



INDIAN PM MODI, RUSSIAN PRESIDENT PUTIN DISCUSS REGIONAL, GLOBAL DEVELOPMENTS, INCLUDING AFGHANISTAN SITUATION. | DETAILS ON PAGE 5

## PFIZER SAYS COVID-19 BOOSTER NEUTRALIZES OMICRON VARIANT

Pfizer announced that a third dose of its mRNA vaccine can protect against the Omicron variant of Covid-19. Results from an initial laboratory study demonstrated that serum antibodies induced by the Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine (BNT162b2) neutralises the SARS-CoV-2 Omicron variant after three doses, the company said in a statement. These antibody levels are associated with high efficacy against both the wild-type virus and these variants. A third dose also strongly increases CD8+ T cell levels against multiple spike proteins which are considered to correlate with the protection against severe disease. Compared to the wild-type virus, the vast majority of these remain unchanged in the Omicron spike variant, the company said.

"Sera obtained from vaccines one month after receiving the booster vaccination (third dose of BNT162b2 vaccine) neutralised the Omicron variant to levels that are comparable to those observed for the wild-type SARS-CoV-2 spike protein after two doses," it said. Sera from individuals who received two doses of the current Covid-19 vaccine did exhibit, on average, more than a 25-fold reduction in neutralisation titers against the Omicron variant compared to wild-type, indicating that two doses of BNT162b2 may not be sufficient to protect against infection with the Omicron variant. However, the company believes that vaccinated individuals may still be protected against severe forms of the disease and are closely monitoring real world effectiveness against Omicron, globally. Data from additional studies indicate that a booster with the current Covid-19 vaccine from Pfizer and BioNTech increases the antibody titers by 25-fold.

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## JASKIRAT SINGH SIDHU'S DEPORTATION CASE: LAWYER SAYS 'NOT GETTING ON A PLANE ANY TIME SOON'

Jaskirat Singh Sidhu, the semi-truck driver responsible for the 2018 Humboldt crash, would like to avoid deportation. Still, the decision won't be coming until the new year.

In 2019, Jaskirat Singh Sidhu was sentenced to eight years in prison after pleading guilty to dangerous driving causing death and bodily harm in the April 2018 collision that killed 16 people and injured 13. A legal advisor for Jaskirat Singh Sidhu, 33, had sent a voluminous measure of desk work to the Canada Border Services Agency recently contending why he ought to be permitted to remain in Canada once his sentence has been served. "Since it's been so long since we made our original submissions, they wanted to allow us to update our information with anything new before they made a decision," Calgary immigration lawyer Michael Greene said in an interview with The Canadian Press.

"The psychologist is going to pay (Sidhu) another visit just to see if there's been any changes in his mental health that could affect his report," he said.

"We're confident we submitted a very strong package in the first place but, on the other hand, it's a difficult decision, and we don't want to go back and say, 'Oh, we missed something that we should have had in there.'"



| CONTD. ON PAGE 8

## THE NEW ERA: BOXER SUKHDEEP SINGH CHAKRIA FROM CANADA REMAINS UNDEFEATED, BEATS JUAN CARLOS RAYGOSA FROM MEXICO AT CAA CENTRE, BRAMPTON



FROM EXTREME LEFT TO RIGHT- PARMINDER GILL (ANOKHI), BOXER SUKHDEEP SINGH CHAKRIA, YUDHVIR JASWAL (Y MEDIA GROUP EDITOR AND CEO), BALDEV SIDHU, DEEPAK ANAND (MPP MISSISSAUGA—MALTON & PARLIAMENTARY ASSISTANT TO ONTARIO'S MINISTER OF LABOUR, TRAINING AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT).

## MERCK TO MAKE ITS COVID-19 ANTIVIRAL PILL IN CANADA

KIRKLAND, QC — Merck (NYSE: MRK), known as MSD outside Canada and the United States, announced today it has entered into an agreement with Thermo Fisher Scientific to manufacture molnupiravir, Merck's investigational oral antiviral medicine for the treatment of COVID-19. This agreement is part of Merck's commitment to make this investigational medicine widely available globally, if approved for use by regulatory agencies.

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## GTA HOME SALES UP BY 3.3%, AVERAGE PRICE UP BY 21.7% IN NOV: TRREB

Home sales reached a new record for the month of November, and the average selling price also reached a new all-time high. New listings were down substantially compared to last year for all market segments - further highlighting the inherent supply issue across all home types in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).

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## SONIA SIDHU, LIBERAL MP FROM BRAMPTON SOUTH, RECEIVES 2021 FREDERICK G. BANTING AWARD FROM DIABETES CANADA

Diabetes Canada recognized Sonia Sidhu, Member of Parliament from Brampton South, for her leadership on advancing awareness for diabetes by naming her this year's recipient of the Frederick G. Banting Award. The award is presented to an individual, corporation, or organization that has significantly contributed to either preventing diabetes or improving the quality of life of individuals affected by diabetes in Canada.



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BRAMPTON'S RHAPSODY PARK, LOCATED AT 50 BURLWOOD ROAD, RENAMED AFTER CANADA'S FIRST NRI SIKH MP GURBAX SINGH MALHI.

## PAKISTAN MOVES TO CURB MOB KILLINGS AFTER LYNCHING OF SRI LANKAN NATIONAL

A call was taken at a gathering chaired by Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan on Monday to overview the general safety state of affairs within the nation, in accordance to an announcement issued by the Pakistan PM's Office.



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## INDIA RANKS FOURTH MOST POWERFUL COUNTRY IN ASIA, AS PER THE LOWY INSTITUTE ASIA POWER INDEX 2021

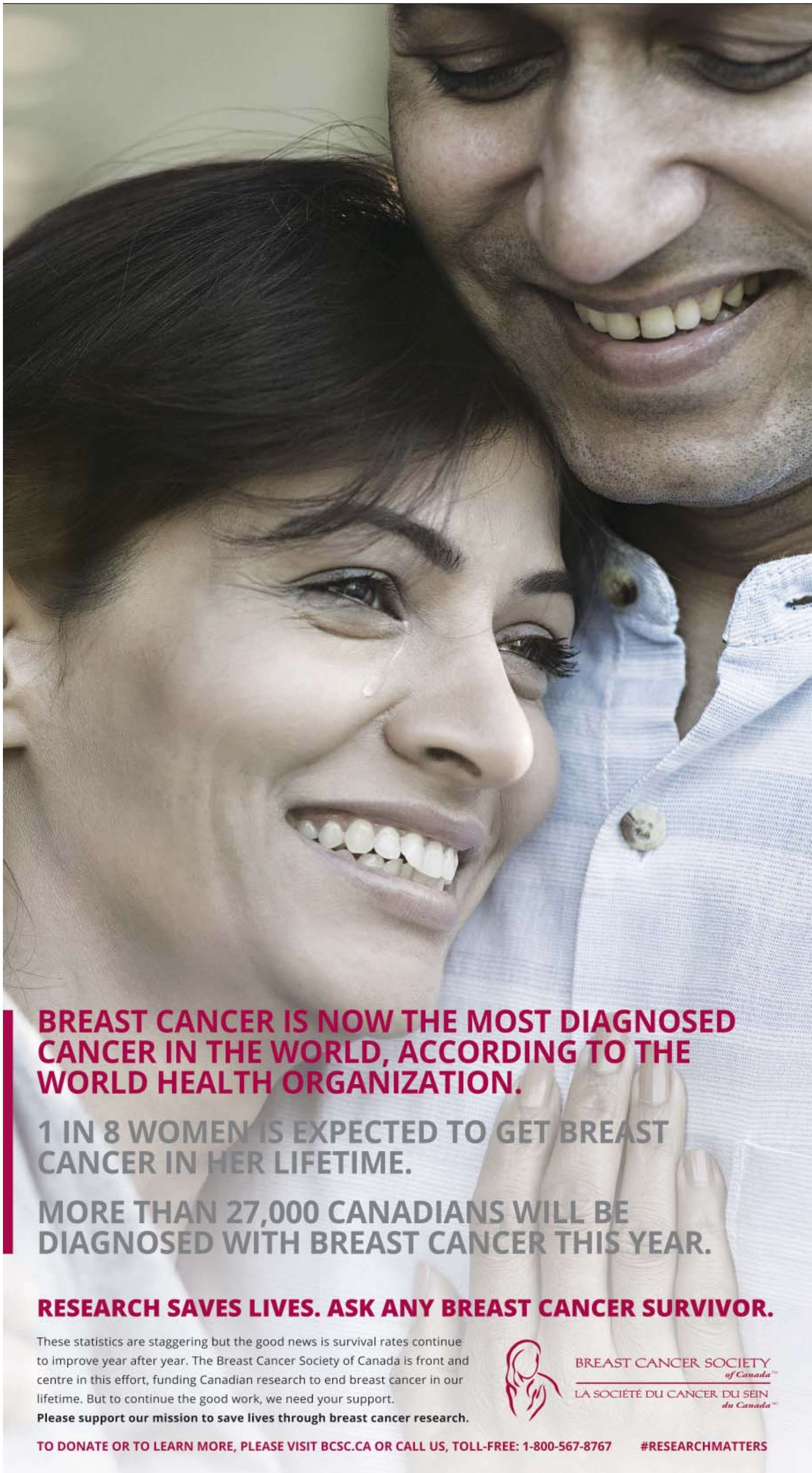
New Delhi, India is the fourth most powerful country in Asia, as per the Lowy Institute Asia Power Index 2021. The annual Asia Power Index -- launched by the Lowy Institute in 2018 -- measures resources and influence to rank the relative power of states in Asia. The project maps out the existing distribution of power as it stands today, and tracks shifts in the balance of power over time.

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## Y MEDIA COVID & VACCINE REPORT

- *Next Pandemic Could Be More Lethal Than Covid-19, Oxford-AstraZeneca Vaccine Creator Says.*
- *Early Indications Suggest Omicron Variant Less Dangerous Than Delta.*
- *Merck To Make Its Covid-19 Antiviral Pill In Canada.*
- *Canadians Who Provide Negative PCR Covid-19 Test From South Africa Within 48 Hours Of Departing Will Be Allowed To Return Home For Next Week.*
- *Travellers Who've Forgotten To Use ArriveCan App Can Now Give Details At The Border.*
- *Peel Region, Hamilton Report Their First Cases Of Covid-19 Omicron Variant.*
- *90.1% Of Ontarians 12+ Have One Dose, 87.3% Have Two Doses.*





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Y MEDIA TEAM REACHED BATTS ATHLETIC WHERE REALTOR OF CENTURY 21 GREEN REALTY INC & REALTOR OF RE/MAX GOLD REALTY INC ORGANIZED BADMINTON TOURNAMENT AT BATTS ATHLETIC



THE TOURNAMENT WON BY DIGIL AND NAVANEETH TEAM.



Shahid Latif (Realtor of Century 21 Green Realty Inc) and Hafeez Ur Rahman (Realtor of Re/Max Gold Realty Inc) organized badminton tournament at batts athletic on December 4, 2021. It was an open badminton tournament for across GTA club level teams. The tournament won by Digil and Navaneeth Team and runner-up

Joglot and Gokul team. The main sponsors of the tournament were Century 21 Green Realty Inc, SR Legal professional Services, Team Hafeez of Re/Max Gold Realty Inc., Zafar Ahmed Mortgage Specialist of BMO, Y Media Inc., and Team Nofeil of C21 Green.

US PRESIDENT BIDEN, RUSSIAN PRESIDENT PUTIN HOLD VIDEO CALL ON BILATERAL TIES, UKRAINIAN CRISIS, IRAN NUCLEAR DEAL

US President Joe Biden and Russian President Vladimir Putin held a video call on a range of bilateral issues as well as the Ukrainian crisis and the Iran nuclear deal.

Biden "voiced the deep concerns" of the US and its European allies about "Russia's escalation of forces surrounding Ukraine and made clear that the US and our Allies would respond with strong economic and other measures in the event of military escalation," the White House said in a readout after the meeting.

Biden "reiterated his support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and called for de-escalation and a return to diplomacy," Xinhua news agency quoted the readout as saying.

"The two presidents tasked their teams to follow up, and the US will do so in close coordination with allies and partners," it said.

The presidents also discussed the US-Russia dialogue on Strategic Stability, a separate dialogue on ransomware, as well as joint work on regional issues such as Iran, said the readout.

The leaders mainly focused on the internal crisis in Ukraine during their second talks in six months, the Kremlin said in a statement.

Putin, using specific examples, explained to Biden "the destructive policy" of the Ukrainian authorities and expressed his "serious concern about



Kiev's provocative actions against Donbass."

Putin stressed that it is the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) that is making dangerous attempts to "conquer Ukrainian territory" and is building up its military potential near the Russian borders.

Putin asked Biden for the guarantee that NATO will not expand in the eastern direction and not deploy offensive weapons near Russia.

To create conditions for mending bilateral ties, Putin offered Biden to lift all the accumulated restrictions on the functioning of Russian and US diplomatic missions. Biden and Putin held their first face-to-face meetings in a summit in Geneva in June and spoke via phone in July.

PAKISTAN OPPOSITION VOWS TO HOLD LONG MARCH ON PAKISTAN DAY

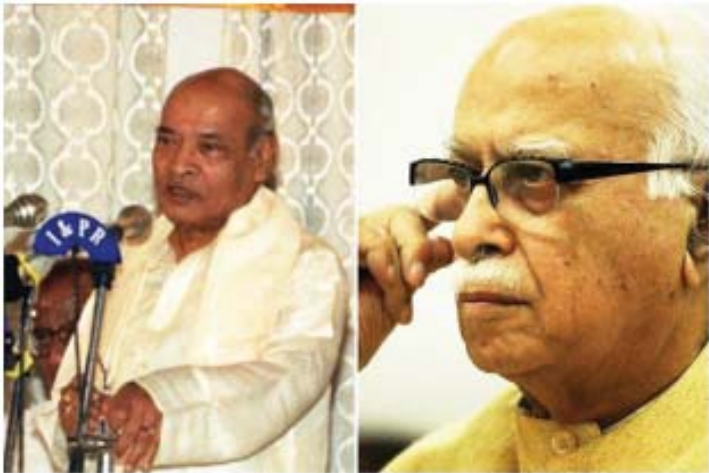
Rejecting the government's criticism of the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) decision to hold a long march on the Pakistan Day, the eight-party opposition alliance has vowed to reach Islamabad on March 23 and warned the authorities against any attempt to use force to prevent the marchers from entering the federal capital, Dawn reported.

"So far, we have decided to reach Islamabad. The duration of the stay will be decided (by the leadership) after reaching the capital," PDM spokesman Hafiz Hamdullah said at a news conference after a meeting of the steering committee of the alliance on Tuesday.

Responding to a question about the venue of their protest march, Hamdullah claimed that millions of people from across the coun-

try would participate in the long march against price hike and turn the twin cities into D-Chowk, the place where the ruling Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) had staged a 126-day sit-in while in the opposition in 2014, the report said. When a reporter pointed out that every year the army took over most parts of the capital ahead of March 23 military parade and, therefore, there could be a possibility of a confrontation, Hamdullah, who is also a senior member of the Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam (JUI-F), said the government would be responsible for any untoward happening. "We will come. Stop us Asad Umer, if you can," he said while referring to a statement by the minister for planning and development that the opposition would receive a bashing if it held a long march, the report added.

NARASIMHA RAO, ADVANI, RAJIV GANDHI SHARE BLAME FOR BABRI DEMOLITION: C-VOTER SURVEY



**NEW DELHI, (IANS):** Blame seems to be equally divided between the top leadership of the Congress and the BJP over the demolition of the Babri Masjid on December 6, 1992, whose 30th anniversary begins on Monday, as per an IANS-CVoter snap poll.

This was revealed by a nationwide poll conducted with a sample size of 1942 using random sampling on December 5, 2021. Respondents were given the option to single out one among the three politicians who they considered more responsible for the demolition. Most analysts would have expected top BJP leaders to be blamed for the act. But the results were surprising.

The largest share of the blame went to former Prime Minister the late P.V. Narashima Rao, who was identified by 36.6 per cent of respondents as more responsible for the demolition. He was closely followed by BJP leader and former deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani. The surprise package was former Prime Minister the late Rajiv Gandhi, who was held more responsible for the act, even though he had been assassinated about 18 months before the actual demolition.

There doesn't appear to be any deep polarisation on this issue across the party divides. While 32.4 per cent of NDA voters hold Advani responsible, 37.6 per cent of opposition voters hold him responsible. Similarly, while 36.1 per cent of NDA voters hold Rao responsible, 35.2 per cent of opposition hold him responsible. As mentioned earlier, Rajiv Gandhi had been assassinated in 1991. P.V. Narashima Rao was the prime minister at the time and L.K. Advani was actually present at the site when the disputed structure was brought down.

PUNJAB CM BATS FOR OPENING BORDER TRADE WITH PAKISTAN



In a bid to boost the state's economy, Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Channi on Monday announced that he would soon write to the Centre besides seeking an appointment with the Union Home Minister for opening trade with Pakistan.

In his address during the 15th Edition of the Punjab International Trade Expo (PITEX) here, he said that if the trade could be carried by the sea route, then why it is not permitted through the land route as it would propel enormous opportunities for economic prosperity. According to the major demand of the PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Channi said the foundation stone of a convention centre for PITEX spread over 10 acres would be laid within a week to enable the organisation to carry out a diverse range of activities to promote trade and industry in the region in a big way.

He also said a digital single window system would be put in place shortly to ensure all kinds of requisite permissions from a unified platform to the industrialists in a seamless manner. "This move would also enable them to apply for permissions from their homes to almost removing the user interface with the officials thus increasing transparency." Listing the achievements of his government, Channi said the state government has withdrawn 40,000 VAT-related cases registered against the traders, abolishing the institutional tax, and made the Right to Business Act of 2020 applicable.

IS INDIAN GOVT'S FACE-OFF WITH OPPOSITION A WELL THOUGHT OUT STRATEGY?

The government has been demanding an apology from the suspended MPs but the opposition is firm on not tendering an apology. Meanwhile the suspended MPs have been sitting on protest in Parliament; MPs of the ruling BJP too protested against them on Friday.

Leader of the House Piyush Goyal said, "The opposition leaders are making provocative statements and have refused to apologise on the serious issue even though I have offered an apology on small issues." "When they are not willing to apologise, how can the matter be resolved?" The statement itself is a manifestation that the government is not interested in resolving the matter despite the Chair suggesting that both sides sit and discuss the issue. The government has been able to push the Dam safety bill in the week just ended with the opposition participating in the discussion. In these circumstances the opposition has of late got the sense that the government's strategy is of confrontation and not resolution and then they started pushing for issues like inflation and farmers' compensation. The MPs are moving the suspension of business notice under rule 267 on a daily basis which is being rejected by the Chair. On Friday also the Chairman rejected various notices of the opposition leaders under rule 267. One of the notices was given by Congress MP Deepender Hooda in which he demanded compensation for the families of those farmers who lost their lives during the agitation going on since last year. On Thursday the opposition parties resorted to sloganeering after the Rajya Sabha assembled for Question Hour and later walked out of the House after they were denied permission for a discussion on inflation. Congress MP K.C. Venugopal had given a suspension of business notice under rule 267 to discuss the rising prices of essential commodities, which the chair did not permit. Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge urged the Chair, "its an important issue." The whole week has passed but the opposition in the Upper House could not raise the issues it wanted as the entire focus was on the suspension of the MPs.



Y MEDIA COVID & VACCINE REPORT

Key findings

- COVID-19 cases are rising in most Public Health Units due to the Delta variant. Testing has not increased, but positivity is rising. This is a real rise in cases.
- Vaccine effectiveness in Ontario remains very high but experience in other countries suggests we will need to boost immunity with third doses.
- Even without Omicron, ICU occupancy will likely grow to 250-400 beds in January, putting hospitals under strain again.
- To control cases and the impact on our health system, we need to increase vaccination (particularly 5-11 year-olds) and continue to use public health measures to reduce transmission now.
- Spread of the new Omicron variant will likely drive COVID-19 cases above current projections.
- In South African data, vaccination appears to protect against serious illness due to Omicron and most hospitalizations are in the unvaccinated. There is likely an increased risk of re-infection even amongst people those who have had COVID-19, emphasizing the importance of vaccination.
- Low global vaccine coverage means that we can expect new variants to arise.

ONTARIO'S NEW COVID19MODELLING WARNS RISING COVID CASES, HOSPITALIZATIONS WILL PUT HEALTHCARE SYSTEM UNDER STRAIN ONCE AGAIN 'EVEN WITHOUT OMICRON'.

Ontario Accelerating Booster Eligibility to Adults Aged 50 +



**TORONTO** - The Ontario government, in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health, is accelerating COVID-19 vaccine booster dose eligibility to Ontarians aged 50 and over and additional high-risk individuals, providing an extra layer of protection against COVID-19 and its variants. Starting on Monday, December 13, 2021 at 8:00 a.m., individuals aged 50 and over will be eligible to schedule their booster dose appointment through the COVID-19 vaccination portal, by calling the Provincial Vaccine Contact Centre, through Indigenous-led vaccination clinics, select pharmacies and primary care settings. Appointments will be booked for approximately six months (168 days) after a second dose. In addition, due to a higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19, effective immediately individuals receiving dialysis (hemodialysis or peritoneal dialysis) are eligible to receive a third dose of the COVID-19 vaccine if it has been 56 days since their second dose. Also effective immediately, the province is recommending re-vaccination with a new COVID-19 vaccine primary series post-transplantation for individuals who receive hematopoietic stem cell transplants (HSCT), hematopoietic cell transplants (HCT) (autologous or allogeneic), and recipients of CAR-T-cell therapy, due to the loss of immunity following therapy or transplant. Beginning in January, Ontario will further expand eligibility for booster doses based on age and risk, with an interval of six to eight months from the second dose. "If you are eligible for a booster dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, please book your appointment as soon as you can to provide yourself with an extra layer of protection," said Dr. Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health. "If you have not yet received the vaccine, please do so today. This

includes vaccinations for children aged five to 11. Achieving the highest vaccination rates possible remains our best tool to protect us, reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission, and fight the significant surge of new cases and the new Omicron variant." While the best defence against the Omicron variant remains containing it at the border, Ontario has the infrastructure in place to rapidly identify, trace and isolate COVID-19 and its variants. In addition to accelerating booster doses the province is taking several other measures in the fight against COVID-19 and its variants, including: \* Further expanding free PCR testing at all testing centres to asymptomatic individuals who have returned from, or travelled in, Nigeria, Malawi and Egypt between November 1st and December 6th, 2021, including family and other household contacts of travellers. The province is also distributing 11 million rapid antigen screening tests to all public schools and participating First Nation schools for each student to take home five tests to use over the holidays and throughout the return to in-person learning in January. The province will also launch a holiday testing blitz this month, with additional pop-up testing locations at high-traffic locations in higher-risk regions. \* Releasing enhanced guidance on case, contact and outbreak management for individuals that may have been exposed to the Omicron variant to mitigate further transmission. This includes more frequent follow up calls to ensure adherence to isolation, not permitting a shortened duration of isolation for asymptomatic fully vaccinated individuals with a positive test, requiring isolation for all high-risk contacts regardless of vaccination status or previously positive status, and offering supports for isolation as needed.

Medicago, Canada’s First Homegrown Covid-19 Vaccine, Shows High Efficacy Of 71% Against All Virus Variants, 75% Against Delta Variant

**QUEBEC CITY, LONDON,** – Medicago, a biopharmaceutical company headquartered in Quebec City, and GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) today announce positive efficacy and safety results from the global Phase 3 placebo-controlled efficacy study of Medicago's plant-based COVID-19 vaccine candidate in combination with GSK's pandemic adjuvant, conducted in over 24,000 subjects, adults 18y and above, across six countries. Vaccine efficacy was demonstrated in an environment dominated by SARS-CoV-2 variants, unlike most published Phase 3 efficacy trials for currently licensed COVID-19 vaccines that were conducted when only the ancestral virus was circulating, making direct comparisons impossible. The overall vaccine efficacy rate against all variants of SARS-COV-2 was 71% (95% Confidence Interval: CI 58.7, 80.0; Per Protocol Analysis: PP). The corresponding number for people with an initial seronegative status indicating no previous exposure to COVID-19 was 75.6% (95% CI: 64.2-83.7; PP). The vaccine candidate demonstrated efficacy of 75.3% (95% CI: 52.8, 87.9; PP) against COVID-19 of any severity for the globally dominant Delta variant. Efficacy was 88.6% (95% CI: 74.6, 95.6; PP) against the Gamma variant. Although only a small number of severe cases occurred in this study, none occurred in the vaccinated group. No cases of the Alpha, Lambda and Mu variants were observed in the vaccinated group while 12 cases were observed in the placebo group. The Omicron variant was not circulating during the study. During the study, no related serious adverse events were reported and reactogenicity was generally mild to moderate and transient; symptoms lasting on average only 1 to 3 days. To date, the Phase 3 results have confirmed the safety profile is consistent with Phase 2 results. The frequency of mild fever was low (<10%), even after the second dose.

McMaster University Researchers In Hamilton To Begin Human Trials Of Inhaled Covid-19 Vaccine

**MICHELLE DONOVAN**  
Human trials are set to begin for two next-generation COVID-19 vaccines developed by a team of scientists at McMaster University. Both are designed to combat variants of concern and will be delivered by inhaled aerosol, not by injection, and will target the lungs and upper airways, where respiratory infections begin. These are two of the very few COVID-19 vaccines being developed in Canada. Phase 1 of the clinical trials was recently approved by Health Canada. Study participants who have previously received two doses of a COVID mRNA vaccine, such as BioNTech Pfizer or Moderna, will receive a booster as part of the clinical trial. As the pandemic transitions into an endemic phase, researchers around the world have been racing to develop more efficient vaccines to follow the first generation of emergency vaccines that were designed to stem the initial spread of COVID-19. The new McMaster vaccines, which express three different SARS-CoV-2 proteins, including the distinctive spike protein, are designed to also target other parts of the virus that do not change or mutate. Activating the immune system against three different proteins, rather than one, should provide better protection against variants of concern, the researchers say. "It is critical to continue research on new forms of COVID vaccines that work in a different way and could be used to boost immunity in people who have already been vaccinated," says Fiona Smaill, a professor of Pathology and Molecular Medicine at McMaster who is leading the clinical trial. "By targeting a breadth of immune responses to different parts of the COVID virus, we expect to see broader protection," she says. The inhaled delivery concept draws on two decades of research and development on a tuberculosis vaccine led by Zhou Xing, a co-principal investigator and professor in the Department of Medicine and McMaster Immunology Research Centre.

EARLY INDICATIONS SUGGEST OMICRON VARIANT LESS DANGEROUS THAN DELTA

(IANS) The Omicron variant, with more than 30 mutations on its spike protein, may not be as dangerous as the Delta and Alpha and other variants of coronavirus, which has so far claimed more than five millions lives across the world. However, the variant appears to be more contagious, said a scientist from Hadassah-Hebrew University Medical Center in Israel. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), Omicron has spread to nearly 38 countries, but no deaths have yet been reported. "We have to say this with a lot of caution, but if we look at the currently available information, there is reason to believe that the variant is spreading fast, but maybe it is not so dangerous," Prof. Dror Mevorach, a senior physician was quoted as saying to Jerusalem Post. South Africa's Tshwane District Omicron Variant Patient Profile showed that 80 per cent of hospital admissions in the previous two weeks were people below age 50, the vast majority of whom did not require oxygen support. This can be explained in several ways, including the lower age of the patients, or that the course of the Omicron variant is milder, Mevorach said. Some experts have also suggested that if Omicron is more infectious but milder, it could make corona more similar to the flu. A Mevorach agreed, saying that "it would really be good news for the world. I think that we have had indications of vaccinated people getting infected, but it appears that their disease is mild". If this is so, he said different scenarios might emerge. "We might need to accept that some people are going to get sick, and treat them with the antiviral treatments that are about to become available, or the vaccines might be slightly tweaked to be more effective," he said. "However, I'm not really sure that we will need to do it. The first option might be good enough." Mevorach also expressed optimism that the protection granted by the booster will last for a long time, the report said.

NEXT PANDEMIC COULD BE MORE LETHAL THAN COVID, SAYS OXFORD VACCINE CREATOR

IANS: While the Covid-19 crisis is not over yet with the new super mutant Omicron spreading to 38 countries, the next pandemic could be even more lethal, said the creator of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine Professor Sarah Gilbert. Delivering the 44th Richard Dimbleby Lecture, Gilbert cautioned that it is increasingly obvious that "this pandemic is not done with us", and vaccines could also prove to be less effective against the Omicron variant, the BBC reported. Gilbert, a professor of vaccinology at the University of Oxford whose team developed the Covid vaccine now used in 170 countries, said the scientific advances made and knowledge gained in research fighting against the coronavirus must not be lost. She also stressed on the need for more funding on pandemic preparedness. "This will not be the last time a virus threatens our lives and our livelihoods. The truth is, the next one could be worse. It could be more contagious, or more lethal, or both," Gilbert was quoted as saying. "We cannot allow a situation where we have gone through all we have gone through, and then find that the enormous economic losses we have sustained mean that there is still no funding for pandemic preparedness." "All the advances we have made, and the knowledge we have gained, must not be lost," she said. So far it is known that the Omicron variant's spike protein contained mutations known to increase the transmissibility of the virus. "But there are additional changes that may mean antibodies induced by the vaccines, or by infection with other variants, may be less effective at preventing infection with Omicron."

COVID OMICRON VARIANT HAS SUPERCHARGED BOOSTER VAX DEBATE

Due to the presence of more mutations, Omicron is suspected to undermine vaccine performance. Although, it is yet to be proved, vaccine makers are developing variant-specific boosters, Nature reported. Immunisations with available shots today could help ward off a surge of Omicron infections, health experts believe, but the question remains whether the need for boosters continue indefinitely. Before Omicron, it was thought that the immune-system players -- memory B and T cells -- were holding up well, and two doses of a Covid-19 vaccine would maintain long-term protection against severe disease and death. But the new variant could change the immunological picture, the researchers said. "Unfortunately, we're still living in uncertainty," immunologist Ali Ellebedy at the Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, US, was quoted as saying. Further, the researchers said that though the extra vaccine shots may help bend the pandemic's curve, it cannot bring an end to it. Real-world data from Israel and the UK indicated that Pfizer's booster dose significantly lowers risk of infection from SARS-CoV-2 and getting severe diseases.

NEW DATA OFFERS INSIGHTS INTO OMICRON SYMPTOMS, SEVERITY

*The report, which analysed symptoms and severity of patients with Omicron from Tshwane - an epicentre of the outbreak - also showed a marked difference in patient condition from that of previous waves seen in the two years of pandemic*  
Patients hospitalised with Omicron in South Africa show less dependence on oxygen, early recovery, according to a new report. The report, which analysed symptoms and severity of patients with Omicron from Tshwane - an epicentre of the outbreak - also showed a marked difference in patient condition from that of previous waves seen in the two years of pandemic. Between November 14 and 29, a sharp rise was observed in admissions at the Steve Biko Academic and Tshwane District Hospitals (SBAH/TDH) Complex. Of 166 new admissions, 42 patients are currently in the Covid wards. And most patients had another medical, surgical or obstetric reason, and SARS-CoV-2 has been an incidental finding in them. "The main observation that we have made over the last two weeks is that the majority of patients in the Covid wards have not been oxygen dependent," according to Dr Fareed Abdullah, the Director of the Office of AIDS and TB Research at the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC). "The majority of hospital admissions are for diagnoses unrelated to Covid-19. The SARS-CoV-2 positivity is an incidental finding in these patients and is largely driven by hospital policy requiring testing of all patients requiring admission to the hospital," he added. Of the 42 patients in the ward, 29 (70 per cent) were not oxygen dependent and the "patients were saturating well on room air and did not present with any respiratory symptoms". "This is a picture that has not been seen in previous waves. The numbers of patients in high care on double oxygen, High Flow Nasal Oxygen or non-invasive ventilation (NIV) were noticeably higher in previous waves," Abdullah said.





## INDIAN PM MODI, RUSSIAN PRESIDENT PUTIN DISCUSS REGIONAL, GLOBAL DEVELOPMENTS, INCLUDING AFGHANISTAN SITUATION

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin met in New Delhi and discussed regional and global developments, including global economic recovery and the situation in Afghanistan after the pandemic. Accompanied by a high-level delegation, Putin visited New Delhi for the 21st India-Russia Annual Summit. He extended an invitation to Modi to visit Russia for the 22nd India-Russia Annual Summit in 2022. The two leaders expressed satisfaction at the continued progress in the special and privileged strategic partnership between the two countries, despite the challenges posed by the COVID pandemic. They welcomed the first meeting of the 2+2 Dialogue of Foreign and Defense Ministers and the meeting of the Inter-Governmental Commission on Military and Military-Technical Cooperation in New Delhi. The leaders underscored the need for greater economic cooperation and, in this context, emphasized new drivers of growth for long-term, predictable and sustained economic cooperation. They appreciated the success story of mutual investment and looked forward to greater investment in each other's countries. The role of connectivity through the International North-South Transport Corridor and the proposed Chennai-Vladivostok Eastern Maritime

Corridor was discussed. The two leaders looked forward to greater inter-regional cooperation with the states of India, in various regions of Russia, particularly with the Russian Far East. They appreciated the ongoing bilateral cooperation in the fight against the COVID pandemic, including the humanitarian assistance provided by the two countries to each other in critical times of need. The leaders discussed regional and global developments, including the post-pandemic global economic recovery and the situation in Afghanistan. They agreed that the two countries share similar perspectives and concerns on Afghanistan and appreciated the bilateral roadmap prepared at the NSA level for consultation and cooperation on Afghanistan. They noted that the two sides shared similar perspectives on a number of international issues and agreed to further strengthen cooperation in multilateral fora, including the United Nations Security Council. Putin congratulated Modi for India's ongoing non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council and successful presidency of BRICS in 2021, while Prime Minister Modi congratulated Russia for its current presidency of the Arctic Council.

## NEW LABOUR MARKET REPORT INDICATES WESTERN CANADA'S BIO-ECONOMY GROWING, BUT LACKS WORKERS

The bio-economy, a potentially burgeoning sector of the Western Canada economy, is poised to create jobs, but the current pipeline for those positions is three-quarters empty. "Canada's bio-economy is facing a shortage of 65,000 workers by the end of the decade, according to BioTalent Canada's recently released National Labour Market Information (LMI) study," says Rob Henderson, President and CEO of BioTalent Canada. "Programs like Career Starter are vital resources for introducing talent to the industry and strengthening the pipeline. The talent is out there, it just needs an opportunity to shine." This was the conclusion of an unprecedented labour market study by BioTalent Canada released this fall. Today, the organization released eight reports that unpack the current landscape, trends, challenges, and opportunities facing each region. The report on Western Canada – including British Columbia and Alberta – and an accompanying report on Metro Vancouver conclude that the region's talent pipeline is insufficiently stocked to meet the talent demand. It is likely that Western Canada's biotech industry will lack 18,800 bio-economy workers by 2029, and current estimates indicate there will not be enough workers to meet labour needs. While other regions of Canada expect to see a significant post-pandemic decline in bio-economy employment in 2021, Western Canada does not. Employment in the region's bio-economy is expected to grow by just under 2.0% in the short term and by 1.2% annually over the medium/longer term. Whether potential employers can recruit the needed workers remains in question. The reports note that the COVID-19 pandemic exposed significant gaps in the Canadian bio-economy, notably in bio-manufacturing and processing capacity, which saw Canada initially unable to produce sufficient protective equipment and having no domestic capacity to develop and manufacture vaccines. Efforts to close this gap could be hampered by a lack of qualified labour. Estimates suggest Western Canada will need an additional 4,760 bio-manufacturing workers by 2029 (including 1,220 in bio-industrial and



1,740 in agri-bio) even without considering expansion growth due to recently announced federal investments. Only 25% of those positions will be fillable by predicted supply during this period. "To fill the shortages, the bio-economy will need to develop new strategies," says BioTalent President and CEO Rob Henderson. "In Western Canada, this could include efforts to broaden the talent pool. Western Canada's bio-economy has a higher percentage of visible minorities than other regions, but the opportunity for the industry to be more diverse exists." Other notable findings in the Western Canada regional analysis: Western Canada accounts for 28% of Canada's bio-economy, with over 3,800 organizations – mainly small and medium-sized businesses – collectively employing some 48,000 people in 2019. The bio-economy workforce in Western Canada covers a wide range of occupations, with research & development and manufacturing accounting for nearly half of all jobs in the region. The Western Canadian bio-economy is expected to grow modestly from 2022 to 2029. On average, women make up one-third (34%) of bio-economy workers in the region, with visible minorities about one-quarter (22%).

## Akhilesh says SP will oust BJP in UP; Jayant Chaudhary announces SP-RLD alliance

"I am announcing from this stage the alliance between SP-RLD. The double engine government of SP-RLD will come to power and take the state to new heights." Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav on Tuesday slammed the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and said that SP will oust the saffron party from power in Uttar Pradesh in next year's Assembly polls. During the 'Parivartan Sandesh' rally organised in Meerut, Akhilesh Yadav coined a new slogan - 'Kisan ka inquilabhoga, 2022 mein badlavhoga'. It was the first rally in which the Samajwadi Party and the Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) shared the stage together. Both Akhilesh Yadav and Jayant Singh Chaudhary of the RLD arrived at the rally together. While addressing the rally, Akhilesh Yadav slammed the BJP and said that this 'Parivartan Sandesh' is not just a rally, but the power of the people to drive out the BJP government from Uttar Pradesh. The SP chief said that he has promised to give jobs to one crore youth. According to the SP's poll manifesto, farmers will get 1.5 times the price of potatoes and sugarcane within 14 days. Under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana, the farmers will be given Rs 12,000 every year. Old-age pension will be increased by three times, 50 per cent reservation will be given in job recruitments for women, he said. An effective insurance scheme will be prepared for the farmers, while previous electricity bills of farmers and weavers will be waived and their next bills will be reduced by half, Akhilesh Yadav said. While addressing the rally, Akhilesh Yadav also said that if the SP forms government, the amount for PM Samman Nidhi Yojana will be increased from Rs 6,000 to Rs 12,000. He also assured to increase the price of sugarcane. RLD chief Jayant Singh Chaudhary also took a jibe at the BJP government, saying, "You have seen the condition of the double-engine government at the Centre and in Uttar Pradesh... a BJP MLA recently broke a coconut in Bijoor, but the road got damaged instead." Chaudhary added, "I am announcing from this stage the alliance between SP-RLD. The double engine government of SP-RLD will come to power and take the state to new heights." Raising the issue of farmers, the RLD chief said that farmers were attacked and insulted in the state, but no BJP leader uttered a word condemning the attacks. Chaudhary said, "Yogi (Adityanath) starts talking about Aurangzeb, but ends up pointing at the exodus during the previous government. The youth are being forced to move to other states and look for jobs, but Yogi ji does not see this as exodus." The RLD chief said, "When the SP-RLD government is formed in Uttar Pradesh, we will build a memorial for the martyred farmers in Meerut so that their sacrifices are remembered."

## DOMINIC BARTON TO STEP DOWN AS CANADA'S AMBASSADOR TO CHINA AT THE END OF THE MONTH



Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, today issued the following statement on Canada's Ambassador to China, Dominic Barton: "With much gratitude and respect, I have accepted Ambassador Barton's decision to leave his post in Beijing at the end of the year. "For the last two years, Dominic has led our team in China with determination, integrity, and compassion, and at a time when relations between our two countries faced difficult challenges. "As a defender of human rights and the rule of law, his top priority always remained to secure the release of Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor, who had been arbitrarily detained in China for two and a half years. "He worked tirelessly on this important task. He offered support and counsel to the two Michaels' families and he worked to forge a coalition of like-minded countries to stand in solidarity. Thanks to Dominic's leadership and skilled diplomatic approach, Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor are back at home with their families. "Dominic has also played an integral role in shaping and pursuing Canada's priorities with respect to China. Thanks to his efforts, Canada is now better positioned to manage this important relationship and achieve our diplomatic objectives. "Dominic, my friend, thank you for your work and dedication to our country and to the people of Canada. "Canada is stronger because of your service, and I wish you all the best."

## LONDON HC RULES IN FAVOUR OF BORIS JOHNSON IN PRITI PATEL CASE



The FDA Union filed the case against the fact that Johnson had gone against the conclusion reached by Sir Alex Allan, then his independent adviser on ministerial standards, to protect Patel. The two-judge bench said: "The question for this court is whether the Prime Minister proceeded on the basis that conduct would fall within the description of bullying with paragraph 1.2 of the ministerial code if the person concerned was unaware of, or did not intend, the harm or offence caused." It added: "Reading the statement (made by Johnson at the time) as a whole, and in context, we do not consider that the Prime Minister misdirected himself in that way." In November last year, Sir Alex found that Patel had not always treated civil servants with "consideration and respect". He went on to say in his report to Johnson: "Her approach on occasions has amounted to behaviour that can be described as bullying in terms of the impact felt by the individuals. To that extent, her behaviour has been in breach of the ministerial code, even if unintentionally." The Prime Minister is the final arbiter on such complaints. His interpretation was that Patel was "unaware" of the disquiet she had caused. And that he had received an assurance from her that she was "sorry for inadvertently upsetting those with whom she was working". This, though, was not the first time that Patel had been accused of bullying and had forced the government to pay out cash compensation for the injury inflicted. Sir Alex had resigned after Johnson did not take action on his inference. The FDA stated: "The court has determined that the Prime Minister did not acquit the Home Secretary of bullying, and that he did not reject the findings of Sir Alex Allan that her conduct amounted to bullying."

## 'US INFLATION TO REMAIN ABOVE FED RESERVE'S TARGET AMID RISING WAGES'



**WASHINGTON:** The US' annual inflation will remain above the Federal Reserve's target of 2 per cent over the next three years amid rising wages and a strong demand for goods and services, according to a survey released by the National Association for Business Economics (NABE). "Eighty-seven per cent of panelists cite supply chain bottlenecks, 76 per cent identify strong demand for goods and re-opening services, and 69 per cent list rising wages as key drivers of higher prices," Xinhua news agency quoted the survey published on Monday as saying. Business economists have ramped up their inflation expectations for both 2021 and 2022 compared with the last survey in September. The overall consumer price index (CPI) is projected to rise 6 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2021 from a year earlier, compared to the 5.1 per cent forecast in the September survey. The CPI inflation is expected to remain elevated by the end of 2022 at 2.8 per cent year-over-year, compared to the September's forecast of 2.4 per cent. The core personal consumption expenditures (PCE) price index, the Fed's preferred inflation measure, is now expected to rise 4.1 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2021 from a year earlier, and only slow to a 2.6 per cent year-over-year rate in the fourth quarter of 2022. About 71 per cent of respondents anticipate that the core PCE gauge will not decline to or below the Fed's target of 2 per cent until the second half of 2023 or later, the survey further revealed. Meanwhile, 58 per cent of respondents anticipate that the US economy will have already achieved or will reach full employment by the end of 2022.



# Putin's visit to India full of symbolism: Arrival coincides with Soviet-backed recognition of B'desh

**NEW DELHI:** In a short while Russian President Vladimir Putin will begin talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The visit is being watched with particular interest on both sides, coming as it does at a particularly critical time - volatile Taliban rule in Afghanistan, worsening NATO/Ukraine-Russia relations, India-China tensions, India's inclusion in the QUAD, and the new geopolitical move with AUKUS. Especially significant is the fact that given its closeness to the US, India is intent on going ahead with its purchase of S 400 TRIUMF missiles, with the threat of CAATSA (though improbable) hanging over it. Turkey has faced similar sanctions from the US over its purchase of the same missile system from Russia. During President Putin's visit the India-Russia 2+2 dialogue involving the foreign and defence ministers on both sides, which replicates the India-US 2+2 dialogue, has already begun. The timing of the visit, however, is significant and interesting historically. Fifty years ago on 6th December 1971 India became the first country to recognise the newly liberated state of Bangladesh. This year the day is being celebrated as both India and Bangladesh jointly as "Maitri Diwas" - a decision that was taken when Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Bangladesh earlier in March this year. Russia will also be one of the select countries where the day will be celebrated. In this war of liberation along with India's generosity, valor and decisiveness, a pivotal role was played by the Soviet Union, of which Russia is the inheritor state. The astuteness of then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to quickly conclude the 1971 Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation in August 1971 had a direct impact on the decisive battle in the eastern war theatre between India and Pakistan. A crucial clause that if either country was attacked, the other would consult to "remove such threat" and "take appropriate effective measures to ensure peace and the security of their countries" became a deterrent for Pakistan, its all weather friend China, and US. As Russian Ambassador to India Nikolay Kudashev wrote in an article in August to mark the 50th anniversary of the Indo-Soviet Friendship Treaty "...the Treaty was an integral part of the range of events, which had divided the history of South Asia into before and after, - the third war between India and Pakistan, the creation of Bangladesh and the adoption of the relevant UN SC resolution strongly supported by the Soviet Union along with prevention of attempts to attack India by other powers." Soviet military support allowed India to take on Pakistan equipped with arms from the US, Jordan, Turkey, and Iran under its Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi. Following the 1971 war hero Lt. General JFR Jacob had said "The



Russians helped us a lot. I always will appreciate it. I have a lot of time for the Russians." For people of West Bengal though the sailing of the US 7th fleet led by the world's largest nuclear powered aircraft carrier USS Enterprise into the Bay of Bengal in December 1971 that remains etched in their memory. Soviet intelligence also found a British naval group also moving into India's territorial waters in the West. The Soviets responded by dispatching their nuclear armed flotilla, the 10th Operative Battle Group (Pacific Fleet) from Vladivostok. When the UN wanted to send observers from the United Nations High Commission for Refugees to both sides of India's borders with East Pakistan, something that would have exposed the Mukti Bahini, Soviet diplomats in the UN scuttled it. After the war began, Soviet veto in the Security Council gave enough time to Indian troops to move to Dhaka and get Pakistani troops to surrender. Consequently, the Soviet Union and now Russia have followed the Shimla Agreement of 1972,

taking a position against raising the Kashmir issue in the UN Security Council, seeing territorial disputes between India and Pakistan as strictly a bilateral issue. Later, the Indo-Soviet Friendship Treaty of 1971 became the template for the Indo-Bangladesh Friendship Treaty signed in 1972. Today India and Russia have many differences between them, and unease which need to be settled. The Modi-Putin summit is set to breathe new life into bilateral relations. Today is also a good day to revisit history, because in a fickle world, even with the differences, India-Russia relations have reassuringly endured.

*Disclaimer: Aditi Bhaduri is a columnist specialising in Eurasian geopolitics. The opinions expressed within this article are the personal ideas of the author. The facts and conclusions appearing in the article do not reflect the views of Y Media and Midweek Newspaper, and Y Media does not assume any responsibility or liability for the same.*

## PAKISTAN WANTS 'INDIA-LIKE' TIES WITH US

(IANS): In recent months, Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan has been beseeching the US for civilised relations, as 'civilised' as they are between the US and India.

Notwithstanding the invitation to Biden's Democracy Summit, his



agony may not end soon if the US is not satisfied that Pakistan, the global leader in exporting terror, has renounced its duplicitous ways. Imran Khan expressed the wish for 'civilised' ties with the US in an interview with the New York Times, which has often extended the hospitality of its columns to Pakistani leaders to trumpet their litany of lies and bizarre logic that is supposed to show that Pakistan is the most peace-loving, tolerant and progressive nation on earth! The interview did not shed much light on what precisely Imran Khan expects of the US that will qualify bilateral ties to be classified as 'civilised'. Bringing in India to illustrate the point doesn't make sense, because the context of India-US relations is different from that of the US-Pakistan 'civilised' ties rooted in the Cold War era and the US paranoia about the now defunct Soviet Union. Pakistan had jumped on the US bandwagon by pretending to support its anti-Soviet and anti-Communist diktats. But in reality, closeness to the US provided Pakistan an easy avenue to arm itself to the teeth while pursuing hostile anti-India policies. The US played along with the Pakistani deception even after the fall of the Soviet empire. But the US received a jolt from its long-time military ally after the 9/11 terrorist attacks exposed Pakistan as the hub of global terror. If after 9/11 US-Pakistan ties were still left with a 'civilised' element, they began to unravel no sooner Pakistan had agreed to join the 'war on terror'. Whether Pakistan did so at the point of the gun is beside the point; Pakistan was simply not in a position to say 'no' to US President George Bush when he asked the then Pakistani dictator, General Pervez Musharraf, to join the 'war on terror'. Musharraf, like most Pakistani leaders before and after him, was only paying lip service when he pledged to support the 'war on terror' in order to lessen the threat to his country. His actual intention was clear: Grab everything, particularly arms and dollars, that the US threw at Pakistan while pretending to be fighting the 'war on terror'. Musharraf and the Pakistanis who led the country after him adopted a

policy of blatant dishonesty while participating in the 'war on terror'. Pakistan was providing covert protection to the terrorists it was supposed to be hunting. These were the terrorists who were killing US troops while Pakistan was maintaining the facade of fighting against them. The Bill Clinton and the Barack Obama administrations shut their eyes even though aware that Pakistan was cheating them. Donald Trump turned out to be a different kettle of fish. He bluntly denounced Pakistan for its double-crossing, halted military aid and curtailed cash flow. That was the beginning of the 'uncivilised' chapter in US-Pakistan relations, which Imran Khan wants to end without committing Pakistan to an honest relationship with the US - by downing the manner in which Pakistan had 'fought' terrorists. Despite all the talk about China being Pakistan's 'iron brother', the 'all weather friend' and the bravado of Pakistanis that they don't need America, the fact is just the opposite. For the elites who rule the feudal and backward-looking state of Pakistan, the US remains a coveted destination. They want to migrate to the Eldorado. How many rich or poor Pakistanis have ever thought of migrating to China? Probably none, even though the Pakistani propaganda spews poison against the US and the West while turning a blind eye to the atrocities China commits on its Muslim minorities. The Generals in Pakistan are far happier spending time in US training schools than any drab Chinese institute. Above all, the American technology and weapons lure them more than anything the Dragon could offer gratis, except, of course, the Chinese weapons of mass destruction which can be used against India. Geo-political realities may find the US repairing its relations with Pakistan. In any case, they cannot get worse than what they are now. India will be watching with interest what or how the Joe Biden administration initiates steps to usher in 'civilised' relations with Pakistan, knowing fully well the roguish predilections of India's troublesome western neighbour.

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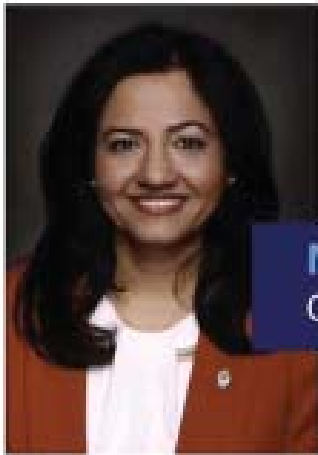
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## SONIA SIDHU, LIBERAL MP FROM BRAMPTON SOUTH, RECEIVES 2021 FREDERICK G. BANTING AWARD FROM DIABETES CANADA

### Frederick G. Banting Award

"I am proud to be your government advocate, so that the diabetes strategy, when it is complete, will result in the best care possible for those living with diabetes and support researchers on the road to a cure."



MP Sonia Sidhu  
Ontario

DIABETES  
CANADA

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"Banting was a pioneer in medical research – one of the great Canadian scientists. Thanks to his historic invention, millions of lives have been saved," MP Sidhu said. "It is truly an honour to be receiving an award that bears his name."

In June, Sidhu's private member's Bill C-237, the National Framework for Diabetes Act, was passed into law after receiving unanimous support in both the House of Commons and the Senate. This bill requires the Minister of Health to create and report to Parliament on a national framework to defeat diabetes. The framework will be created in consultation with provincial and territorial governments, Indigenous communities, and other relevant stakeholders with the goal of improving access to diabetes prevention and treatment to ensure better health outcomes for Canadians. The legislation requires that the framework include: identify the training and education needs of health care professionals related to diabetes; promote research and improve data collection on diabetes prevention and treatment; promote information and knowledge sharing; and take into consideration any existing diabetes prevention and treatment strategies and best practices, including those that focus on addressing health inequalities. MP Sidhu has been a passionate advocate for the diabetes community since being elected to Parliament in 2015. Prior to her career in politics, she worked as a healthcare professional for eighteen years. In her home community of Brampton, where 1 in 6 people live with diabetes, she often saw how diabetes was a complicating factor in other conditions including heart and kidney disease, blindness, and amputation. Since being elected, she has served as chair of the all-party Diabetes Caucus, through which she has worked to raise awareness about the disease among her colleagues, passed the motion in 2019 that recognized November as Diabetes Awareness Month, and represented Canada at diabetes conferences domestically and abroad.

Sidhu has pledged that she plans to continue being an advocate for those with diabetes and to encourage the research sector in Canada as they work towards finding a cure. "By working together, we can one day bring an end to this disease. Canada gave insulin to the world. It is time we recommit as a country to fighting this disease and lead the way to a cure."

## GTA HOME SALES UP BY 3.3%, AVERAGE PRICE UP BY 21.7% IN NOV: TRREB

#### CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

GTA REALTORS® reported 9,017 home sales through TRREB's MLS® System in November 2021 - 3.3 per cent above the November 2020 result, setting a new record. In contrast, new listings were down by 13.2 per cent year-over-year, with double-digit declines for low-rise home types and condominium apartments.

"Governments at all levels must take coordinated action to increase supply in the immediate term to begin addressing the supply challenges of today, and to work towards satisfying growing demand in the future. The GTA remains the primary destination for new immigrants and is at the centre of the Canadian economy. For far too long, governments have focused on short-term bandaid policies to artificially suppress demand. Current market activity highlights decisively that these policies do not work, and unless governments work together to cut red tape, streamline the approval processes, and incentivize middensity housing, ongoing housing affordability challenges will escalate. On this point, we commend the City of Toronto for moving forward with initiatives to facilitate the creation of more mid-density home types, including their current consultations on options to encourage more multiplex development across the city," said TRREB President Kevin Crigger.

The MLS® Home Price Index composite benchmark was up by 28.3 per cent year-over-year in November 2021. The average selling price for all home types combined was \$1,163,323 - up by 21.7 per cent compared to November 2020. "A key difference this year compared to last year, is how the condo segment continues to tighten and experience an acceleration in price growth, particularly in suburban areas. This speaks to the broadening of economic recovery, with first-time buyers moving back into the market in a big way this year. The condo and townhouse segments, with lower price points on average, will remain popular as population growth picks up over the next two years," said TRREB Chief Market Analyst Jason Mercer. "As population and housing demand continues to grow in the GTA, it will be important to support the fabric of our region's neighbourhoods. This can be partially accomplished by bringing on line a greater diversity of housing choices. However, in addition, local businesses also need support, and TRREB was encouraged to see the new small business property tax class approved by the City of Toronto. This will be an important tool for post-pandemic recovery," said TRREB CEO John DiMichele.



## ONTARIO EXTENDING COVID-19 PAID SICK DAYS UNTIL JULY 31, 2022



**TORONTO** – The Ontario government is extending its Worker Income Protection Benefit program, which provides paid sick days, until July 31, 2022, to continue keeping workers safe and ensure they do not lose pay if they need to miss work for reasons related to COVID-19. Employees can continue to access this paid leave to get tested, vaccinated, self-isolate, or care for a family member. Should the Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit be extended, workers in Ontario have access to the most generous paid sick days program in Canada. "Nearly a quarter-million workers have already used our program, which is the first and most comprehensive in the country, for paid time off work," said Monte McNaughton, Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development. "Our government is working for workers and ensuring they have the support they need to keep themselves and their families safe." Extending the COVID-19 paid leave program will help more workers take time off to get their booster shots and help more parents take time to get their children vaccinated. To date, the program has helped over 235,000 people stay safe without worrying about losing pay. The average number of days being claimed per employee is two. To support employers, Ontario will continue reimbursing them for providing this support to their workers.

## VICE-ADMIRAL HAYDN EDMUNDSON, MILITARY'S FORMER HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES, CHARGED WITH SEXUAL ASSAULT, INDECENT ACTS



On December 7, 2021, the Canadian Forces National Investigation Service (CFNIS) laid the following charges against Vice-Admiral Haydn Edmundson:

Sexual assault contrary to section 271 of the Criminal Code of Canada.

Indecent acts contrary to section 173(1) of the Criminal Code.

The decision by the Canadian Forces Provost Marshal (CFPM) to retain this investigation was taken in due regard to the parameters outlined by Justice Arbour where she stated, "the CFPM should transfer to civilian police forces all allegations of sexual offences, including allegations currently under investigation by the CFNIS unless such investigation is near completion". In this particular case, the investigation was near completion. As the matter is now proceeding through the civilian justice system no further information can be released at this time.

## MERCK TO MAKE ITS COVID-19 ANTIVIRAL PILL IN CANADA

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Molnupiravir is being developed by Merck in collaboration with Ridgeback Biotherapeutics. Thermo Fisher's manufacturing site in Whitby, Ontario, will manufacture molnupiravir for distribution in Canada and the United Kingdom as well as markets in the European Union, Asia Pacific and Latin America, pending local market approvals. It is one of three manufacturing sites in the world for this therapy. Merck also announced on December 3, 2021, that it has entered into a Supply Agreement with the Government of Canada for molnupiravir. Through this agreement, the Government of Canada has secured access to 500,000 patient courses, with options for up to 500,000 more in 2022.

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## DUE TO LABOUR DISPUTE INVOLVING ONE OF PEEL'S WASTE COLLECTION CONTRACTORS, SOME RESIDENTS WILL EXPERIENCE TEMPORARY CHANGES TO THEIR CURBSIDE WASTE PICKUP

As a result of a labour dispute involving one of Peel's waste collection contractors, Emterra Environmental and its employees, some residents in Brampton, Caledon and Mississauga will experience temporary changes to their curbside waste pickup beginning today, Monday, December 6. Please refer to this map for information about impacted areas.

For strike-affected residents during their garbage week:

Continue to put garbage and organics at the curb on your scheduled garbage collection day.

You may experience collection delays. Please leave garbage and organics at the curb until further notice (even on the weekend).

No bulky items will be picked up during the labour disruption.

For strike-affected residents during their recycling week:

Recycling will not be picked up during the labour disruption.

Please hold onto your recycling until further notice.

Your organics will not be collected on your recycling week. It will only be collected on your garbage week.

Yard Waste Collection for strike-affected residents:

Yard waste will not be picked up during the labour disruption.

Please hold onto your yard waste until further notice.

Check [peelregion.ca/waste](https://www.peelregion.ca/waste) for further updates or follow Public Works on Twitter at [twitter.com/peelpublicworks](https://twitter.com/peelpublicworks) for updated service information.

"We thank everyone for their patience as we work to support waste collection during this labour disruption. Keeping public health and safety top of mind for our communities, we've temporarily changed the collection program to allow collection crews to focus on our first priority of picking up garbage and organics from homes affected by the strike. We encourage residents to visit our website or social channels often for updated information," said Norman Lee, Director of Waste Management.

### PFIZER SAYS COVID-19 BOOSTER NEUTRALIZES OMICRON VARIANT

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"Although two doses of the vaccine may still offer protection against severe disease caused by the Omicron strain, it's clear from these preliminary data that protection is improved with a third dose of our vaccine," said Albert Bourla, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Pfizer, in the statement. "Broad vaccination and booster campaigns around the world could help us to better protect people everywhere and to get through the winter season," added Ugur Sahin, CEO and Co-Founder of BioNTech.

He also said that the company will "continue to work on an adapted vaccine which will help to induce a high level of protection against Omicron-induced Covid-19 disease as well as a prolonged protection compared to the current vaccine".

Meanwhile, a small study led by South African researchers showed that Pfizer's Covid vaccine may be up to 40 times less effective against the new super mutant Omicron variant compared with the original virus. But, Omicron's ability to escape vaccine antibodies is "incomplete", said Prof Alex Sigal, a virologist at the Africa Health Research Institute, who led the research.

"Previous infection, followed by vaccination or booster is likely to increase the neutralisation level and likely confer protection from severe disease in Omicron infection," he added. Moderna and Johnson & Johnson are also expected to release lab results from the Omicron variant in the coming days. In an interview with The Wall Street Journal, Bourla said that company should have been more mindful of lack of facilities, the infrastructure as well as vaccine hesitancy hurdles faced by poor countries, even as the drugmaker sent more doses to low-income countries after ramping up manufacturing. "We should have done it better," he said on Tuesday at The Wall Street Journal's CEO Council. The company could have partnered earlier with NGOs to help address vaccine hesitancy. He praised a recent effort to do so by the World Health Organisation, but noted "that's something that we could have done ourselves".

Further, he stated that the Omicron variant which causes Covid-19 appears to be milder than previous strains, but also seems to spread faster and could lead to more mutations in the future. "I don't think it's good news to have something that spreads fast," he said. "Spreads fast means that it will be in billions of people and another mutation may come. You don't want that." Bourla also said that is hopeful that the US Food and Drug Administration will this month authorise the company's Covid-19 drug Paxlovid. The pill was found in a preliminary look of late-stage study results to be 89 per cent effective at reducing the risk of hospitalisation and death.



## COVID-19 vaccine clinic at Ontario Khalsa Darbar (Dixie Gurdwara)

First, second and third doses available for eligible individuals age 5 and over. Third doses must be 168 days after the second dose, and are available for individuals age 70+, health care workers, those with 2 doses of AstraZeneca/Janssen, and First Nation, Inuit and Métis adults and their non-Indigenous household members. Health card recommended but not required. Please bring photo ID. **Walk-in, no appointment needed.** Learn more at: [peelregion.ca/covid19vaccine](https://www.peelregion.ca/covid19vaccine)

### Clinic dates

**Saturday, November 27**  
10:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

**Tuesday, November 30**  
1 – 7:30 p.m.

**Saturday, December 4**  
10:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

**Tuesday, December 7**  
1 – 7:30 p.m.

**Saturday, December 11**  
10:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

**Tuesday, December 14**  
1 – 7:30 p.m.

### Clinic location

Ontario Khalsa Darbar  
7080 Dixie Road  
(NW corner of Dixie Rd. & Derry Rd.)  
Mississauga, ON L5S 1B7

### For information or assistance, contact:

**Punjabi Community Health Services**  
416-605-6134, Monday to Friday  
9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

**Indus Community Services**  
905-366-1010, 9 a.m. – 7 p.m.

## PEEL WILL REQUIRE VENDORS TO BE FULLY VACCINATED AGAINST COVID-19

The Region of Peel will require its current vendors, service providers and contractors to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 or have a legally valid exemption.

A Vendor Vaccination Policy is an additional health and safety measure that will help protect the health, safety and wellbeing of Regional employees, partners and the broader Peel community and reduce the spread of COVID-19. It's consistent with Public Health guidance and similar policies implemented by organizations such as Public Services and Procurement Canada and The City of Toronto.

Vendors with current or existing contracts have been asked to confirm, by Dec. 17, 2021, that their personnel have been fully vaccinated by completing a Vendor Vaccination Attestation Form. Vendors who fail to confirm their vaccination may not be permitted to have contractor personnel attend any Peel worksites.

"This policy will help ensure a safe and healthy environment for everyone at our Regional worksites. Thanks to all of our vendors and service providers for helping us reduce the spread of COVID-19," Janice Baker, CAO, Region of Peel said.

## OSLER FOUNDATION'S AWESOME AUCTION RAISES \$330,000 FOR HOSPITALS' PANDEMIC RECOVERY EFFORTS

Lucky bidders got a jump on their holiday shopping and helped to raise \$165,000 at Osler Foundation's Awesome Auction, hosted by William Osler Health System Foundation (Osler Foundation). Thanks to a generous matching gift from Bramalea Lions Club, this amount was doubled, bringing the total to \$330,000, with all funds raised going to support pandemic recovery at William Osler Health System (Osler) hospitals.

This exciting online auction ran

from November 24 to December

3 and offered many

unique items and experiences.

Funds raised will benefit

the Build Back, Together campaign, which aims to raise \$10 million to help Osler hospitals build back from the COVID-19 pandemic—better, stronger and together. All equipment in a hospital must be funded by the community. Auction proceeds will purchase essential items for Osler hospitals such as surgical tables, anesthesia gas machines, laparoscopes and camera heads.

"From the moment the auction opened to the final minutes, the bidding was intense. In this season of giving, it's wonderful to see our community once again stepping up to support quality health care close to home," said Ken Mayhew, President & CEO, William Osler Health System Foundation. "As we wind down another difficult year, the generosity shown by bidders, donors and sponsors will help Osler hospitals—and our entire community—build back from the pandemic stronger, together." Osler Foundation's Awesome Auction was made possible with generous support from: Presenting Sponsor LiUNA! Local 183; Gold Sponsors Armour Insurance Brokers Ltd., Borden Ladner Gervais, Sodexo Canada and S. Robinson and Associates of RBC Dominion Securities; Silver Sponsors Almag Aluminium, Bell, Bramalea City Centre, Drywall Acoustic Lathing & Insulation Local Union 675 and Meridian; and Bronze Sponsors Brannon Steel, TACC Developments and Treasure Hill. Donations in support of Osler's pandemic recovery can still be made at [www.oslerfoundation.org](https://www.oslerfoundation.org), or by calling Osler Foundation at (905) 863-2579. Bramalea Lions Club will also match these gifts, up to \$1.5 million.

ABOUT WILLIAM OSLER HEALTH SYSTEM AND FOUNDATION: William Osler Health System is a hospital system, which includes Brampton Civic Hospital, Peel Memorial Centre for Integrated Health and Wellness and Etobicoke General Hospital, and serves 1.3 million residents of Brampton, Etobicoke and surrounding communities within the Central West region. Osler's emergency departments are among the busiest in Canada and its Mental Health and Addictions program is one of the largest in Ontario. William Osler Health System Foundation seeks to create a healthier community through giving by inspiring its communities to invest in exceptional health care close to home.

## ONE OF THE HIGHEST DEVALUATIONS OF PAKISTAN CURRENCY IN PM IMRAN'S TENURE

**NEW DELHI:** The value of the Pakistani rupee has fallen by 30.5 per cent against the US dollar over the last three years and four months under the Imran Khan-led government of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).

The rupee witnessed massive depreciation from Rs 123 against the US dollar in August 2018 to Rs 177 against the US dollar in December 2021, a decline of 30.5 per cent over the last 40 months, The News reported. This makes it one of highest devaluations of the currency in the country's history. The only other higher devaluation occurred when Dhaka fell and Pakistan's currency was devalued by 58 per cent from Rs 4.60 to Rs 11.10 against the US dollar in 1971-72, the report said. Experts say this massive devaluation of currency under the PTI government fuelled inflationary pressures, adding that two major factors contributed to the price hike.

First, the prices of food and commodities as well as fuel prices skyrocketed in the international market, and second, the depreciation of the exchange rate by 30.5 per cent also led to higher inflation.

An analysis of regional currencies versus the US dollar shows that the Pakistani currency experienced massive depreciation compared to others, the report said.

The Indian rupee stood at 75.39 against a US dollar. The Indian rupee stood at Rs 70.09 against the US dollar in 2018, Rs 73.66 in December 2019, Rs 74.53 in March 2020 and Rs 74.57 in April 2021.

In the case of Bangladesh, the Bangladeshi Taka stood at 85.76 against the US dollar and it hovered around 84 to 85.9 on an average over the last two years. Meanwhile, the Pakistani rupee continued to fall in value and stood at Rs 177 against a US dollar in December 2021. It depreciated sharply from Rs 123 to Rs 177 against a dollar over the last three years and four months.

## JASKIRAT SINGH SIDHU'S DEPORTATION CASE: LAWYER SAYS 'NOT GETTING ON A PLANE ANY TIME SOON'

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The 415 pages sent to the government incorporate letters from Sidhu's family, the general population and three Broncos families, including Scott Thomas, whose 18-year-old child, Evan, passed on in the accident. Greene said his client has not looked for parole and was just moved from medium security to least security toward the finish of August.

Regardless, the legal counsellor said Sidhu wouldn't leave the nation right away as he said, "there are other processes, and he's not getting on a plane any time soon, even if they decide that's what they want to do." Sidhu moved to Canada from India with his spouse in 2013, took training to turn into a transport truck driver, and got his permit quickly before April 6, 2018, crash.





## Sand mafia in Punjab worth Rs 20,000 crore, says Delhi CM Kejriwal

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday said the sand mafia in Punjab alone runs illegal business of over Rs 20,000 crore. There are serious allegations of direct involvement of ruling Congress MLAs, their ministers and their close associates, including the Chief Minister himself. Kejriwal was responding to the queries of the media persons on his arrival at Sri Guru Ramdas Ji International Airport here. He was on a day-long visit to Punjab for participation in party programmes. He said when allegations of involvement of the Congress MLAs and ministers, including the Chief Minister, in sand mafia and many other illegal activities are being levelled, then who will protect the interests of the general public? "Who will save the interest of Punjab? To whom will the common people go for justice? Can the welfare of Punjab and the people of

Punjab be expected from such mafia and patrons of mafia state?" Kejriwal said earlier the Badals and the BJP had looted the state by patronizing all sorts of mafia during their regime. In 2017, people expressed their faith in the promises made by the Congress and the Captain (Amarinder Singh), but they too followed the footsteps of the Badals. He said according to an estimate, illegal trade of Rs 20,000 crore per annum in sand and gravel mining alone was going on in Punjab. This money can be used for the welfare of the people, but it is going into the pockets of the leaders instead of the government coffers. Kejriwal promised that with the formation of the AAP government in 2022, all sorts of mafia, including illegal sand mining, would be shut down. The money that is going into the pockets of political leaders from the resources of the state due to mafia rule will go to the needy pockets of mothers, sisters and the elderly.

## Amarinder, SAD, BJP hand in glove to curb Punjab's rise: CM Channi

(IANS): Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Channi on Monday blamed his predecessor Amarinder Singh, Shiromani Akali Dal President Sukhbir Badal and the BJP for clandestinely harming the state's interests, with their sole focus on the forthcoming Assembly polls. At a media conclave here, he said all the three were hand in glove to hamper the state's prospects in the past, in the present and would continue to pursue their politically motivated agenda in the future too. Channi, however, said no one can dampen the upbeat mood of Congress workers this time coupled with positive public sentiment, which was all the more decisive in the favour of none except the Congress. The Chief Minister said now there is sea change in the mood of rank and file of the Congress, especially after the ouster of Amarinder Singh. On the issues of sacrilege of Guru Granth Sahib and drugs, Channi said things were moving on the right track and soon justice would be delivered to the satisfaction of the people. He said though the outcome in both these issues has been delayed as these were badly entangled but hopefully the government is heading towards its logical end. Replying to another query about possible damage caused by Amarinder Singh to the Congress in the ensuing Assembly polls, Channi said a person who could not deliver during his tenure of four and a half years and confined himself within the four walls of his farm house, how anyone can now rely on his fledgling party, which absolutely lacks credibility due to his past nature of non-accessibility



and slackness. "Amarinder Singh had been playing a friendly match with the Badals to mutually facilitate each other in the seat of power to pursue their narrow vested interests. These so-called foe-turned-friends this time too are secretly engaged in adjustment of seats during the assembly polls to extend political gains to one another," he claimed. Asked to comment on the functioning of state Congress chief Navjot Sidhu, the Chief Minister said Sidhu is the party President and he was heading the government and there was perfect harmony between the organisation and the government.

## 1984 RIOTS: EX-CONG LEADER SAJJAN KUMAR CHARGED WITH 2 MURDERS

A Delhi court has announced charges against former Congress leader Sajjan Kumar in the 1984 riots case, in connection with two murders in Delhi's Raj Nagar locality. The court charged him with rioting, murder, and dacoity under sections 147, 149, 148, 302, 308, 323, 395, 397, 427, 436, 440 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) in connection with the murder of Jaswant Singh and Tarun Deep Singh. The family of the duo had alleged that Sajjan Kumar instigated a mob that led to burning alive of the two men besides setting afire their house on November 1, 1984. As per the case in this regard registered at the Saraswati Vihar police station, Sajjan Kumar was identified by one eyewitness after showing his photograph. Earlier in 1994, the case was closed as untraced and the SIT had opened it again, advocate Harpreet Singh Hora apprised. The court has heard arguments from both sides and now the matter is listed on December 16 for formal framing of charges. "This court is of the considered opinion that a prima facie case is made out against the accused for framing of charge against him for commission of the offences punishable under sections of 147/148/149 IPC as well as the offences punishable under 302/308/ 323/395/ 397/427/436/440 read with Section 149 IPC. Charges are accordingly directed to be framed against him for the said offences," read the order of Additional Sessions Judge M.K. Nagpal dated December 4. The court order said the evidence is sufficient to make a prima facie opinion that an unlawful assembly or mob of several thousand persons armed with deadly weapons like iron rods was there to resort to large-scale looting, arson, or destruction of property of Sikhs to avenge the killing of the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi by two Sikh bodyguards. "The above incident of attack on the house of complainant took place at the hand of said mob only and in the said attack not only the house and other household articles of the complainant were looted and destroyed, by fire or otherwise, but also the killing of her husband and son took place and even the complainant and the other victims suffered injuries at the hands of participants of such mob," the court order read. "Further, there is also sufficient material on record for this court to form a prima facie opinion that the accused was not only a participant of the said mob but also leading it", it read.

## ACTIVE COVID CASES IN COUNTRY INCREASE TO 99,763

**NEW DELHI:** With 9,765 new coronavirus infections being reported in a day, India's total tally of Covid cases rose to 3,46,06,541, while the active cases increased to 99,763, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Thursday. The death toll climbed to 4,69,724 with 477 fresh fatalities including 403 from Kerala, according to the data updated at 8 am. Of the 403 deaths in Kerala, 96 were reported over the last few days and 307 were designated as Covid deaths after receiving appeals based on the new guidelines of the Centre and the directions of the Supreme Court, a Kerala state government release said. The ministry said the daily rise in new coronavirus infections has been less than 50,000 for 158 consecutive days now. The active cases comprise 0.29 per cent of the total infections, the lowest since March 2020, while the national Covid recovery rate was recorded at 98.35 per cent, the ministry said. An increase of 740 cases has been recorded in the active Covid caseload in a span of 24 hours. The daily positivity rate was recorded at 0.89 per cent. It has been less than two per cent for last 59 days. The weekly positivity rate was also recorded at 0.85 per cent. It has been below one per cent for the last 18 days, according to the ministry. The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 3,40,37,054, while the case fatality rate was recorded at 1.36 per cent. The cumulative doses administered in the country so far under the nationwide Covid vaccination drive has exceeded 124.96 crore. The 477 new fatalities include 28 from Maharashtra. A total of 4,69,724 deaths have been reported so far in the country including 1,41,025 from Maharashtra, 40,535 from Kerala, 38,213 from Karnataka, 36,492 from Tamil Nadu, 25,098 from Delhi, 22,911 from Uttar Pradesh and 19,498 from West Bengal.

## INDIA BECOMES BOOMING MARKET FOR HOSPITALITY EDUCATION

**NEW DELHI, (IANS):** Sommet Education, one of the world's leading hospitality and culinary education players, recently joined hands with the country's premium hospitality institute, Indian School of Hospitality (ISH). With this Sommet Education now owns a 51 per cent stake in the ISH, a significant addition to the former's expansive global network. The strategic partnership allows Sommet Education to establish two of its prestigious institutions in India: Ecole Ducasse, a world-wide education reference in culinary and pastry arts, and Les Roches, one of the world's leading hospitality business schools. With this academic alliance, Ecole Ducasse will now have its first campus in India at ISH, and Les Roches will launch its undergraduate and post-graduate hospitality management programmes in the country. Sommet Education's belief in the Indian market and its potential to grow exponentially made the country the focal point of its development plans. As per the recent data, the Indian hospitality industry has shown a 122.9 per cent growth in RevPAR in Q3 2021 as compared to Q2 2021. The sector bounced back strongly with the relaxations in regulations over travel restrictions post the second wave of the pandemic. During the recent meeting between Benoit-Etienne Domenget, CEO, Sommet Education and Dilip Puri, Founder & CEO, Indian School of Hospitality, both the leaders shared their future development plans for India. Two are exploring opportunities to launch a second campus, most likely to be located in Mumbai, Bengaluru, or Hyderabad. The duo also plans to set up a network of Ecole Ducasse studios in select cities across India, including New Delhi, Mumbai, and Bengaluru. These studios will cater to the needs of not only hospitality aspirants but also professionals, enthusiasts, and career changers for upskilling and acquiring new skills in line with changing dynamics of the industry. Besides setting Ecole Ducasse studios in India, the expansion of the current ISH Gurugram campus is also underway.

## INDIA AIMING AT \$43 BILLION AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS' EXPORTS, SAYS GOVT

Union Minister of State of Commerce and Industry, Anupriya Patel has said that the country has set a \$400 billion target for merchandise exports for 2021-22, of which \$262 billion has already been achieved in the April-November 2021-22 period, an official statement said on Sunday. "A record export target of \$43 billion has been set for agricultural products in 2021-22 and because of efforts by APEDA and farmers, this target would be achieved in the current fiscal," Patel said while addressing the Agri-Export Conference cum Buyer-Seller Meet at Uttar Pradesh's Mirzapur on Saturday. The increase in agricultural and processed food products exports from Purvanchal (eastern UP) will not only boost India's foreign exchange earnings, it will help in doubling farmers' income as well as boost employment opportunities in the region, the Minister said at the event organised by Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), the government release said. More than 700 farmers and exporters attended the conference, where APEDA Chairman, Dr M Angamuthu spoke about the initiatives taken for boosting exports from Purvanchal region. The event was organised to commemorate the 75th year of Independence being celebrated with the theme 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav'. During the conference a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between leading exporters-Association and Farmer Producers' Organisation (FPOs) of Purvanchal region for increasing agricultural products' exports. Patel and Angamuthu flagged off export consignments of non-basmati rice to China and green chilies to the United Arab Emirates, the release added.

## 98.1% INDIANS BELIEVE BABRI DEMOLITION DESTROYED

IANS- A large number of Indians believe that the demolition of Babri Masjid in 1992 strained the relations between Hindus and Muslims across the country, as per an IANS-CVoter snap poll. This was revealed by a nationwide poll with a sample size of 1942 conducted using random sampling on December 5, 2021. As many as 98.1 per cent of the respondents said that the incident damaged the relations between the two communities. However, while 59.3 per cent of these respondents further opined that the relations between the communities that had got damaged because of the incident were healing with time, 38.8 per cent stated that the Hindu-Muslim relations were permanently damaged and divide continues to exist almost 30 years after the Babri demolition. Only 1.9 per cent of those who participated in the survey said that the incident did not damage Hindu-Muslim relations in the country. A clear manifestation of the impact of the Babri demolition on Hindu-Muslim relations was widespread communal riots that took place in the aftermath of the incident. Religious hatred had engulfed the nation and communal riots in different states claimed more than 1,000 lives. However, in the past few years, the number of serious communal riots has gone down and respondents in the same survey were equally divided on the reasons for the dip in communal violence in the country. While 30.8 per cent of the respondents said that exemplary punishment to rioters by the judiciary is the main reason for the reduced number of communal riots, 36.5 per cent of those, who participated in the survey said that cooler heads from both communities calming down inflamed passions is the prime reason for ebbing the communal violence and 32.7 per cent opined better law and order maintenance by police has brought down the occurrence of such horrific incidents.

## INDIA RANKS FOURTH MOST POWERFUL COUNTRY IN ASIA, AS PER THE LOWY INSTITUTE ASIA POWER INDEX 2021

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India is ranked as a middle power in Asia. As the fourth most powerful country in Asia, India again falls short of the major power threshold in 2021. Its overall score declined by two points compared to 2020. India is one of eighteen countries in the region to trend downward in its overall score in 2021, the report said. The country performs best in the future resources measure, where it finishes behind only the US and China. However, lost growth potential for Asia's third largest economy due largely to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic has led to a diminished economic forecast for 2030, Lowy Institute said. India finishes in 4th place in four other measures: economic capability, military capability, resilience and cultural influence. India is trending in opposite directions for its two weakest measures of power. On the one hand, it remains in 7th place in its defence networks, reflecting progress in its regional defence diplomacy -- notably with the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, which includes Australia, Japan and the US. On the other hand, India has slipped into 8th position for economic relationships, as it falls further behind in regional trade integration efforts, Lowy Institute said. India exerts less influence in the region than expected given its available resources, as indicated by the country's negative power gap score. Its negative power gap score has deteriorated further in 2021 relative to previous years. As per the report, many developing economies, including India, have been hardest hit in comparison to their pre-Covid growth paths. This has the potential to reinforce bipolarity in the Indo-Pacific, driven by the growing power differential of the two superpowers, the US and China, in relation to nearly every other emerging power in the region.





# WHO ADVISES AGAINST USE OF CONVALESCENT PLASMA FOR COVID TREATMENT

Convalescent plasma shows no improvement in survival and other important measures and is not recommended for patients with Covid-19, according to a study released on Tuesday by the World Health Organization (WHO). Covid-19 convalescent plasma, also known as "survivor's plasma", is transfusion of blood plasma from patients who have recovered from Covid-19. Last year, the US Food and Drug Administration

(FDA) issued an emergency use authorisation to allow use of convalescent plasma in hospitalised patients with Covid-19. A WHO Guideline Development Group of international experts in The BMJ wrote that despite its initial promise, current evidence shows that it does not improve survival nor reduce the need for mechanical ventilation, and it is costly and time-consuming to administer.

## IMF chief urges global cooperation to control pandemic, support economic recovery

**WASHINGTON:** Kristalina Georgieva, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), has urged for global cooperation to control the raging Covid-19 pandemic and support the economic recovery as the new Omicron variant has spread to over 40 countries around the world. "The global economy has continued to recover, but the recovery faces many risks, including the uncertain path of the pandemic amid the arrival of new variants, and the outlook on inflation," Georgieva said in a statement on Monday at the conclusion of the sixth "1+6" Roundtable. "To address these challenges, urgent policy action is needed to control the pandemic, limit scarring, and transform the global economy," Georgieva said, stressing four areas for global cooperation. First, urgent action is needed to reach the IMF's pandemic proposal to vaccinate 40 per cent in each country by the end of this year and 70 per cent by mid-2022. Second, countries need to cooperate to reduce trade tensions and strengthen the multilateral trading system, which is a key engine for growth and jobs. Third, more ambition is needed to



accelerate the transition to net-zero carbon emissions and to support climate adoption efforts, tapping all policy levers available. Finally, many developing economies will need the global community's support in their recovery, as they face shrinking fiscal space and rising debt burdens. "Supporting the global recovery will be a joint task that we need to tackle together," Georgieva added.

## PAKISTAN MOVES TO CURB MOB KILLINGS AFTER LYNCHING OF SRI LANKAN NATIONAL



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The assembly was attended by Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry, Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed, Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa, National Security Adviser Moeed Yousaf, Punjab Chief Minister Usman Buzdar and different senior army and civil officers. The assembly expressed critical concern over the merciless act of killing of Sri Lankan national Priyantha Diyawadana in Sialkot final Friday, and expressed the resolve to convey the perpetrators to justice, the report mentioned. The individuals on the assembly have been of the view that people and mobs can't be allowed to take the regulation into their palms, and such incidents can't be tolerated. "Therefore, a comprehensive strategy shall be implemented to curb such incidents and ensure strict punishment to all the perpetrators," learn the communique. Earlier within the day, the mortal stays of the Sri Lankan national have been repatriated to Colombo from Lahore airport with full state honours.

## OPPOSITION FAVOURED BY AUSTRALIAN VOTERS TO WIN NEXT ELECTION: POLL

(ANS): A new poll has revealed that Australia's main opposition Labor Party is the favourite among voters to win the next federal election. The latest Newspoll, which was published on Sunday night, found that 47 per cent of voters expect Labor to form a government following the election, which is due to be held by May 2022, compared to 37 per cent who expect the governing Coalition to remain in power, reports Xinhua news agency. However, the margin is closer than that in the lead-up to the 2019 election, when 55 per cent of voters tipped a Labor victory only for the Coalition to pull off a major upset and win a third term in the government. According to the poll Labor still leads the Coalition 53-47 on a two-party preferred basis. The poll indicated that preference deals with independents, who could have a major impact on the election result with 13 per cent of respondents saying they intend to cast their first preference votes for minor parties. Prime Minister Scott Morrison continues to lead Labor leader Anthony Albanese as the voters' preferred Prime Minister, with 45 per cent choosing the incumbent compared to 36 per cent for Albanese. The most significant change since the last poll in mid-November was in the leaders' satisfaction rating. For the first time since March 2020, Albanese leads Morrison in net satisfaction, which is measured by subtracting the portion of voters dissatisfied with their performance from those who are satisfied. Albanese recorded a negative six rating while Morrison's was negative eight compared to a positive-36 rating at the same time in 2020.



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DINO HOLIDAY IS A 50,000 SQ FT INDOOR THEME PARK  
CONSISTING OF OVER 45 LIFE-SIZE ANIMATRONIC DINOSAURS,  
CARNIVAL RIDES, GAMES, HOLIDAY DECOR, FOOD AND SO MUCH MORE.



DINO HOLIDAY IS DEC 17 TO JAN 2ND



LOCATION: MARKHAM FAIRGROUNDS, 10801 MCCOWAN RD, MARKHAM

For tickets visit [Dinoholiday.ca](http://Dinoholiday.ca) or call: 9058416484

Get 10% off by using the promo code: YMEDIA  
For Online ONLY at [www.Dinoholiday.ca](http://www.Dinoholiday.ca)



MARKHAM LOCATION

\*All Sale Items For Markham Store Only

Sunnysupermarket.com

SUNNY

FOODMART

陽光超級市場

FLYER PRICES EFFECTIVE:

Dec.10 (Fri.) - Dec.16 (Thur.) 2021

PRODUCE

Fresh Flat Cabbage

新鮮大白菜

Reg: \$0.99

Save: \$0.42

57¢ lb

Fresh Long Eggplant

新鮮長茄子

Reg: \$1.99

Save: \$0.72

\$1.27 lb

Fresh Baby Napa Bok

新鮮奶白菜

Reg: \$1.99

Save: \$0.72

\$1.27 lb

Fresh California Booth Ranches Navel

新鮮加州博蘭橙

Reg: \$1.99

Save: \$0.62

\$1.37 lb

Fresh Red Seedless Grape

新鮮加州無籽紅提

Reg: \$2.99

Save: \$1.02

\$1.97 lb

Fresh Cantaloupe

新鮮哈密瓜

Reg: \$4.99

Save: \$2.02

\$2.97 ea

MEAT

Fresh Chicken Leg (Back Attached)

新鮮大雞腿

Reg: \$1.69

Save: \$0.69

\$1.00 lb

Fresh Veal Shoulder

新鮮牛肩肉

Reg: \$3.99

Save: \$0.50

\$3.49 lb

Frozen 3 Bones Beef Short Rib

冰鮮三骨牛腩

Reg: \$7.99

Save: \$2.00

\$5.99 lb

KITCHEN

Chicken Fried Rice With

雞汁雞肉炒飯

Reg: \$6.99

Save: \$3.01

\$3.98 order

Deep Fried Tilapia Fish

酥炸金山魚

Reg: \$6.99

Save: \$3.01

\$3.98 order

Star Fried Chicken With

星洲雞飯

Reg: \$10.99

Save: \$3.01

\$7.98 order

Deep Fried Shrimp With Salt

酥炸蝦球

Reg: \$13.99

Save: \$5.01

\$8.98 order

Bourbon Chicken

黑椒雞

Reg: \$15.99

Save: \$5.01

\$10.98 order

SUPER DEAL

Live Green Bass

游水青斑

Reg: \$15.99

Save: \$1.02

\$14.97 lb

Haagen-Dazs Selected Ice Cream

500ml

Reg: \$7.99

Save: \$4.00

\$3.99 ea

SH Raw Peeled Shrimp Net 400g

Reg: \$7.99

Save: \$2.02

\$5.97 ea

Seven Baskets Premium

Frozen Raw Vannell

Shrimp 20/30 Net 400g

Reg: \$14.99

Save: \$7.02

\$7.97 ea

Sunthai Seafood Red Fish

Net 3lb

Reg: \$19.99

Save: \$5.02

\$14.97 ea

Gray Ridge Extra Large 18

Family Pack White Eggs

Reg: \$6.99

Save: \$2.02

\$4.97 ea

Lactantia Salted / Unsalted

Butter 1lb

Reg: \$6.99

Save: \$1.02

\$5.97 ea

Sunthai Snacks Series 341g

Reg: \$2.99

Save: \$1.02

\$1.97 ea

Lallemand Baking Instaform

Instant Dry Yeast 450g

Reg: \$7.99

Save: \$4.02

\$3.97 ea

Ovaltine Malt Drink Mix

400g

Reg: \$6.99

Save: \$2.02

\$4.97 ea

V-Yumz Fruit Chews

Immunity Boosters Vitamin

C & Zinc / Vitamin D 350g

Reg: \$3.99

Save: \$1.02

\$2.97 ea

Alshifa 100% Natural Honey

500g

Reg: \$8.99

Save: \$3.02

\$5.97 ea

Ribena Blackcurrant

Beverage 850ml

Reg: \$8.99

Save: \$2.02

\$6.97 ea

Brooke Bond Red Label Tea

900g

Reg: \$11.99

Save: \$3.02

\$8.97 ea

Nestle Original Coffee

Mate 1.9kg

Reg: \$11.99

Save: \$2.02

\$9.97 ea

Wonder White / 100% Whole

Wheat Texas Toast / Thin

Sliced Bread 6750g

Reg: \$3.29

Save: \$0.82

\$2.47 pk

Sesame Chicken

芝麻雞

Reg: \$10.99

Save: \$3.01

\$7.98 order

Fresh Crown Broccoli

新鮮鮮花西蘭花

Reg: \$1.99

Save: \$0.92

\$1.27 lb

Fresh Spanish Persimmon

6pcs (Ready To Eat)

新鮮西班牙即食高升柿

Reg: \$8.99

Save: \$2.02

\$6.97 cs

GROCERY

Maggi Authentic Masala

Spicy Indian Noodles 70g

Reg: \$0.49/ea

Save: \$0.47

3 FOR \$1.00

Parle-G Original Gluco

Biscuits 300g

Reg: \$1.99

Save: \$0.99

\$1.00

Lal Qilla Crunchy Fried

Onions 400g

Reg: \$3.00

Save: \$2.02

\$1.97 ea

Dil Se Baked Delight Milk

Rusk 600g

Reg: \$3.99

Save: \$1.02

\$2.97 ea

Planters Salted Cocktail

Peanuts 200g

Reg: \$3.99

Save: \$1.02

\$2.97 ea

Fruiti - O Mango Juice 1.5l

Reg: \$3.99

Save: \$1.02

\$2.97 ea

Deep Kesar Mango Pulp

850g

Reg: \$3.99

Save: \$1.02

\$2.97 ea

Divya Malda All Purpose

Flour 4lb

Reg: \$4.99

Save: \$1.02

\$3.97 ea

Global Choice Rice Flour

4lb

Reg: \$4.99

Save: \$1.02

\$3.97 ea

Eagle Kala Chana (Desi

Chickpeas) 4lb

Reg: \$5.99

Save: \$2.02

\$3.97 ea

National Ginger / Garlic /

Ginger & Garlic Paste 750g

Reg: \$5.99

Save: \$1.02

\$4.97 ea

Sulmat Green Raisin 450g

Reg: \$5.99

Save: \$1.02

\$4.97 ea

Zaika Tamarind / Tamarind

& Date Sauce 750g

Reg: \$5.99

Save: \$1.02

\$4.97 ea

Aurora Plain Bread Crumbs

600g

Reg: \$5.99

Save: \$1.02

\$4.97 ea

Deep Urud Dal (Split Matar)

4lb

Reg: \$8.99

Save: \$2.02

\$6.97 ea

FROZEN

Golden Harvest Aloo /

200g

Reg: \$3.99

Save: \$2.02

\$1.97 ea

Mading Garotho 1.6kg

Reg: \$6.99

Save: \$3.02

\$3.97 ea

Frozen Wild Caught

Pollock Fillets 400g

Reg: \$8.99

Save: \$4.02

\$4.97 ea

Al Safa Chicken Burgers

454g

Reg: \$8.99

Save: \$3.02

\$5.97 ea

Golden Harvest Paratha

Reg: \$9.99

Save: \$4.02

\$5.97 ea

Frozen Spicy Fries

Reg: \$9.99

Save: \$3.02

\$6.97 ea

Oneworld Halal Beef

Patties 1.17kg 9pcs

Reg: \$12.99

Save: \$3.02

\$7.97 ea

Ashtoka Family Pack

Tandoori (Naan) 15PCS

Reg: \$13.99

Save: \$4.02

\$7.97 ea

Kebab Factory Boneless

Tandoori Chicken

Reg: \$16.99

Save: \$4.02

\$7.97 ea

AL - Thomas Samosa /

Spring Roll 1.2kg

Reg: \$12.99

Save: \$3.02

\$1.97 ea

Supreme Fish Frozen

Pompano

Reg: \$3.99

Save: \$3.02

\$2.97 ea

Supreme Fish Bone

Steak

Reg: \$5.99

Save: \$2.02

\$3.97 ea

Sunthai Seafood Frozen

Wild Caught Cattle Fish

Reg: \$6.99

Save: \$3.02

\$3.97 ea

Sunthai Seafood Frozen

White Shrimp 500g

Reg: \$12.99

Save: \$5.02

\$7.97 ea

Cool Ocean Impex Black

Tiger Shrimp 400g

Reg: \$13.99

Save: \$5.02

\$8.97 ea

SH Cooked Shrimp

(Cocktail) 450g

Reg: \$12.99

Save: \$3.02

\$9.97 ea

SH Jumbo Raw Red

Shrimp Net 450g

Reg: \$15.99

Save: \$4.02

\$9.97 ea

Sunthai Seafood Frozen

King Fish Steak 5.0

Reg: \$39.99

Save: \$10.02

\$2.97 ea

BAKERY

Crispy Rusk 200g

Reg: \$2.29

Save: \$0.52

\$1.77 pk

Chicken Pie 2pcs

Reg: \$2.49

Save: \$0.52

\$1.97 pk

La Fournée Dorée Brûlée Burger Buns 4 Buns

Reg: \$2.99

Save: \$1.02

\$1.97 pk

Sunthai Fruit Cake / Golden

Eggless Fruit Cake

340g

Reg: \$2.79

Save: \$0.52

\$2.27 pk

Mini Cheese Croissant 10pcs

Reg: \$3.29

Save: \$0.52

\$2.77 pk

Furiani Texas Garlic Toast 16pcs

Reg: \$4.29

Save: \$0.52

\$3.77 pk

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Reg: \$1.99

Save: \$0.62

\$1.37 lb

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Reg: \$2.99

Save: \$1.02

\$1.97 lb

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新鮮哈密瓜

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Save: \$2.02

\$2.97 ea

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Reg: \$1.69

Save: \$0.69

\$1.00 lb

Fresh Veal Shoulder

新鮮牛肩肉

Reg: \$3.99

Save: \$0.50

\$3.49 lb

Frozen 3 Bones Beef Short Rib

冰鮮三骨牛腩

Reg: \$7.99

Save: \$2.00

\$5.99 lb

DAIRY

16k Turn Almond Drink 946ml

Reg: \$2.99

Save: \$1.02

\$1.97 ea

Harvest Power 341g

Reg: \$2.99

Save: \$1.02

\$1.97 ea

Maggi's Instant Noodle

Ultimate 200g

Reg: \$4.99

Save: \$1.02

\$3.97 ea

Stani Ricotta Cheese

454g

Reg: \$5.99

Save: \$3.02

\$2.97 ea

Harvest Creek Halal

Chicken Wings 900g

Reg: \$6.99

Save: \$3.02

\$3.97 ea

Oneworld Halal Shredded

Cheese 200g

Reg: \$6.99

Save: \$3.02

\$3.97 ea

BAKERY

Crispy Rusk 200g

Reg: \$2.29

Save: \$0.52

\$1.77 pk

Chicken Pie 2pcs

Reg: \$2.49

Save: \$0.52

\$1.97 pk

La Fournée Dorée Brûlée Burger Buns 4 Buns

Reg: \$2.99

Save: \$1.02

\$1.97 pk

GROCERY

Redpath Special Fine

Granulated Sugar 24g

Reg: \$2.99

Save: \$0.52

\$2.47 pk

Deerhart Doré Raisin 450g

Reg: \$4.99

Save: \$1.02

\$3.97 ea

Planters Salted Cocktail

Peanuts 200g

Reg: \$3.99

Save: \$1.02

\$2.97 ea

Coca-Cola Mega Bottles

1.8L 600ml

Reg: \$3.99

Save: \$1.02

\$2.97 ea

Eagle Brand Kala Chana 4lb

Reg: \$5.99

Save: \$2.02

\$3.97 ea

WE SERVE 100% HALAL YUMMY KITCHEN WE SERVE 100% HALAL

Singapore Style Rice

Reg: \$3.99

Save: \$1.02

\$2.97 ea

Tempura Shrimp Recipe

Reg: \$4.99

Save: \$1.02

\$3.97 ea

Star Fried Green Beans

Reg: \$4.99

Save: \$1.02

\$3.97 ea

Spicy Chicken

Reg: \$4.99

Save: \$1.02

\$3.97 ea

Sassy Chicken

Reg: \$4.99

Save: \$1.02

\$3.97 ea

Mexican Chicken

Reg: \$4.99

Save: \$1.02

\$3.97 ea