the minorities," he said.

"Now they are planning to bring a similar system to appoint party cadres as PCS officers in Uttar Pradesh," he said.

Have Big Powers pushed Ukraine to Disaster?

MAJOR GENERAL S.B. ASTHANA

Decoding Strategic and Military Action of Russia so far

The contours and logic of Russian plans were evident from its posturing over months, President Putin's speeches to the nation and his demands made to Ukraine. The political aim of Russia seems to be to target Ukraine's leadershipto give up demand of NATO membership, or else force a regime change, replacingit with a pro-Russian government not propagating NATO membership/agenda.

Strategically, the centre of gravity for the Russian offensive is the minds of Ukraine's leadership and military to surrender to Russia with minimum militaryactions. This strategic goal cannot be realised without surrounding Kyiv, which is the key strategic objective; as a result, operations to encircle Kyiv and capture adjacent airbases have been launched. After Russia recognised the independence of the Donetsk People's Republic and the Luhansk People's Republic, the liberation of the Donbas region was a foregone conclusion.

The military aim is to demilitarise Ukrainian military to ensure that Ukraine cannot be used as a springboard by NATO to threaten the security of Russia and isolate Kyiv to facilitate regime change without military interference. To shape the battlefield, Russian military postured three sides of Ukraine with massive combat superiority, used forces in Belarus to invade from the North to reach Kyiv via shortest route, used its Black Sea fleet and Crimea to blockade Ukraine from South, and forces in Donbas region to invade from east and some forces from northeast to expedite consolidation.

The military operations were preceded by cyber-attacks and information warfare. Military operations were launched in a wellplanned and professional manner under the banner of 'Special Operations,' beginning with air and missile strikes to neutralise air defence capability, air assets to achieve air superiority, and pulverise military targets, claiming to have destroyed over 70 military targets and installations, including 11 airfields in Ukraine, before ground elements marched in, adding conventional superiority to upgrade its hybrid war.

NATO's Response and Future Options

President Biden's address on February 22, and statements of other western leaders, clearly indicated that NATO is not going to have boots on ground in Ukraine and will depend on financial sanctions and material support to Ukraine as response to Russian aggression.

This weakness emboldened Russia to seize opportunity for offensive into Ukraine with minimum military cost, so far. NATO is still unclear about further responses, as the Russian offensive is already underway; hence time for any possible military action by NATO is already over. NATO, therefore is only salvaging its own security by strengthening NATO countries bordering Ukraine/Russia to prevent any possibility of Russian adventurism into any of the NATO countries, leaving Ukraine to its fate, as it's not a member of NATO as yet.

Likely Russian Action Ahead







TO SHAPE THE BATTLEFIELD, RUSSIAN MILITARY POSTURED THREE SIDES OF UKRAINE WITH MASSIVE COMBAT SUPERIORITY, USED FORCES IN BELARUS TO INVADE FROM THE NORTH TO REACH KYIV VIA SHORTEST ROUTE, USED ITS BLACK SEA FLEET AND CRIMEA TO BLOCKADE UKRAINE FROM SOUTH, AND FORCES IN DONBAS REGION TO INVADE FROM EAST AND SOME FORCES FROM NORTHEAST TO EXPEDITE CONSOLIDATION.

THE MILITARY OPERATIONS WERE PRECEDED BY CYBER-ATTACKS AND INFORMATION WARFARE. MILITARY OPERATIONS WERE LAUNCHED IN A WELL-PLANNED AND PROFESSIONAL MANNER UNDER THE BANNER OF 'SPECIAL OPERATIONS,' BEGINNING WITH AIR AND MISSILE STRIKES TO NEUTRALISE AIR DEFENCE CAPABILITY, AIR ASSETS TO ACHIEVE AIR SUPERIORITY. AND PULVERISE MILITARY TARGETS. CLAIMING TO HAVE DESTROYED OVER 70 MILITARY TARGETS AND INSTALLATIONS, INCLUDING 11 AIRFIELDS IN UKRAINE, BEFORE GROUND ELEMENTS MARCHED IN, ADDING CONVENTIONAL SUPERIORITY TO UPGRADE ITS HYBRID WAR.

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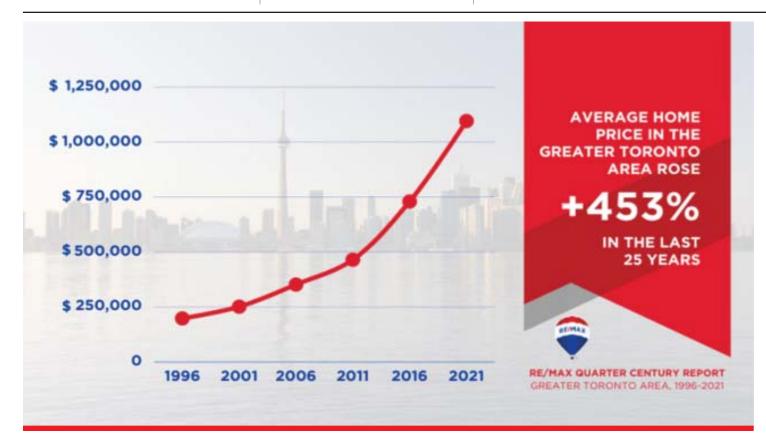
Russia will try to achieve its strategic objectives as fast as possible and move out of Ukraine to minimise its cost. It will avoid fighting in built up areas, as it will prolong the invasion and may not remain as an occupational force to avoid backlash from a segment of hostile population turning into insurgency against it.

It will therefore try to maximise pressure on Ukraine by all instruments of power to submit to regime change or force it at the earliest and deescalate. Notwithstanding what Russia wants, the resolve of Ukrainian military and leadership will determine the timeframe and escalation dynamics and the support of NATO to refuel resistance will determine the staving power. Russia is unlikely to make the mistake of annexing Ukraine, as it does not make sense in strategic cost benefit analysis. To build pressure for Ukraine to surrender, Russia may also take over some key strategic installations, till its strategic aims are achieved. It's a harsh punishment for Ukraine's uncomfortable geopolitical location and leadership's desire to join NATO, which has thrust it into the centre of a "Big Power Contestation" that is going to be a tragedy for its people, in all contingencies.

The first priority for India should be to evacuate its own students and diaspora.lt can push for diplomatic solutions and peaceful resolutions, as well as measures to reduce temperatures, but it should avoid taking sides because it has good connections with all of the opposing powers. While each country's sovereignty must be maintained, both sides have rejected it when it has served their interests, as in the Iraq war, Crimea and Afghanistan. India needs to factor the weak western response to Ukraine crisis in its strategic calculations, as it can embolden other authoritative powers like China to take similar actions in Indo-Pacific region.

Disclaimer: Major General S.B. Asthana is a strategic and security analyst, a veteran Infantry General. He is the Chief Instructor, United Service Institution of India. The opinions expressed within this article are the personal ideas of the author. The facts and conclusions appearing in the article do not reflect the views of Y Media and Midweek Newspaper, and Y Media does not assume





RE/MAX CANADA REPORT FINDS TORONTO AREA HOME PRICES UP 453% SINCE 1996

CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

Between 1996 and 2021, more than two million homes sold in the GTA, representing a dollar volume in excess of \$1.1 trillion. Average price has soared over the 25-year period, rising close to 453 per cent, from \$198,150 in 1996 to \$1,095,475 in 2021, at a compound annual growth rate of 7.08 per cent. Statistics Canada reports the Toronto CMA reached 6,202,225 in 2021, an increase of 45 per cent over the 1996 Census figure of 4,263,759.

"Performance of the Greater Toronto housing market over the 25-year period has been nothing short of remarkable," says Christopher Alexander, President, RE/MAX Canada. This is especially so, when considering this time period was characterized by the tech meltdown of 2000, 9/11, SARS, the Great Recession of 2008, Ontario's Fair Housing Plan and the on-going pandemic. "Many have raised concerns about the future of housing, given population growth and land scarcity within the Greater Toronto Area."

The RE/MAX Canada Quarter Century Market Report analyzed homebuying activity in the nine Toronto Regional Real Estate Board (TRREB) districts that comprise the GTA – Toronto East, Toronto West, Toronto Central, Durham, Halton, Peel and York Regions, and Simcoe and Dufferin Counties – and found land availability, especially in the city's core and bedroom communities, has waned. This, as migration, low interest rates, and affordability continue to play a critical role in the growth of the GTA. Triple-digit increases in sales were noted in Toronto Central, Halton Region, York Region, Simcoe County and Dufferin

County over the past 25 years, while average sale prices reached new heights across the greater Toronto housing market, with percentage increases climbing between 1996 and 2021, from a low of 301 per cent in Toronto Central, to a high of 874 per cent in York Region.

New construction has been a significant factor in the sales gains in Halton, Durham, Peel and York Regions, the latter two of which are approaching build-out. Over the years, the 905 communities offered affordable alternatives to those looking to purchase freehold properties. Starter homes on smaller lots attracted many first-time buyers in locations to the west, north and east of the 416 area code, supported by the new and proposed expansion of GO train service and another 400-series highway servicing the GTA's northeast/west corridor. The movement brought new life into older communities, forever changing the make-up of cities such as Milton, Whitby, Clarington, East Gwillimbury and Innisfil.

"If you build it, they will come, and they sure did," says Alexander. "Bolstered by historically low interest rates, a strong economy, grit and determination, buyers both young and old have moved to the city's bedroom communities." With limited land to build on in the 905, emphasis is now shifting from freehold to high-density homes: condominiums in land-locked Mississauga now represent one in every two sales, while new condominium developments are planned and proposed for Brampton, York Region (transit-oriented communities) and Pickering's City Centre.

CANADA'S ECONOMY GREW 1.6% IN FOURTH QUARTER & 4.6% IN 2021

The real gross domestic product (GDP) was essentially unchanged in December following six consecutive months of growth. Growth in services-producing industries (+0.1%) was offset by a decline in goods-producing industries (-0.1%), as 14 of 20 industrial sectors increased in December.

Advance information indicates a 0.2% increase in real GDP in January, 2022. Leading the growth were retail, construction, finance and insurance as well as the professional, scientific and technical services sector. Notable decreases were in manufacturing, mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction as well as client-facing services industries and air transportation services due to continued public health restrictions put in place in late 2021. Owing to its preliminary nature, this estimate will be updated on March 31 with the release of the official GDP data for January 2022.

Spread of Omicron variant stymies some client-facing industries in December

As the Omicron variant of the COVID-19 virus spread through Canada in December, all levels of government reintroduced some level of restrictions in order to slow down its progress. The weight of the Omicron wave was predominantly felt in client-facing industries. Retail trade declined 2.7% in December, fully offsetting gains observed in the second half of the year. Supply-chain disruptions and the reintroduction of restrictions by various levels of government right before the busiest, last-minute holiday-shopping period, contributed to the largest monthly contraction since May 2021. Overall, 11 of 12 subsectors contracted with only motor vehicle and parts dealers expanding (+0.6%), led by higher activity at automotive parts, accessories and tire stores. Excluding motor vehicle and parts dealers, retail trade would have decreased 3.3%. Reduced activity at stores typically associated with holiday shopping accounted for most of the decline in December. Clothing and clothing accessories stores decreased 8.9%, while general merchandise stores were down 1.8%. Food and beverage stores declined 1.0% as scaled-back holiday gatherings partly reduced the demand for goods sold by supermarkets and beer, wine and liquor stores.

SURESH RATNANI, 54, OF BRAMPTON CHARGED WITH CRIMINAL HARASSMENT & FAILING TO COMPLY WITH UNDERTAKING

Investigators from the 22 Division Crimi Investigation Bureau are looking for assistance identifying any witnesses or locating potential vicinvolving a man in an SUV engaging in similar t harassment incidents in the City of Brampton.

On Monday, February 14, 2022, at approximately 7:35 a.m., a 15-year-old female was walking to her school bus pick up area near Chinguacousy Road and Mayfield Road when a man in a vehicle approached her.

It is alleged that the man asked the female if she wanted to get into his SUV for a ride. The vehicle involved was a 2013 navy blue Land Rover Freelander SUV. Investigators identified and arrested the suspect, 54year-old Suresh Ratnani of Brampton. He has been charged with Criminal Harassment and Failing to Comply with an Undertaking.

He was held for a bail hearing and appeared before the Ontario Court of Justice on Saturday, February 26, 2022.

Investigators believe there may be additional victims that may not have yet contacted police and are encouraging them to contact investigators at 905-453-2121, extension 2233. It is important to note that the location of this particular incident may or may not be the only area this has occurred in.

Anyone with information on this incident, or anyone who may have witnessed or has video footage, is also asked to contact the 22 Division Criminal Investigation Bureau at 905-453-2121, extension 2233. Anonymous information may also be submitted by calling Peel Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477), by visiting peelcrimestoppers.ca.

Learn how to recognize and manage potential high risk environments and behaviours and what you can do in those situations to greatly improve your safety and that of your friends and family:

- * Always be aware of your surroundings
- * Always stick to main routes and consider using a buddy system, especially in the evening
- * Always be cautious and create distance if a stranger approaches and/ or asks you for something
- * Ensure youth know their parent/guardian contact information
- * Ensure youth know how to contact and tell a trusted adult if they feel unsafe
- * Know when and how to dial 9-1-1 on your electronic device when needed
- * It is important to prepare yourself and youths in your household to be aware of various personal safety scenarios that may present themselves. Learn more at PeelPolice.ca.

KAVITA CHODHARY, 24, OF BRAMPTON **KILLED IN MISSISSAUGA HIT-AND-RUN**

CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

The vehicle and occupant fled the scene, and did not stop to render any assistance to the victim. The victim was transported to hospital where she later died as a result of the injuries she sustained. Officers have since located the vehicle involved, and have identified the driver of the vehicle. A warrant for their arrest is currently being sought for the offence of Fail to Remain - Cause Death. The driver is encouraged to contact legal counsel and arrange to speak with investigators.

Anyone with information on this incident is asked to contact investigators at the Major Collision Bureau at 905-453-2121, extension 3710. Anonymous information may also be submitted by calling Peel Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477) or visiting peelcrimestoppers.ca.

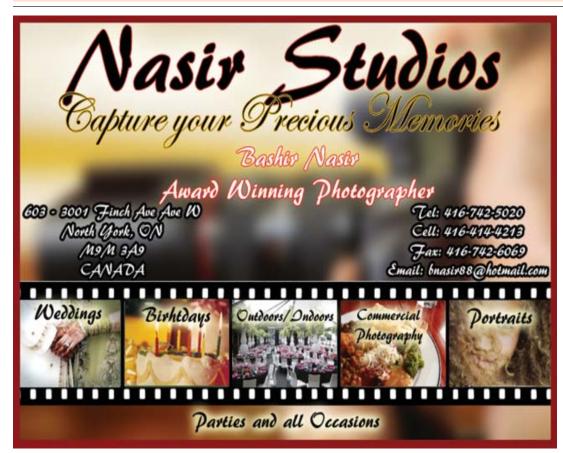
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MidWeek

OTTAWA MAN, 50, CHARGED IN RIDEAU CENTRE MALL ROBBERY

The Ottawa Police Service Robbery Unit has charged one male in connection to a robbery investigation that occurred earlier today within the shopping corridor of the 100 block of Rideau St. Ottawa.

Carlos SMYTHE, 50 years of age of Ottawa has been charged with Robbery and several firearms-related offences in relation to this incident. On February 22nd, 2022 at approximately 12:15 pm, the Ottawa Police Service received several calls for an armed man. The suspect entered a commercial business inside the shopping mall where he committed a theft and when confronted by Loss Prevention officers, he brandished a firearm. The suspect fled on foot and was arrested a short distance away. There were no reported injuries. The Ottawa Police Service would like to reassure the public that there are no further safety concerns related to this incident.



Anyone with information regarding this investigation is asked to contact the Robbery Unit at (613) 236-1222 extension 5116 or call Crime Stoppers toll-free at 1-800-222-8477 or at www.crimestoppers.ca.

FIRE AT MISSISSAUGA LIBERAL MP PETER FONSECA'S OFFICE DEEMED SUSPICIOUS: POLICE

Officers from the 12 Division Criminal Investigation Bureau seek assistance from the public in relation to an arson investigation at a federal constituency office in Mississauga.

On Tuesday, February 22, 2022, at 4:19 a.m, emergency services received reports of a fire at a federal constituency office located within a commercial plaza in the area of Burnhamthorpe Road East and Tomken Road in the City of Mississauga.

The fire department attended and extinguished the fire. In total, three units were damaged, and no injuries were suffered to anyone. This incident is deemed suspicious and believed to be targeted. Investigators are working with the Fire Marshal's office to determine the fire's cause and circumstances.

Investigators are appealing to anyone with any information to contact the Criminal Investigation Bureau at 905-453-2121, ext. 1233. Information may also be provided anonymously by calling Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477) or by visiting peelcrimestoppers.ca.

THE BEST YET FROM SHAN FOODS

In this world of incessant content marketing and information overload, one rarely comes across a piece of work, especially an ad, that instantly warms your heart. And that's exactly what the latest Shan Foods film does.

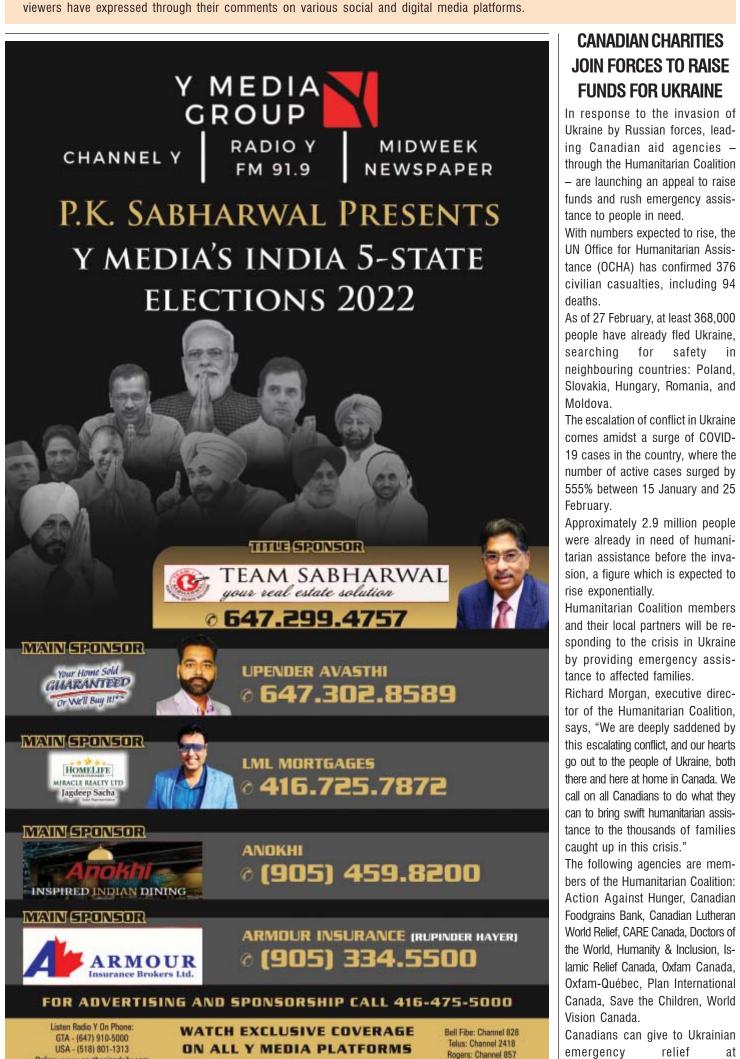
This is a heart-warming story of a little girl, Meera, who's been adopted in an entirely different culture. She finds herself excited yet extremely lost in this new world. Her adoptive parents do their best to make her feel at home. Meera still feels alienated.

But the parent's persistence pays and they do something that sparks the beginning of a new friendship. That little lost girl finally feels at home. What struck us is how a delicate and sensitive subject like this has been given it's due and woven into a wonderful

Online: www.southasiandaily.com Download App: Y Media TV App



script. The film unravels many layers of emotions this little girl and her parents are going through. The simplicity of the script, the subtle performances of the actors, the restraint in the direction and an outstanding track are some of the ingredients that make this film extremely relatable. The fact that it has touched the hearts of millions is very evident from the overwhelming and immense love that



www.southasiandaily.com

Ignite TV: Channel 707

WET'N'WILD TORONTO IS HIRING FOR THE 2022 SEASON



Located on Finch Avenue West just off Highway 427 in Brampton, Ont., Wet'n'Wild Toronto is a world-class waterpark destination. It boasts a 45-acre park that features an assortment of tube and body water slides, Bear Footin' Bay kids' play structure, the Big Surf wave pool and the Muskoka Soakah lazy river.

Jobs available for the 2022 season include:

Lifeguards and slide dispatchers.

Admissions and quest service.

Food Service.

Park Services. Maintenance.

Security and access control.

For a full list of the positions available, please visit wetnwildtoronto.com.

Candidates interested in joining the team of lifeguards can get trained and work up to get the required certifications. Wet'n'Wild Toronto will host a Bronze crash course from March 14th to 18th. Please visit wetnwildtoronto.com to register. Training is free for those who work the entire summer season at Wet'n'Wild Toronto.

Rates of pay start at \$15 per hour and are variable depending on the job, role and responsibility.

Team member benefits include free and unlimited use of the water park during off hours, free tickets for friends and family, access to exclusive employee events and activities throughout the season, discounts to partnering Ontario attractions, employee discounts on food, merchandise and more.

Wet'nWild Toronto is committed to a workplace culture where diversity, equity and inclusion are embraced and promoted. The park works closely with provincial and regional health officials to respect all relevant COVID-19 safety protocols.

About Wet'n'Wild Toronto

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For more than 30 years, the Wet'n'Wild brand has been known for the biggest and the best water rides in the industry, and its only Canadian park is no exception. Wet'n'Wild Toronto is an awesome tropical adventure featuring 45 acres of water slides, rides and attractions, including the Krazy Kanuck family raft ride, a mega treehouse play structure for the kids, the Wet'n'Wild Junior mini water park for the little ones, a bowl slide, free fall speed slides and the Klondike Express mat slide racer. Parents and kids will have a blast experiencing the biggest waterpark in the Greater Toronto Area!

For more information, please visit wetnwildtoronto.com.

About Premier Parks, LLC

Led by Kieran Burke, the former chairman and CEO of Six Flags Entertainment Corporation, Premier Parks currently operates 11 theme and waterparks throughout the United States and Canada. They include: Wild Waves Theme & Waterpark (Seattle, WA); Magic Springs Theme & Waterpark (Hot Springs, AK); Elitch Gardens (Denver, CO); Nashville Shores Waterpark (Nashville, TN); Ocean Breeze Waterpark (Virginia Beach); Rapids (West Palm Beach, FL); Wet'n'Wild Hawaii; Wet'n'Wild (Toronto, Ontario); City Museum (St. Louis, MO); Island H20 Live (Orlando, FL) and Pacific Park (Santa Monica, CA).

UPDATE FROM WILLIAM OSLER HEALTH SYSTEM



Over the past two years, William Osler Health System's (Osler) dedicated staff, physicians, volunteers, and you, members of our community, have come together in incredible ways to ensure patients continue to have access to safe, compassionate care.

Throughout the pandemic, we have persevered together - rising to every challenge with dedication and resilience. We will always be profoundly grateful for the tireless commitment of our health care teams, and the unwavering support of our community, our donors, and our health system and government partners. Our shared resilience has united us and made us stronger as a local health system and as a community. You have truly helped us to be Osler Strong. As we move forward in the face of change, Osler remains deeply committed to focusing on the future - one that's rooted in our Vision to provide patient-inspired health care without boundaries to those we serve. This includes recovering from the pandemic and resuming the non-urgent and non-emergent surgeries and procedures that many of you have been patiently waiting for. We know that our recovery will take time, but we are here when you need us, to continue to deliver exceptional care to you and your loved ones. Looking ahead, we are inspired by the promise of a bright future for health care in our community. We continue to work with government partners and to advance plans for the new Peel Memorial Hospital and the proposed comprehensive Cancer Care Centre in Brampton, while also focusing on the continued refurbishment and renewal of Etobicoke General Hospital. We look forward to more engagement with the community to support the planning of these important projects. On March 21, we will be re-opening the Urgent Care Centre at Peel Memorial and continuing our plans to expand it to 24/7 operations, pushing forward with services that mean so much to our community. We couldn't do what we do without the support of our Osler Foundation and without you, our community. Thank you for your continued support and uplifting messages - they are always received with gratitude and smiles by our teams. Our commitment to our community has been and always will be to ensure you have access to exemplary care, delivered in keeping with Osler's Values of Respect, Excellence, Service, Compassion, Innovation and Collaboration.



WITH DEBT OF RS 2.82L CR, INCOMING **GOVT FACES DAUNTING TASK IN PUNJAB**

CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

As per the latest findings of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India, the state's financial crisis is set to worsen with the debt likely to reach Rs 3.73 lakh crore by 2024-25.

Government officials told IANS that the state's debt has increased by Rs 1 lakh crore in the past five years under the current Congress government now led by Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi, largely owing to populism. When this government took over the reins in 2017, it got the legacy of a Rs 2.08 lakh crore debt left by the decade-long rule of the Shiromani Akali Dal-BJP in the state.

An official familiar with the matter told IANS that political compulsions and populist announcements have been taking a huge toll on the state's finances and this may surge the debt beyond the projected Rs 2.82 lakh crore. Finance Minister Manpreet Badal in his last budget speech for this fiscal projected the total revenue receipts at Rs 95,257 crore. However, the state has never managed to achieve more than 80 per cent of its revenue target.

Also approximately 40 per cent of the state's total estimated revenue receipts of Rs 95,257 crore for the current fiscal would go into debt servicing. As per the budget estimates of an outlay of Rs 168,015 crore for 2021-22, the outstanding debt is likely to be Rs 273,703 crore in 2021-22, which is 45 per cent of the GSDP.

The total outstanding debt of the state as on March 31 is projected at Rs 252,880 crore, which is 42 per cent of the GSDP for 2020-21 and the outstanding debt is likely to be Rs 273,703 crore in 2021-22, which is 45 per cent of the GSDP. Besides a major component of earnings and market borrowings go into debt servicing, the revenue goes into unproductive expenditure like disbursement of salaries, pensions and power subsidies for the farmers. Also, say officials, the Covid-19 pandemic has caused a significant deterioration in public finances, adding to pre-existing strains. Also businesses in the state are reeling because of a sluggish economy and poor liquidity. As per the recent memorandum by the state to the Centre for extending the Goods and Services Tax (GST) compensation, Punjab says being an agrarian economy it was deriving a significant portion of its revenue from the agriculture sector in the pre-GST era by imposition of tax on agricultural produce (mainly foodgrains).

This was realized in the form of the levy of Purchase Tax on agricultural produce at the rate of five per cent of the minimum support price (MSP) of produce collected from the purchaser of such produce.

In addition, an Infrastructure Development Fee at the rate of three per cent was also levied on purchase of foodgrains. The state collected Rs 3,094 crore in 2015-16 from the Purchase Tax and Infrastructure Development Fee alone, i.e. 16.55 per cent of its total tax revenue of Rs 18,692.89 crore during that year. With the implementation of GST, both the Purchase Tax and Infrastructure Development Fee on foodgrains have been subsumed in the GST. Since the GST is a destination-based tax and agricultural produce is largely exempted under it, Punjab has experienced a permanent loss of a significant portion of the state revenue.

However, the saving grace for the government is the first half of this fiscal with a hefty increase in revenue from the pre-Covid levels.

The GST revenue comprising state goods and services tax (SGST) and integrated goods and services tax from April to September of 2021 was Rs 7,851 crore, which is 67.55 per cent more than in the corresponding period of 2020, and 54 per cent more than in the pre-pandemic year of 2019-20. But the area of concern for authorities now is ending GST compensation from the Centre on June 30, unless it is extended by the GST Council, leaving the state to fend for itself thereafter.

A report by the Group of Experts (GOE) led by noted economist Montek Singh Ahluwalia, set up by Chief Minister Amarinder Singh to revive Punjab's economy, recommended measures like reducing average cost of government debt, banning recruitment in police and bringing pay scales of government employees on par, among others.

The panel in its report to aid medium and long-term revival strategy was categorically clear that unless measures are taken to correct the fiscal situation over the next few years, it will not be possible to achieve the objective of restoring Punjab to its pre-eminent position.

The experts suggested rationalisation of power subsidies given to farmers that is 1.9 per cent of its GDP and grew from Rs 5,670 crore in 2019-20 to Rs 7,180 in 2020-21.

Ahead of the polling for the Assembly elections on February 20, the opposition Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) had accused the previous Akali-BJP and current Congress government of plunging Punjab into debt.

"With the population of 3 crore, today every individual in Punjab has a debt of Rs 1 lakh. Every child who is born in Punjab already has a debt of 1 lakh rupees on them right after their birth," AAP leader Raghav Chadha told the media. SAD President Sukhbir Badal, the man known for micro poll management for his now own controlled century old party with the focus on farmers' interests and justice for them, said Punjab and Punjabis are in a crisis. "The Congress government did nothing for five years. It reneged on each and every promise made to the people be it complete farm loan waiver, Rs 2,500 per month unemployment allowance, jobs for each household and increase in social welfare benefits.

"It also stalled all development work but simultaneously presided over a sand and liquor mafia and looted the state exchequer. It was due to this that the state's debt has increased by Rs 1 lakh crore in the last five years alone." All the parties were banking on freebies to woo the electorate. The AAP has promised Rs 1,000 for all women, while the Congress has assured Rs 1,100 per month for needy women. The SAD-BSP alliance has promised Rs 2,000 per month to all women heads of BPL families.

Two-time Chief Minister and former Congress leader Amarinder Singh in his election campaignin stressed Punjab "needs the Centre's support for its economic revival, which his party, the Punjab Lok Congress, in alliance with the BJP would help achieve."

The state has no money for development, which will remain a far cry under the false promises of parties like the Congress, AAP and SAD, who were not willing to work in coordination with the Centre, he stressed.

INDIA ENGAGES CONSTRUCTIVELY FOR GLOBAL ACTION ON PLASTIC POLLUTION

NAIROBI, (IANS) India has engaged constructively with all UN member states for global action on plastic pollution. The resolution agreed at the undergoing resumed fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-5.2) respects national circumstances and capabilities and provides for immediate collective voluntary action.

Delivering the national statement on Tuesday at the opening plenary of the UNEA-5.2 in this Kenyan city, Leena Nandan, Secretary with the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, said India is committed to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Paris Agreement, based on the principles of equity, common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities in the light of national circumstances.

"India's climate vision is also integrally linked to India's vision of development aimed at poverty eradication and well-being. At COP26 (in Glasgow), as part of our commitments towards global climate action, our Prime Minister announced enhanced climate goals."

"The goals are installation of 500 GW non-fossil energy capacity by 2030, reduction in emissions intensity of GDP by 45 per cent over 2005 levels, 50 per cent electric installed capacity coming from non-fossil sources by 2030, one billion tonnes reduction in carbon emissions till 2030 and India to become net-zero by 2070," she said.

Further, making the planet pollution free must be the responsibility of all member states, driven nationally.

"India has been spearheading many initiatives which include the National Hydrogen Energy Mission, National Clean Air Program, restoring 26 million hectares of degraded and deforested land, development of urban forests, and conservation of species like lions and dolphins. "At the global level, India is spearheading the Leadership Group for Industry Transition (LeadIT), One Sun One World One Grid (OSOWOG), International Solar Alliance (ISA) and Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) and Infrastructure for Resilient Island States (IRIS)."

Sustainable development is core to India's development strategy, Nandan stressed.

Proactive steps have been taken to mainstream the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into policies, schemes and programmes of the government. "Our sustainable development policies cover many sectors such as renewable energy, sustainable mobility, sustainable habitats and many others."

The progress towards sustainable development goals can be accelerated through strong global partnerships in accordance with agreements under multilateral environmental conventions. "India reiterates its commitment to sustainable development, and supports global efforts in this direction."

On plastic pollution, she said India is committed to address plastic pollution, including marine plastic pollution to reduce the adverse impact on terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems and human well being.

"India had piloted a resolution on addressing single-use plastic product pollution in the fourth United Nations Environment Assembly held in 2019, bringing global focus on the issue.

"Under the leadership of the Prime Minister of India resolute steps have been taken. The government has notified the Guidelines on Extended Producers Responsibility on plastic packaging. Also, the government has put in place a ban on identified single-use plastic items, which have low utility and high littering potential."

Hosted by the UN Environment Programme, the UNEA brings together representatives of the 193 member states of the UN, businesses, civil society and other stakeholders to agree on policies to address the world's most pressing environmental challenges.

The overall theme for UNEA-5 is "Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals". This highlights the pivotal role nature plays in lives and in social, economic and environmental sustainable development.

MILLENNIALS HAVE MORE FAITH IN INDIAN **COVID VAX THAN GEN Z: REPORT**



About 43 per cent millennials have increased faith in Covid vaccines developed in India, more than Gen Z (30 per cent), according to a report. Millennials are people born between 1977 and 1995, while Gen Z are those born between 1996 and 2015.

The report also showed that 88 per cent of Millennials in India agreed with the role of Covid vaccine than Gen Z (81 per cent) and others. In general, 85 per cent people considered Covid vaccines to be safe and effective, and a majority considered Indian vaccines safer than those developed in other countries (67 per cent).

Gen Z (below 25 years) and Millennials (26-41 years) also mentioned the World Health Organisation as their most trusted source of information about vaccines.

The report is based on a survey by HEAL Foundation in collaboration with Saizen Global Insights & Consulting.

The survey included 1,106 respondents across nine metro cities of India. More than 90 per cent believe in vaccines and understand/ appreciate the role of vaccines in the fight against Covid-19.

About 80 per cent are also optimistic about life getting back to normal in the next 2-5 years from Covid impacts. Unvaccinated people showed higher concerns, while females were also found somewhat more worried or less sure about vaccine safety and efficacy than males. Side effects are a top concern across generations. Boomers (58-76) have somewhat low belief in vaccine efficacy and its concern.

BJP TO THROW ALL MIGHT FOR LAST PHASE OF UP POLLS

CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

Union minister and BJP's election in-charge for Uttar Pradesh Dharmendra Pradhan, national general secretary Tarun Chugh have already reached Varanasi. National general secretary C.T. Ravi is also expected to reach

"Several union ministers like Uttar Pradesh election co-incharge Anurag Thakur, senior party leaders including national office bearers will be in Varanasi for the last phase of campaigning. There will be a major campaign blitz with Varanasi at the epicentre and all BJP top guns will be part of it," a Uttar Pradesh BJP insider said.

Apart from central leadership all the top state leadership also hit the ground for the last phase. A Uttar Pradesh BJP functionary said, "Both central and state leadership will cover every nook and corner of 54 assembly constituencies where polling will be held on March 7. We have planned to reach out to each voter in all these constituencies before the end of campaigning on March 5."

NAVEEN SHEKHARAPPA, INDIAN STUDENT, KILLED IN SHELLING IN KHARKIV, UKRAINE

CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

He also said: "We convey our deepest condolences to the family." India's foreign secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla is calling in Ambassadors of Russia and Ukraine to reiterate India's demand for urgent safe passage for the Indian nationals who are still in Kharkiv and cities in other conflict zones.

"Similar action is also being undertaken by our Ambassadors in Russia and Ukraine," Bagchi said.

Russia shelled the Ukrainian city of the second largest city Kharkiy on Tuesday damaging various installations over there.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday spoke to the father of Naveen. Naveen hails from Haveri in Karnataka, and is the first Indian casualty of the deadly face-off between Ukraine and Russia.

According to information, Prime Minister Modi expressed deep condolences while talking to Naveen's father and consoled him.

Naveen was studying in Ukraine for the last 4 years. According to family sources, the tragedy occurred when he went out to have his breakfast. The Indian government is running 'Operation Ganga' to bring back stranded Indians from Ukraine safely. Following instructions from Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Indian Air Force aircraft have also launched a campaign. The Government of India has sent 4 of its ministers to different neighbouring countries of Ukraine to expedite the evacuation process.

CBI TO GRILL ANIL DESHMUKH IN RS 100CR MONEY LAUNDERING CASE

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has got the permission from a Special Court to record the statement of former Maharashtra Home Minister Anil Deshmukh in connection with the Rs 100 crore extortion case involving former top Mumbai cop Param Bir Singh.

The CBI had recently moved a plea before the special court requesting it

to grant them permission to record Deshmukh's statements. The CBI will have to visit Arthur Road Jail to record his statement.

Deshmukh is currently lodged there.

According to the information, the federal probe agency will record his statement for three consecutive days -- March 3, 4 and 5.

The CBI has so far recorded the statement of as many as seven persons in the matter. A source said that the seven persons whose statements were recorded were from police. They were reportedly deployed in the security of Anil Deshmukh. Singh had accused Deshmukh for missing his post. He had alleged that it was Deshmukh who was forcing him to collect Rs 100 crore every month from bars and restaurants in Mumbai. He made these allegations when he was removed from the police commissioner post. Deshmukh had denied all the allegations levelled against him. On April 21, 2021, the CBI had filed an FIR against Deshmukh and had initiated a probe. The raids are in connection with this FIR. The source said that they were scanning the financial transactions of the last three years. The team is also gathering information about the business dealings of Deshmukh. The CBI wants to know about the business associates of Deshmukh. The transactions made between them will be scanned by the team. On November 1, 2021, Deshmukh was placed under arrest by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in connection with Rs 100 crore money laundering case pertaining to the alleged posting and transfer of the officials.



By 2050, number of wildfires globally to rise by 30%: UN Report

more frequent and intense, a new report said on Wednesday, adding that the number of extreme fires globally will rise by up to 14 per cent by 2030, 30 per cent by the end of 2050 and 50 per cent by the end of

The report by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and GRID-Arendal, a non-profit environmental communications centre based in Norway, has called for a radical change in government spending on wildfires and shifting their investments from reaction and response to prevention and preparedness.

The report, 'Spreading like Wildfire: The Rising Threat of Extraordinary Landscape Fires', finds an elevated risk even for the Arctic and other regions previously unaffected by wildfires. The report is released ahead of the resumption of 5th session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-5.2) here starting on February 28 till March 2.

The report was commissioned in support of UN Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (UNREDD), an effort at increasing forests as part of climate mitigation action, and the 'UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration'.

UNEP will be exploring how further investments can be made to reduce fire risks in critical ecosystems around the world.

The publication calls on governments to adopt a new 'Fire Ready Formula', with two-thirds of spending devoted to planning, prevention, preparedness, and recovery, with one third left for response. Currently, direct responses to wildfires typically receive over half of related expenditures, while planning receives less than one per cent. In order to prevent fires, authors call for a combination of data and science-based monitoring systems with indigenous knowledge and for a stronger regional and international cooperation, a release said. "Current government responses to wildfires are often putting money in the wrong place. Those emergency service workers and firefighters

Climate change and land-use change are projected to make wildfires on the frontlines who are risking their lives to fight forest wildfires need to be supported," said UNEP Executive Director, Inger Andersen. "We have to minimize the risk of extreme wildfires by being better prepared — invest more in fire risk reduction, work with local communities, and strengthen global commitment to fight climate change."

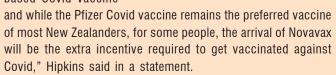
NEW ZEALAND APPROVES 3RD COVID VACCINE NOVAVAX

WELLINGTON, (IANS) New Zealanders will soon be able to access a third type of Novavax vaccine following the government's confirmation. Covid Response Minister Chris

NOVAVAX

Hipkins said on Tuesday that Novavax will soon be available to New Zealanders aged 18 and over, Xinhua news agency reported.

"Novavax is a proteinbased Covid vaccine



New Zealand is already one of the most highly vaccinated countries in the world with 95 per cent of people aged 12 and over being vaccinated, Hipkins said.

The first doses are anticipated to arrive in New Zealand this month, and officials are working with Novavax to confirm the delivery schedule and rollout start date, he said.

US CDC EASES COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS UNDER NEW GUIDELINES



NEW YORK, (IANS) The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has eased mask recommendations for the bulk of the country under a new framework that immediately affects nearly 70 per cent of Americans. "The new guidelines, which took effect from Friday, reflect the administration's view that the US has entered a different, potentially less dangerous phase of the pandemic," reported The Washington Post. The new guidelines suggest that 70 per cent of Americans can now stop wearing masks, and no longer need to keep social distance or avoid crowded indoor spaces. The change follows a relaxation of restrictions by most governors responding to nosediving case counts and public pressure, Xinhua news agency reported.

"The shift reflects the reality that after more than two years of living with the virus, most communities have greater protection against severe disease because of widespread immunity gained from both vaccinations and infections, as well as the increased availability of treatments, testing and higherquality masks," said the report.

Under the new framework, counties are guided to determine the need for restrictions after assessing three factors — new Covid-19-related hospital admissions over the previous week and the percentage of hospital beds occupied by Covid-19 patients, as well as new cases per 100,000 people over the previous week.

Based on these factors, counties can calculate whether the risk to their residents is low, medium or high. According to the CDC, only areas of high risk should require everyone to wear a mask, but unvaccinated people should wear masks even in low-risk areas.

Meanwhile, Americans will still be required to wear face coverings on public transportation, including buses, trains and planes, until a decision is made around March 18 when the order is set to expire. The agency had endorsed universal masking in schools since July regardless of virus levels in the community, but the new guidelines recommend masking in schools only in counties at high risk. "The new guidelines are being released as the coronavirus is in retreat across the country," reported The New York Times. "We're well past the surge," Linsey Marr, an aerosol scientist at Virginia Tech, was quoted as saying. "We don't need to be operating in emergency mode anymore." Most states have eased rules for mask-wearing, and some like New Jersey have announced plans to lift mandates even in schools, and others are poised to end indoor mask mandates in the coming weeks. Under the CDC's previous criteria, 95 per cent of the counties in the US were considered high risk, whereas under the new criteria, fewer than 30 per cent of Americans are living in areas with a high level of risk. "An official recommendation from the CDC may hold some sway in districts that have been more cautious," said the report.



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RAJESH VASHISTH, PRESIDENT OF HARYANVI ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA(HANA)& WIFE KAMLESH VASHISTH CELEBRATED 25TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY









AN EMINENT BUSINESS PERSONALITY AND PRESIDENT OF HARYANVI ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA(HANA) MR RAJESH VASHISTH CELEBRATED THE 25TH WEDDING ANIVERSARY AT NOOR BANQUETS BRAMPTON.THE SILVER 25TH ANNIVERSARY IS A MILESTONE FOR EVERY WEDDING COUPLE. TO EMBARK THIS DAY MR. RAJESH VASHISTH & MRS. KAMLESH VASHISTH ENJOYED THE DANCE AND DINE PARTY WITH THEIR FAMILY & LOVED ONES AND CELEBRATES THEIR SUCCESSFUL AND HAPPY 25 YEARS OF COMPLETION OF HAPPY MARRIED LIFE. TO EMBRACE THIS OCCASSION, PATRICK BROWN(MAYOR OF BRAMPTON) AND GREAT BUSINESS PERSONALITIES ALSO ATTENDED THE EVENT TO SHOWER HIS BLESSINGS TO THE COUPLE.

WINNER OF BEAUTY PAGEANT HOSTED BY HARYANVI ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA WAS KAMLESH VASHISTH







MRS. KAMLESH VASHISTH WAS THE WINNER OF THE BEAUTY PAGEANT HOSTED BY HARYANVI ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA. THE AWARD WAS PRESENTED BY HONOURABLE CONSULATE GENERAL OF INDIA APOORVA SRIVASTAVA.



VCARE ACADEMY HOSTS A NETWORKING EVENT FOR TOP TRAINING INSTITUTES IN THEU.A.E. AT DUBAI EXPO 2020

VCARE ACADEMYIN COLLABORATION WITH COCKTAIL INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITS AT THE CANADA PAVILION DUBAI EXPO 2020

VCARE Academy hosted a high-level presentation and networking gathering in the Canadian Pavilion at the Dubai Expoon February 5, 2022, followed by a networking dinner at the Canada Pavilion Conference Centre to highlight VCARE's Academy rolein revolutionizing the learning experience across the globe. A number of local dignitaries and members from government agencies, universities, and corporates graced the event to put forth a powerful message to the industry and increase the brand awareness in the MENA circuit.

About the company

VCARE Academy is the world's first knowledge body established with a primary focus on the value chain to assist organizations to achieve their strategic supply chain goals by gaining visibility and transforming their supply chains into value chains to step up to emerging business challenges. Cocktail International was the official event organizer for the VCARE Academy Event at Dubai Expo 2020. Cocktail is a full service media and event management company, well-positioned in the North American MICE industry with an unblemished track record of organizing and managing exhibitions, conferences and other special events for government agencies, associations and trade bodies.



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