



**PM MODI MEETS US DEFENCE SECY, STRESSES COMMITMENT TO PARTNERSHIP.** **| CONTD. ON PAGE 5**

# Y MEDIA COVID & VACCINE REPORT

## US, JAPAN, AUSTRALIA PROVIDE FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO PRODUCE 1 BILLION COVID VACCINES IN INDIA

- Canada has approved four vaccine candidates till now, namely Pfizer- BioNtech, Moderna, Oxford-AstraZeneca and Serum Institute of India's CoviShield, and finally Johnson & Johnson vaccine.
- PM Trudeau thanks President Biden as White House plans to send 1.5 million doses of AstraZeneca vaccine to Canada
- U.S. to 'loan' 1.5 million doses of AstraZeneca vaccine to Canada and 2.5 million doses to Mexico.
- 'Canada is in process of finalizing an exchange agreement to receive 1.5 million AstraZeneca vaccine doses from U.S., Minster Anand tweets.
- EU's regulator says Oxford-AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine is 'safe and effective', benefits outweigh risks
- Health Canada confirms benefits of AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine continue to outweigh risks for use
- National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) recommends AstraZeneca vaccine to aged 65 & above.
- Every Canadian to receive inoculation by September.
- Ontario aims to have all eligible Ontarians receive 1st Covid-19 vaccine shot by June 20.
- Ontario government expects to inoculate up to nine million people between April 2021 and July 2021.
- Non-essential travel restrictions with the United States extended until April 21
- Council of Atlantic Premiers expects Atlantic bubble to resume April 19, 202
- Ontario launches provincial booking system & customer service desk to support Covid-19 vaccination appointment bookings.
- Ontarians aged 80+ can now book vaccination appointments online at <http://ontario.ca/bookvaccine> or call the provincial vaccine information line at 1-888-999-6488 for support.
- Starting March 22, more pharmacies & primary care settings offer AstraZeneca to those 60+
- AstraZeneca CoviShield vaccine available at designated pharmacies without OHIP health card in Canada.
- Ontario permits outdoor dining at restaurants, bars regions in grey-lockdown zone effective March 22
- Starting March 22, indoor dining capacity limits at restaurants, bars for regions in red & orange zones increase by 50%
- B.C. to begin inoculating front-line workers including grocery store workers, teachers from April
- 'Covid strains spreading rapidly in Canada'
- Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. David Williams, says, 'we are in the third wave it is just a matter of what kind of wave it is'
- Delhi-to-Toronto flights bringing most Covid cases to Canada: Health Canada's data
- Pak PM Imran Khan isolates after testing Covid positive
- President Biden says every American adult will be able to get covid-19 vaccine by May
- President Biden sees freedom from Covid by Independence-day, July 4.
- Canada to receive 1 million Pfizer vaccine doses per week between March 22 and May 10

## BRAMPTON RALLY ORGANIZER GETS POLICE SUMMONS FOR PANDEMIC VIOLATION

**REGION OF PEEL** – Officers from the 22 Division have issued a Provincial Summons to a man for violating the Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act in the City of Brampton. On Saturday, March 7, 2021, organizers initiated a car rally and a foot march protest in the City of Brampton which is in violation of the current restrictions as outlined by the Province of Ontario.



## 'IT IS DANGEROUS TO SPEAK UP IN INDIA TODAY': TIME

**NEW DELHI, (IANS)** "It Is Dangerous To Speak Up In India Today", is the headline of a story in Time magazine which talks about what the resignations of 2 academics show about freedom of expression under the Narendra Modi government. Two prominent academics stepped down from their positions at one of India's most respected universities this week, shining a spotlight on the state of academic freedom and a widening crackdown on dissent under the Hindu nationalist ruling party, the Time magazine report said.



## TRIALS OF DETAINED CANADIANS IN CHINA BEGIN

### CHINA ACCUSED DETAINED CANADIANS OF SPYING

Chinese authorities accused two detained Canadians of spying as tensions between the two nations grow over the possible extradition of a Huawei executive to the US.

Michael Kovrig, a former diplomat, and Michael Spavor, a businessman, were detained in December after Huawei Chief Financial Officer Meng Wanzhou was arrested in Canada on suspicion of fraud and breaching sanctions on Iran.



## FORMER MUMBAI TOP COP NOW IN FIRING LINE

### INVESTIGATE PARAM BIR SINGH'S LINKS WITH UNDERWORLD: MUMBAI COP

**NEW DELHI, (IANS)** A new controversy has erupted featuring former Mumbai Police Commissioner Param Bir Singh with Mumbai Police inspector, Anup S. Dange seeking an inquiry into his connections with "dubious characters" Jitendra Navlani and Bharat Shah who are having underworld links.

In a letter to Maharashtra's Additional Chief Secretary, Home, in February, Dange said that on November 22, 2019, Jeetu Navlani threatened him when the Inspector was trying to get the pubs closed on time in Breach Candy area.



## KEJRIWAL HAND IN GLOVE WITH BJP: AKALI DAL

**CHANDIGARH, (IANS)** The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) on Sunday said Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and AAP Punjab unit chief Bhagwant Mann were hand in glove with the BJP-led Centre. He said Mann had given his assent to the implementation of the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020 in a meeting of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Food and Consumer Affairs with Kejriwal's approval. In a statement here, former Minister and SAD spokesperson Daljit Singh Cheema said Kejriwal should have apologized to the farmers for the sin committed by Mann.



## BIGGEST ASTEROID TO PASS BY EARTH THIS YEAR COMES CLOSEST

**WASHINGTON, (IANS)** The largest asteroid to visit Earth in 2021 is passing by our planet on Sunday at a speed of about 124,000 kph. Although this speed is faster than the speed at which most asteroids encounter Earth, there is no threat of a collision with our planet, NASA said earlier this month. Called 2001 FO32, the near-Earth asteroid will make its closest approach at a distance of about two million kilometres. "The reason for the asteroid's unusually speedy close approach is its highly inclined and elongated (or eccentric) orbit around the Sun, an orbit that is tilted 39 degrees to Earth's orbital plane," NASA said.

## Y MEDIA POLITICAL SENSEX, ELECTIONS 2021-2022



**YOGI SET TO WIN ANOTHER LANDSLIDE IN UP: IANS C-VOTER TRACKER**



**AAP WILL FORM GOVT. IN PUNJAB IF ELECTIONS WERE HELD TODAY: C VOTER SURVEY**



**WHO WILL WIN DEADLOCK IN BENGAL?**

**DETAILS ON PAGE 4**





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!सچائی کو جانیں! सच जनिए!  
உண்மையை அறியுங்கள்!



प्रसार बंद करो! बीमार को रोकिए!  
रोग छड़ानो बक्क करुन! डैमड डे वे!  
பரவுதலை நிறுத்துங்கள்!



مدد پہاں ہے! مہدس سیہے رہے!  
मदद यहाँ है! உதவி இங்கே!  
சাহாய் எখানে பாவே!

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**To know more visit  [apnahealth.org](https://apnahealth.org)**

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Effective March 22 at 12:01 a.m.

**Moving to Red-Control:**

- BRANT COUNTY HEALTH UNIT
- CHATHAM-KENT PUBLIC HEALTH
- LEEDS, GRENVILLE AND LANARK DISTRICT HEALTH UNIT

**Moving to Orange-Restrict:**

- WELLINGTON-DUFFERIN-GUELPH PUBLIC HEALTH

**Moving to Yellow-Protect:**

- KINGSTON, FRONTENAC AND LENNOX & ADDINGTON PUBLIC HEALTH
- NORTH BAY PARRY SOUND DISTRICT
- PORCUPINE HEALTH UNIT
- TIMISKAMING HEALTH UNIT

ONTARIO MOVE EIGHT #PUBLICHEALTH REGIONS TO NEW LEVELS IN COVID-19 RESPONSE FRAMEWORK (CHRISTINE ELLIOTT/TWITTER)

# DELHI-TO-TORONTO FLIGHTS BRINGING MOST COVID CASES TO CANADA

**TORONTO, (IANS)** Flights from New Delhi to Toronto are bringing in the largest number of international passengers testing positive for the novel coronavirus, according to data issued by Health Canada. There are two daily flights between the two cities, operated by Air India and Air Canada. The period from March 3-19 shows that almost all the New Delhi-Toronto flights carried Covid-positive passengers. Passengers in the three-row range of each Covid-positive person on the flight are deemed as impacted. As many as 30 Covid-infected flights from Delhi have landed in Canada since March 4 – nine in Vancouver and 21 in Toronto. Among the 21 flights landing in Toronto, 14 flights showed a minimum of six infected rows. The remaining seven flights had an unknown number of impacted rows. The two most-heavily infected flights from Delhi landed in Toronto on March 9 and 13. The entire business-class and premium economy cabins on the Air Canada Boeing 787 Dreamliner flight from Delhi on March 9 were reported to be affected. Except for eight rows, the economy class was also infected. On March 13, the Air India flight landed with 22 out of 35 rows of its economy class infected.



In all, 106 Covid-infected flights have landed in Canada from various international destinations since March 4, making Indian-origin flights the biggest source of Covid-positive passengers. Air travellers must provide proof of a negative Covid-19 test before boarding Canada-bound flights. They also undergo a test upon arrival. Canadian air travellers returning home quarantine for three days in government-approved hotels.

# ‘COVID STRAINS SPREADING RAPIDLY IN CANADA’



**OTTAWA, (IANS)** Covid-19 variants are spreading quickly across Canada as some provinces have eased restrictions after cases began to fall last month, according to health authorities. A total of 4,086 “variants of concern” cases have been reported across the country as of Wednesday, with an increase of 468 new infections of this kind since Monday, Xinhua news agency quoted the Public Health

Agency of Canada as saying in an update. The “variants of concern” now include 3,777 B.1.1.7, 238 B.1.351, and 71 P.1 strains, according to the update. Some 1,131 and 1,028 cases of the B.1.1.7 variant were reported in Ontario and Alberta, respectively, while British Columbia confirmed 921 cases of this variant which is believed to be 35 per cent to 40 per cent more contagious. Meanwhile, the country reported a total of 918,262 cases and 22,546 deaths. Theresa Tam, the country’s chief public health officer, said on Wednesday that average daily case counts are now on the rise, noting that national data show a seven-day average of 3,194 new cases starting March 10 and currently there are 31,517 active cases across the country. Maintaining public health measures and individual precautions is crucial to reducing infection rates, and avoiding a rapid resurgence and its severe outcomes, Tam tweeted. Meanwhile, health experts have said it is time to take strict measures, considering Canadians had relaxed quite a bit after case numbers fell in early January.

# EU PROPOSES COVID-19 CERTIFICATE TO BOOST TRAVEL



**BRUSSELS, (IANS)** The European Commission on Wednesday proposed a Digital Green Certificate covering Covid-19 vaccination, testing and recovery, in a bid to reopen the European Union (EU) “in a safe, sustainable and predictable way.” “This is an EU level approach to issuing, verifying and accepting certificates to facilitate free movement within the EU,” the executive arm of the bloc said in a statement, noting that the legislative proposal is “based on a strict respect for non-discrimination and of the fundamental rights of EU citizens.” The European Commission proposed to define and implement a technical framework for the certificate at the EU level by mid-June, so that

security, interoperability, as well as full compliance with personal data protection, can be safeguarded, the Xinhua news agency reported. “It will also allow the possibility to extend to compatible certificates issued in third countries,” the Commission added. The proposal is “a balanced package of existing and new measures,” European Commission Vice President Margaritis Schinas said. “In lifting restrictions, we must learn the lessons of 2020 and avoid damaging and costly cycles of opening and closing.” Schinas hoped the bloc’s 27 member states could endorse the proposal at the EU summit on March 25.

## ONTARIO’S BOOKING SYSTEM TO EXPAND TO INDIVIDUALS AGED 75 AND OLDER FROM MARCH 22

Ontario is expanding appointments through its online booking system to individuals aged 75+, effective Monday, March 22, 2021

**TORONTO** — With over 50 per cent of Ontario residents aged 80 and over having received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, the Ontario government is expanding appointments through its online booking system to individuals aged 75 and over, effective Monday, March 22, 2021, ahead of schedule.

Details were provided today by Premier Doug Ford, Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health, Solicitor General Sylvia Jones, and General Rick Hillier (retired), Chair of the COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Task Force.

“The progress we are making on our Vaccine Distribution Plan demonstrates what can be done when we unleash the full potential of Team Ontario,” said Premier Ford. “Thanks to the efforts of an army of frontline health care heroes and volunteers, we are getting needles in arms even faster than we had imagined. All we need now is a steady and reliable supply of vaccines from the Federal government to ensure anyone who wants one, gets one as soon as possible so we can all stay safe.” Ontario began vaccinating individuals aged 80 and over in February, and launched an online booking tool and a call centre to help answer questions and support appointment bookings at mass immunization clinics. Since the provincial booking system was launched on March 15, more than 239,000 appointments have been scheduled for the first and second doses. Ontario is leading the country in the total number of vaccines administered and has fully immunized more individuals than all provinces and territories combined. To date, over 1.4 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been administered across the province, including over 129,000 doses administered to long-term care home residents. Over 294,000 Ontarians are fully immunized, including over 61,000 long-term-care home residents.

“Thanks to the efforts of our health care partners and the efficiency of our booking system, Ontario has been able to schedule more appointments and vaccinate more people quickly and conveniently,” said Minister Elliott. “We are doing everything we can to protect those who are most vulnerable and will ensure that we reach every Ontarian eligible for vaccination in Phase One as we expand the vaccination program further in the coming weeks.” On March 16, 2021, the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) expanded its recommendation for the use of the AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD vaccine to people 18 years old and older. In alignment with NACI’s latest recommendation and Ontario’s Ethical Framework, as of March 22, 2021, participating pharmacies and primary care settings will offer vaccination appointments to individuals aged 60 and over. Eligible Ontarians can contact a participating pharmacy directly to make an appointment. In addition, many primary care providers are directly contacting eligible patients to book an appointment.

The province also continues to expand the delivery channels available to administer COVID-19 vaccines, with another 350 pharmacies to be brought on board across the province in the next two weeks bringing the total to approximately 700 locations. It is expected that this number would again be doubled to approximately 1,500 by the end of April. Depending on vaccine supply, retail pharmacies could administer up to 40 per cent of all vaccinations by the end of April. Details on additional locations and the application process for pharmacy participation will be shared in the coming days. In addition, vaccinations in primary care settings will continue in collaboration with public health units. “We have successfully expanded Ontario’s vaccine rollout plan to include pharmacies, mass vaccination centres and primary health care providers in key parts of the province,” said Solicitor General Sylvia Jones. “This is a huge accomplishment and we continue to extend this rollout to other parts of the province as more vaccines become available.” “Ontario’s vaccine distribution plan is now well underway,” said General (Ret’d) Rick Hillier. “We are grateful to the army of diverse teams – the health care practitioners, IT specialists, data analysts, the dedicated individuals working in logistics and many others – for their outstanding service and commitment to put the needed processes in place to make this happen.” The province continues to expect a high volume of traffic on its online booking system. Everyone is eager to receive the vaccine, but those not yet eligible for a vaccine are being asked to avoid accessing the booking system or calling the service desk to allow those that are eligible the opportunity to book an appointment.

## COVID SPREAD RARE IN SCHOOLS WITH MASKING: STUDY

**NEW YORK, (IANS)** In a finding that could bring huge relief to parents, researchers have found that wearing masks, maintaining social distancing and frequent hand-washing have kept in-school Covid-19 transmission low. The pilot study, conducted in the US state of Missouri, was aimed at identifying ways to keep elementary and secondary schools open and safe during the pandemic. The findings, published in the US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) journal, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, mirror those of schools in other states, demonstrating that Covid-19 prevention efforts can significantly curb the spread of SARS-CoV-2 among students, teachers and staff. “This work is imperative because keeping kids in school provides not only educational enrichment but also social, psychological and emotional health benefits, particularly for students who rely on school-based services for nutritional, physical and mental health support,” said senior author Johanna Salzer, a veterinary medical officer with the CDC’s National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases. The pilot study involved 57 schools in the Pattonville School District in St. Louis County and the Springfield Public School District in Greene County in southwest Missouri, as well as two private schools in St. Louis County.



# YOGI SET TO WIN ANOTHER LANDSLIDE IN UP: IANS C-VOTER TRACKER

**NEW DELHI (IANS)** Yogi Adityanath-led BJP government in Uttar Pradesh is winning big in the state if elections were to be held now as it completes four years in office.

According to the IANS C-Voter tracker, the BJP is projected to win 289 seats in the 403-seat Uttar Pradesh Assembly in March 2021, down 36 from the 2016 election. The Samajwadi Party (SP) is projected to be the second largest party with 59 seats followed by the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) with 38 seats but not posing any real challenge to the BJP.

The BJP and allies are holding on to their massive vote share of around 41 per cent. The Samajwadi Party led by Akhilesh Yadav is gaining vote share by 2.4 per cent compared to 2016 elections to reach 24.4 per cent while Mayawati's BSP is losing vote share to the tune of 1.4 percentage points at 20.8 per cent.

The demise of the Congress in Uttar Pradesh despite Priyanka Gandhi's stewardship is clear with the party down to 5.9 per cent vote share down from 6.2 per cent in 2016.

With an unassailable vote share of 41 per cent, the BJP is sitting pretty in Uttar Pradesh and projected to win 289 seats as of March 2021. It has a dominating seat tally despite losing 36 seats compared to the previous election where its tally was 325. The 2021 projection is 71.71 per cent of the seats.

The SP is winning 59 seats, a gain of 12 seats from the tally of 47 in 2016 while the BSP is third with 38 seats double that of last time but still not really in the frame.

Notwithstanding the hype around Priyanka's campaign in Uttar Pradesh, the Congress is going further downhill and is projected to win only 4 seats, a possible low point for the party which is banking on the largest state for its revival in the coming Assembly and later on Lok Sabha elections.

## YOGI AFTER MODI - HALF OF UP SAYS YES

New Delhi, March 19 (IANS) Yogi Adityanath is not just poised to lead the BJP to a second landslide victory in consecutive elections but almost half of Uttar Pradesh feels that Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is capable of becoming the Prime Minister after Narendra Modi.



As per the IANS C-Voter tracker, 49.5 per cent respondents in the survey said that Yogi is capable of becoming the Prime Minister after Narendra Modi.

Interestingly, 63.5 per cent of the BJP supporters endorsed Yogi as PM candidate while 42.9 per cent of the BSP supporters said yes, 21.7 per cent of the SP supporters also endorsed the view and 24.4 per cent of the Congress supporters also back Yogi as the Prime Minister.

For Yogi, the love jihad campaign, keeping bureaucracy in check, fighting crime and corruption is working in his favour and he is way ahead of Akhilesh Yadav and Mayawati in the popularity contest in Uttar Pradesh. Creating new employment opportunities is seen as the Yogi government's biggest achievement followed by controlling crime.

However, the BJP government is not seen by the majority of respondents as having fulfilled its promises. To a question in the survey, just another year to go for elections, do you think CM Yogi has fulfilled his pre-election promises, 45.7 per cent said no. Yogi is way ahead of Akhilesh and Mayawati in creating employment and infrastructure and controlling crime and corruption and is seen as the best CM among the three.

## SHAH RELEASES BJP'S BENGAL MANIFESTO WITH FOCUS ON BORDER SAFETY

**KOLKATA, (IANS)** Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday released the BJP's manifesto for the upcoming West Bengal Assembly elections. Shah said that it is not just a party manifesto but a resolution letter for West Bengal.

"We have decided to call our manifesto a 'Sankalp Patra'. It is not just a manifesto but a resolution letter for West Bengal by the country's largest party. And at the heart of BJP's manifesto is 'Sonar Bangla'," the Minister said at EZCC here, while officially releasing the manifesto. Taking potshots at the Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress government in Bengal, Shah said that the state's incumbent formation has only politicised its administration, criminalised politics and institutionalised the practice of corruptions.

He said that Bengal has slipped from its position of leadership.

The BJP's election manifesto stated that there would 33 percent reservation in state govt jobs for women.

Shah also promised that no court permissions would be required for Durga Puja and Saraswati Puja across the state.

"Infiltration will be completely stopped and border fencing will be strengthened with the installations of CCTVs cameras," he pointed out, adding that all fishermen will get Rs 6000 every year.

The party manifesto also mentioned that 75 lakh farmers in Bengal to benefit from Kisan Samman Nidhi.

"The BJP's manifesto is not a mere document, it's been compiled with suggestions from people in every assembly segment. A dedicated vehicle toured across all the 294-Assembly constituencies in the state and collected suggestions from the people before preparing the party's final resolution letter," BJP state unit president Dilip Ghosh said.

Earlier in the day, Trinamool Congress supremo Mamata Banerjee termed the BJP as Bharatiya Joghonno (bad) Party.

"I was also a Lok Sabha member for seven times and I have seen many Prime Ministers. But I have never seen such a ruthless, cruel PM. BJP is a party of monsters and demons who only believes in divisions and riots," the West Bengal CM said at an election rally in East Midnapore's Nandakumar on Sunday.

## WHERE THERE IS A SCHEME, THERE'S A SCAM IN BENGAL: PM MODI

**KOLKATA, (IANS)** Launching a blistering attack on the Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress government in West Bengal, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said 'asol paribartan' (real change) in the state would ensure that the benefits of Centre's schemes reach the poor. "BJP will bring the 'asol paribartan' in Bengal. The game of corruption, the game of syndicate and the game of cut money will come to an end. After the BJP forms the government, Maa'er pujo hobe, maatir tilak hobe aar manusher somman hobe! (The worship of Goddess Durga will happen, the land of Bengal and its people will be respected)," Modi said at an election rally in Bankura district. Urging the people of the state to vote for BJP, the Prime Minister said that the Trinamool Congress-led state government will go on May 2. He added that he will not let her kick out development in Bengal.

"Where there is a scheme, there's a scam in Bengal...Didi, you keep saying 'khela hobe' (the game is on) while people of Bengal have decided that this time 'khela shesh hobe' (the game will end this time)... Didi jacche asol paribartan ashche (Didi is going and real change is coming)," he pointed out, adding that development is necessary for Bengal. Modi said that the top priority would be given to development if BJP government comes to power in the state. Confident about BJP's win, he also said that the picture of Bankura is a witness that people of Bengal have decided that "Lotus" will bloom in the state on May 2. "Do May, Didi gai (Didi will go on May 2)...The entire region is proof that Didi and her state government has only played with the sentiments of people in Bengal for the last 10 years...Many of our tribal friends including late Ajit Murmoo have lost lives due to Trinamool's khela," he said. The Prime Minister added: "If you want to get rid of corruption, vote for the BJP. To bring development in Bengal, vote for BJP."

## BJP QUIET OVER CHINA BUILDING DAM ON BRAHMAPUTRA RIVER: PRIYANKA

**GUWAHATI, (IANS)** Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said on Sunday that China has been constructing a dam on Brahmaputra river, but the BJP government is doing nothing to protect the river, which plays a big role in the lives and economy of the people of Assam.

Addressing three election rallies at Jorhat, Nazira and Khumtai in eastern Assam, Priyanka said that with the construction of the dam by China, much damage will be done to the Brahmaputra river.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi came to Assam for poll campaign several times, but he did not utter a single word on the vital issue, nor did he prevent China from constructing the mega dam," she pointed out. The Brahmaputra river, also known as the Yarlung Tsangpo in China, flows for about 2,900 km from Tibet into Arunachal Pradesh and down through Assam to Bangladesh.

She said the BJP-led government had promulgated an ordinance allowing big industrialists to purchase lands in Assam without any permission. Referring to BJP's double engine government in Assam, the Congress leader said that there are two Chief Ministers in Assam and both of them are working through remote control from Delhi.

Claiming that crime and atrocities against women are maximum in Assam and Uttar Pradesh, Priyanka said that the BJP governments in these two states are cheating the women and youth, besides duping the farmers. "When the people of Assam are agitating against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, the BJP is committed to enforce the new act. If the Congress comes to power, as part of the 'five guarantees', CAA would be repealed," she said.

The Congress leader said that the BJP government has been selling out significant assets of the country, causing enormous loss to the economy of India. "A syndicate raj is prevailing in Assam," she said. Priyanka also told the gatherings that people have to make their own destiny, as the BJP leaders from Delhi cannot do anything for them.

"The BJP leaders are so ignorant about Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardeva that they are saying that he (Sankardeva) was fighting against the infiltrations and dealing with other issues. When these people do not know about the iconic figure of Assam, how can they do good to the state," she asked. Srimanta Sankardeva was a 15th-16th century Assamese saint, scholar, poet, playwright, social-religious reformer and a figure of importance in Assam's cultural and religious history. Priyanka arrived in Assam on Sunday and during her two-day stay, she is scheduled to address six election rallies in eastern and central Assam and also to visit the birthplace of Srimanta Sankardeva at Bordowa Satra.

## Y MEDIA POLITICAL SENSEX

AAP WILL WIN MORE SEATS THAN CONGRESS IN PUNJAB: C VOTER SURVEY



AAP	CONGRESS	AKALI DAL	BJP	OTHER
51-57	43-49	12-18	0-5	0-3

SOURCE: C VOTER



CHANNEL Y

RADIO Y  
FM 91.9

MIDWEEK  
NEWSPAPER

**C VOTER SURVEY PREDICTS AAM AADMI PARTY TO FORM GOVERNMENT IN PUNJAB**

**AAP WILL WIN MORE SEATS THAN CONGRESS IN PUNJAB**

**TOTAL NO. OF SEATS IN PUNJAB-117; AAP LIKELY TO GET 51-57 SEATS**

**APP WON ONLY 20 SEATS IN 2017**

**AAP TO SECURE 36.5% OF VOTE SHARE, 12.8% UP FROM 23.7% IN 2017**

**CONGRESS TO GET ANYWHERE BETWEEN 43-49 SEATS**

**CONGRESS MANAGED TO GET 77 SEATS IN 2017**

**C VOTER SURVEY SUGGESTS CONGRESS WHICH GOT 38.5% OF VOTE SHARE IN 2017 ASSEMBLY POLLS, WILL BE AT 31.5% OF VOTE SHARE; DIRECT LOSS OF 7%**

**C VOTER SURVEY PROJECTS SHIROMANI AKALI DAL (SAD) TO GET 12-18 SEATS**

**BJP LAGS BEHIND, TO RECEIVE BETWEEN 0-5 SEATS**

## Kejriwal makes pitch for 2022 Punjab Assembly poll campaign

**NEW DELHI, (IANS)** Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday pushed his party leaders and volunteers to prepare for the Punjab Assembly elections to be held next year.

Addressing a large Kisan Mahapanchayat in Punjab's Moga district, the Delhi Chief Minister said the party should get ready for the Assembly elections in 2022. "You have one year's time, reach out to every single person in Punjab and tell them how they have been cheated for several years on the pretext of false promises by both the Congress and the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD). Keep a card highlighting the promises made by the ruling Congress in the last state Assembly elections in your pockets and remind the people while meeting them that they have been cheated. The people of Punjab voted for development, job, electricity and subsidised schemes, but Congress' promises could not see the light of the day till now," Kejriwal said.

The AAP convener also urged the people of Punjab to support the AAP in the next Assembly elections, saying that his party came to power with full majority in Delhi for two consecutive terms and within six years, the AAP-led Delhi government has effected many changes in education, health, electricity and other sectors.

Reiterating all the achievements of the Delhi government in the last six years, Kejriwal asked the party workers to set a vision for the people of Punjab. "We have to create a long-term vision for the welfare of the people of Punjab. You have one year, go and meet the people and note down their problems. The people of Punjab have made up their minds to elect the AAP government in the next Assembly elections. We will work with a vision of forming a new Punjab once the AAP government is formed in the state," Kejriwal said. Kejriwal also hit out at the Narendra Modi-led Central government for bringing the alleged 'anti-farm' laws in the agriculture sector. He expressed his gratitude to the farmers protesting against the three farm laws which were enacted in September last year. Before addressing

the Kisan Mahapanchayat, Kejriwal visited the grain market in Bagha Purana in Moga district. AAP sources in Punjab claimed that before Kejriwal's visit to Moga, the boards and hoardings of the party were removed by the civic authorities during the early morning hours for which the officials had to face the wrath of the AAP workers, who raised slogans against the civic administration.

## KEJRIWAL SETS STAGE FOR PUNJAB POLL BATTLE WITH KISAN RALLY

New Delhi, March 22 (IANS) Setting stage for his party's campaign in the Punjab Assembly elections due next year, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convener Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday addressed a "Kisan Maha Panchayat" in the state's Moga district. In his address, he hit out the Amarinder Singh-led Congress government, accusing it of not keeping its poll promises and deceiving the people of the state.

He said that 'Captain Sahib' (Amarinder Singh) had made several promises to the people of Punjab in the run-up to the elections but forgot about them about his victory.

With farmers of Punjab in relentless protest against the Centre's three farm laws, Kejriwal attacked the BJP too, accusing the Modi government at the Centre of bringing the measures without consulting the farmers and passing them in an unconstitutional manner. "I have come here to express my gratitude for raising your voice against Centre's three draconian laws. They (BJP) say only a few states' farmers are opposing the farm Bills, but it is not the truth. Your struggle from Punjab to Delhi's borders has become a revolution across the nation and people of this country are not ready to accept these farm laws which are framed for giving benefit to some selected corporate," he said.



# MODI MEETS US DEFENCE SECY, STRESSES COMMITMENT TO PARTNERSHIP



**NEW DELHI, (IANS)** Prime Minister Narendra Modi has met with US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin and stressed the commitment to the strategic partnership between the two countries amid rising tensions in the region and around the world with China. Modi tweeted after their meeting on Friday, "Pleasure to meet U.S. @SecDef Lloyd Austin today. Conveyed my best wishes to @POTUS @JoeBiden. India and US are committed to our strategic partnership that is a force for global good." Austin also met with National Security Adviser Ajit Doval, according to the US embassy. Soon after his arrival, Austin tweeted that his discussions in India would centre on cooperating to face "most pressing challenges" in the Indo-Pacific region where China's aggressive actions, from the Himalayas to the South China Sea are on the rise. The first visit by a member of US President Joe Biden's Cabinet to India came as leaders of the US and China clashed at a meeting in Alaska symbolising the growing aggressiveness of China. It is particularly highlighted in the Indo-Pacific region and the US is responding by working closely with allies and partners. Austin tweeted, "Thrilled to be here in India. The breadth of coopera-

tion between our two nations reflects the significance of our major defense partnership, as we work together to address the most pressing challenges facing the Indo-Pacific region." Outlining Austin's agenda in India, Acting Assistant Defence Secretary for Indo-Pacific, David F. Helvey, said that he will "discuss operationalising the major defence partnership that we have with India, including through enhanced information sharing, regional security cooperation, defence trade, and cooperation in new domains." The Indian Defence Ministry said that Singh and Austin "are expected to discuss ways to further strengthen bilateral defence cooperation and exchange views on regional security challenges and common interests in maintaining a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific region." It added, "Discussions regarding defence cooperation would also focus on how both countries could consolidate military-to-military cooperation and defence trade and industry cooperation." The US designated India as a major defence partner by the US in 2016 allowing it access to some defence hi-tech that would normally be available only to allies. The visit reflects President Joe Biden's focus on the Indo-Pacific region to meet the Chinese challenge. Last week Biden held a virtual summit with other leaders of the Quad nations, Prime Ministers Narendra Modi of India, Scott Morrison of Australia and Yoshihide Suga of Japan, at which they discussed security issues in the face of Chinese aggressive actions. While on his way to India, Austin spoke to Australia's Foreign Minister Maria Payne, who also holds the defence portfolio. Helvey said that Austin spoke to her about the "Quadrilateral process" of the four nations. Before coming to India, Austin had visited two US treaty allies, Japan and Korea, on the frontlines of Chinese aggressiveness at sea in the region, and the military headquarters of the Indo-Pacific headquarters in Hawaii.

# SINGH, AUSTIN PAVE WAY FOR STRONGER INDIA-US MILITARY TIES

**NEW DELHI:** India and the US agreed to strengthen their military partnership during a meeting between Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and the US Secretary of Defence, General Lloyd Austin, held in New Delhi, according to a joint statement issued after the talks. Singh told the media that India is committed to further strengthening its robust defence partnership with the US. At the meeting, Singh also highlighted the opportunity for the US industry to invest in India's defence sector. "I invited the US defence industry to take advantage of India's liberalised foreign direct investment (FDI) policies in the defence sector," the Defence Minister said. Singh, in his statement, said a range of issues were discussed with a focus on "enhancing defence information sharing, cooperation in emerging domains of defence, mutual logistics support, and expanding military-to-military engagements across services". "We also reviewed many bilateral and multilateral exercises and agreed on increasing cooperation between the Indian military, US Indo-Pacific command, Centre Command and Africa Command. We've signed LEMOA, COMCASA & BECA agreements and we've agreed to realise their full potential," the Indian Defence Minister said. This is also in line with India's 'SAGAR' (Security and Growth for All in the Region) policy," he added. **AUSTIN SAYS INDIA PARTNERSHIP IS A PRIORITY** "We discussed opportunities to elevate the US-India major defence partnership, which is a priority of the Biden-Harris administration. And we'll do that through regional security cooperation and military to military interactions and defence trade," the Defence Secretary said after the meeting with Singh. The leaders pledged to work together for a free and open Indo-Pacific and to cooperate on maritime and cybersecurity in the face of challenges from China. Austin called India "an increasingly important partner in the rapidly shifting international dynamics" and reaffirmed his country's commitment to a "comprehensive forward-looking defence partnership with India" for its approach to the Indo-Pacific region. "Our relationship is a stronghold of a free and open Indo-Pacific region. PM Modi stated India stands for freedom of navigation and freedom of overflight, unimpeded lawful commerce in adherence to international law. This reaffirms our shared vision for regional security," Austin said. His maiden visit is significant as it comes within a week of the summit between the heads of state of Quad countries US, India, Australia and Japan. Both countries have increased defence partnership in re-



cent years. India signed four key defence pacts with the US in the past few years. The Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA) in 2018 enhanced information sharing and interoperability. The Industrial Security Annex (ISA), signed in December 2019, allows for the transfer of technologies in support of defence production. The Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA) is for sharing unclassified geospatial information. "We've signed LEMOA, COMCASA & BECA agreements & we've agreed to realise their full potential," said Singh. The top US defence official landed in New Delhi on Friday evening as part of the Biden administration's efforts to forge an alliance of countries seeking to push back against China's assertiveness in the region. He met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and National Security Advisor soon after. **AUSTIN, DOVAL EXCHANGE NOTES** According to the Hindustan Times, the two-hour-long meeting between Secretary Austin and NSA Doval was very positive with both leaders exchanging notes on the security environment in Asia and beyond. "It is in American interest that there is a favourable balance of power in Asia in face of a militarily assertive China. Washington needs to join hands with countries like India whose territorial integrity is being challenged by Beijing," a former Indian foreign secretary told the daily. India has substantially increased its acquisition of US defence equipment, with Indian forces operating US-sourced platforms such as P-8s, C-130Js, C-17s, AH-64s, CH-47s, Precision Guided-Excalibur Munitions, and M777 howitzers. In February, India agreed to acquire Apache and MH-60R multi-mission helicopters worth \$3.1 billion, and is considering other US systems.

# SUV CASE: SC MONITORED PROBE CAN ANSWER KEY QUESTIONS, SAY FORMER TOP COPS

**NEW DELHI, (IANS)** As several key questions remain unanswered in the SUV case related to the explosives-laden Scorpio parked near industrialist Mukesh Ambani's residence in Mumbai last month, former police chiefs have suggested that in the interest of justice, a Supreme Court monitored probe is necessary to investigate the police-criminal-politician nexus, which ostensibly exists in India's commercial capital. As the case snowballs into a huge political controversy that could upset the equations in the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government in Maharashtra, several former DGPs have suggested that it would be better if the probe is handed over to a senior officer of high integrity, monitored by the apex court, instead of a state or Central agency. "As relations between the BJP and the Shiv Sena are at loggerheads, the state agency (Anti-Terrorism Squad) and the Central agency (National Investigation Agency) cannot work in close coordination. In a situation where the relations between the state and the Centre have turned sour, a Supreme court monitored probe remains the only option to ensure a free and fair enquiry," said celebrated police officer Prakash Singh, considered as the key architect of police reforms in India. Voicing the concern of the IPS fraternity, Singh, the former DGP of BSF in Uttar Pradesh and Assam, said that when a Home Minister (Anil Deshmukh) has been accused by his former Commissioner (Param Bir Singh) for exploiting policemen to extort money from businessmen and industrialists, it becomes clear that the rule of law in the state is being blatantly abused by those in power. "We do not know the entire details and the breakup of the monthly

collections of Rs 100 crore, as alleged in the former Commissioner's letter. But it seems that a large amount of the extortion money was going to the party, the minister concerned, and a percentage could as well be pocketed by the police. Now the question is whether the Chief Minister was involved in the extortion racket, or he just failed to take action," said Singh, the Chairman of the Indian Police Foundation and Institute. In a sensational twist to the SUV case on Saturday, Param Bir Singh hit out at Maharashtra Home Minister Anil Deshmukh by virtually alleging that the minister wanted his team member, arrested cop Sachin Vaze, to 'collect' Rs 100 crore per month from bars and hookah parlours. On the role of suspended Assistant Police Inspector (API) Sachin Vaze in hatching the plot to scare the country's richest businessman, another celebrated cop and former DGP of Uttar Pradesh, O.P. Singh, said that an API level officer is too junior to execute a plot at the behest of the state's Home Minister. "The question is how an API level policeman got access to the Home Minister? Moreover, when Vaze bypassed the police hierarchy to report directly to the Home Minister, what were his seniors doing? The supervisory officers should have intervened," said O.P. Singh, a 1983 batch IPS officer of UP cadre. When asked how despite objections by previous Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis, Vaze was reinstated by incumbent Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, O.P. Singh said that an enquiry should be initiated to ascertain the motive of reinstating Vaze and posting him at such an important place (Mumbai Crime Branch).

# US, CHINA CONCLUDE HIGH-LEVEL STRATEGIC DIALOGUE



**ANCHORAGE (IANS)** Top US and Chinese diplomats have concluded a high-level strategic dialogue in Anchorage, Alaska, marking the first face-to-face talks between the two sides since American President Joe Biden took office in January. The two-day dialogue also marked the first high-level contact between the two countries after their heads of state spoke on the phone on the eve of the Chinese Lunar New Year, Xinhua news agency reported. The meeting was attended by Secretary of State Antony Blinken and National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan from the US side, while the Chinese side was represented by member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Yang Jiechi and Foreign Minister Wang Yi. After the meeting ended on Friday, Yang said that although the dialogue was candid, constructive and helpful, some important differences still remained between the two sides. The two sides should handle bilateral relations in "the spirit of non-conflict, non-confrontation, mutual respect and win-win cooperation", he added. Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Wang said that the door for additional China-US dialogue would be always be open if the "two sides respect each other's core interests and major concerns". Ahead of the meeting with the Chinese diplomats, Biden's spokeswoman Jen Psaki had said the focus would be on "having a frank discussion, raising issues where we have concerns, and of course, looking for ways and places where we can work together". Under former President Donald Trump's administration, ties between China and the US reached their lowest level since diplomatic relations were established in 1979. It had levied tariffs on billions of dollars' worth of Chinese goods, to which Beijing also responded with duties of its own. In January 2020, the countries reached a phase one agreement on trade that called for increased Chinese purchases of US goods and greater access to the Chinese financial market. However, bilateral tensions again increased in the months since, amid the coronavirus pandemic after the Trump administration directly blamed China for the global crisis.

# BJP RELEASES MANIFESTO FOR ASSAM POLLS, PROMISES TO WORK ON 'CORRECTED NRC'



The BJP on Tuesday released its manifesto for Assam promising a "corrected National Register of Citizens (NRC)" if it came to power. Among its ten commitments, the party also mentioned several developmental measures, including a promise to solve Assam's flood problem, as well as protection of indigenous rights. Unveiling the "Sankalpa Patra" in Guwahati, BJP national president, JP Nadda said, "We are committed to bringing a corrected NRC to secure and protect Assam... We will protect genuine Indian citizens and detect illegal infiltrators so that Assam can remain Assam's." The final Assam NRC — which excluded 19 lakh people — was published on August 31, 2019. Following that, the Sarbananda Sonowal-led BJP government, alleging wrongful exclusions and inclusions, maintained that it will not accept the NRC in its current form. Since then, the list has remained in a limbo, with those excluded not yet issued rejection orders with which they can appeal at the state's Foreigners' Tribunals (FTs). Nadda said the BJP's aim in Assam has always been protection of 'Jaati, Maati and Bheti' or indigenous interests. To that end, the party has promised a delimitation exercise (act of redrawing boundaries of Lok Sabha and Assembly seats to represent changes in population) to protect the political rights of the people, a task force to recover Sattria land from "illegal encroachment", financial aid of Rs 2.5 lakh to all Naamghars and places of worship of tribals, and distribution of land pattas (titles) to all landless Indian citizens in Assam. With a special focus on women voters, the party has said that it will increase the dole out of Orunodoi — a DBT scheme aimed at women members of underprivileged families — from Rs 830 to Rs 3,000. Thirty lakh families will be brought under it. Other points include Mission Bala Unnayan, or free education for every child in government schools and free bicycles for students in and above Class 8, and the Assam Aahar Atmanirbharata Yojana, which will drive the state towards self-sufficiency in essential food items. "We have worked tirelessly in Assam, whether it is about protection of culture, security of state or commitment to prosperity," said Nadda. He said that Assam will become India's fastest job creator in the country and promised two lakh government jobs (out of which one lakh will be provided before March 31, 2022). Another 'Sankalpa' — or commitment — is to make Assam India's entrepreneurial hub. Ten lakh youth entrepreneurs will be created throughout the Swami Vivekananda Asam Youth Employment Yojana. The party has also promised that Assam will become "flood-free", if voted to power. "Under the Mission Brahmaputra, we will look for new ways to protect Assam from the devastation of annual floods," Nadda said, "We will approach it scientifically — build big reservoirs to collect water from the river and its tributaries." A mechanism of dredging of the river from Dhubri (in western Assam) to Sadiya (in eastern Assam) is part of the plan. The event was attended by Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, Finance Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, Assam BJP President Ranjeet Dass, Assam BJP in-charge Jay Panda, Union ministers and BJP leaders Narendra Singh Tomar and Jitendra Singh, among other dignitaries and politicians.



# INDIA CENTRAL TO THE INDO-PACIFIC REGION



The importance attached by the US to the Indo-Pacific, places India at an advantageous position, both in defence and economic sectors.

While the world was combating the Covid pandemic, international leaders were also busy in realigning the world as per their country's priorities and goals. One region, which has emerged on the top of this new realignment, is the region of the Indo-Pacific. The Indo-Pacific comprises the Indian Ocean, the western and central Pacific Ocean, and the seas connecting the two oceans around parts of Indonesia. The term "Indo-Pacific" gained usage in geopolitical discourse after 2011. It is also described as a substitute for "Quad" or the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, an informal grouping of like-minded democracies in the region, comprising Australia, Japan, India, and the United States. Historically, "Indo-Pacific" was first used by the German geopolitician Karl Haushofer in the 1920s in his academic work "Indopazifischen Raum". But its security aspects emerged in early 2000s, when the analysts began to observe the 'security' linkage between the two Oceans. In this context, the term was first used in an article authored by Gurpreet Khurana, carried in the January 2007 issue of the Strategic Analysis journal titled "Security of Sea Lines: Prospects for India-Japan Cooperation". The author refers to the 'Indo-Pacific' as the maritime space stretching from the littorals of East Africa and West Asia, across the Indian Ocean and western Pacific Ocean, to the littorals of East Asia. Former Japan Prime Minister Shinzo Abe expanded on the spirit of the term in his speech to the Indian Parliament in August 2007 when he talked about the "Confluence of the Indian and

Pacific Oceans" as "the dynamic coupling as seas of freedom and of prosperity" in the "broader Asia". American push for the Quad

Quad was first floated in 2004 to manage disaster relief after the Tsunami. Later, Dick Cheney tried to redefine it as a military club, to counter Chinese influence, but was abandoned in 2010 as India and Australia didn't wanted to ruffle the Chinese feathers. The Trump administration revived the regional grouping in 2017, ostensibly to counter China in the region, particularly in the South China Sea, where the Chinese have continually challenged the Japanese and Americans.

US under Trump wanted to shape the Quad into an Asian NATO, a point that has been raised and challenged by the Chinese again and again, as they see it as a potential defence deterrent in the region. The importance being attached to this by the original members, and the recent desire expressed by the British and French to join also underlines both its economic and defence utility. Though the Biden administration wants to position it as an American outreach on trade, immigration, public health, climate change, yet its security aspect can't be overlooked.

To give a boost to the alliance, the leaders of the Quad met on March 12, 2021 through a virtual summit. The summit and the joint statement issued highlights the evolution of the grouping and its agenda made clearer and resolve by the member states to sustain the momentum.

At a White House press conference following the summit, the U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan noted that each of the four leaders present had described the meeting as "historic."

Quad talks were elevated to the ministerial level in 2019 with foreign ministers from all four countries holding a meeting on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly session in New York in September that year. Since then, Quad foreign ministers have met twice: in-person in Tokyo in October last year, and virtually last month.

President Biden has zealously endorsed the "free and open Indo-Pacific" jargon favoured by his predecessor, contrary to apprehensions that he would seek to adopt a softer line toward China and that the Indo-Pacific paradigm would not be so significant for the new administration.

However, the reality is that the Quad, in essential sense is not a formal alliance, yet. The recent summit concentrated primarily on urgent global catastrophes comprising coronavirus and the climate emergency and tried not to ruffle feathers or cause undue apprehensions in the regional countries, particularly ASEAN member states. A joint statement after the assembly noted that the four nations would collaborate to increase Covid vaccine production, in which India would be helped financially by other members to boost its vaccine production base. But differences remained among the member states on how to handle China.

India's future in the Quad

The moot question is whether Quad in essential sense would be transformed into a real regional alliance or will it continue to serve some countries only, to use it as and when required as per their necessity.

Though one country, which seems poised to gain most out of Quad is India. Due to its vast market potential and also as a counter to China in the region, most western powers attach great importance to it in the region. Indian leaders also realise this besides the fact that to transform into a regional power it has to pursue a geopolitical strategy, which maximises its economic interests and security.

The Indian Prime Minister has spelled out the Indian vision of Indo-Pacific as an enabler for "a common pursuit of progress and prosperity... not directed against any country... (albeit based on) our principled commitment to rule of law." India's role at the Quad seems central to the Biden administration's plans for the region and the quest to counter China. US initiatives so far suggests the Biden administration is serious about its stated intention to counter China through alliances, based on shared values, and that it sees the Quad and India as central to that. At the same time the US seems ready to moderate India's feeling of insecurity in regard to be part of a binding alliance along with its ambition to emerge as a dominant regional player, while downplaying China.

It seems that the US wants to promote bilateral ties by bolstering India at the Quad, and also focussing on more areas of cooperation, which were ignored during the Trump regime. The recent visit of the US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin to India demonstrates both these aspects.

With Tony Blinken at the State Department and Jake Sullivan at the National Security Council, as well as Mr Biden himself, the current US administration possesses more experience of dealing with India than any of its predecessors. It also highlights its resolve to make Indo-US relations as central to its plans. With China as a common denominator, the relationship holds more chances of being robust and fruitful for both. And the key role, which the US wants India to play at the Quad, is more apparent now. It may also open the doors for increased bilateral cooperation and sale of more American military hardware to India besides economic benefits.

## IS INDIA'S 'GREEN RECOVERY' GREEN ENOUGH, ASKS REPORT



**NEW DELHI, (IANS)** While India has committed more public money than any other economy to date — at least \$122 billion — to support the energy sector since the outbreak of the Covid-19 crisis in early 2020, a new report on Monday showed that the government's stimulus is a 'mixed bag' for the country's energy transition. The government of India continues to promote a greener recovery by committing \$35 billion (28.5 per cent) of the \$122 billion in energy-related funding to renewables, almost twice the \$18 billion (15 per cent) flowing to fossil fuels.

However, the largest proportion of support for energy by far is being spent on policies categorized as 'other energy', some \$69 billion (56.5 per cent), with little public information available on whether this recovery funding is going to policies that promote sustainable energy, or energy types and sectors with high carbon emissions.

In a joint report called 'How Green is India's Stimulus for Economic Recovery?', the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA) and the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) reviewed energy-related policies from the Energy Policy Tracker (EPT) to determine what India can do to promote a greener economy recovery in 2021.

"According to the EPT, India has committed more public money to the energy sector than any other economy globally since January 2020," said lead author Vibhuti Garg, IEEFA Energy Economist, Lead India. "We estimate that around 22 per cent of the value of these public money commitments is primarily to deal with the impact of Covid-19 and the rest is to meet the government's ongoing policy objectives on energy security, air pollution and climate change," Garg said.

The Energy Policy Tracker (EPT) is a database developed by the IISD and other organizations that use official government sources and other publicly available information to track energy-related Covid-19 recovery policies across major global economies.

The EPT, which is updated frequently, last on March 3, shows that 31 major economies have pledged over \$686 billion to support energy through new or amended policies since January 2020 (energy-related funding from President Joe Biden's new \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan is not yet included).

Of this overall amount, \$274 billion (40 per cent) is committed to fossil fuels, \$259 billion (38 per cent) to renewable energy, and \$153 billion (22 per cent) to 'other energy', such as nuclear power, first-generation biofuels or policies that support multiple sources of energy. By comparison, more than half (56.5 per cent) of all public money committed to energy in India is supporting 'other energy'.

"We are concerned that India's other energy policies may disproportionately benefit fossil fuels, despite the fact they are not targeted at fossil production or consumption exclusively," said Garg.

At the moment, India's policies for other energy largely support transmission and distribution companies in the power sector. For example, the liquidity support to discoms to build infrastructure, modernize the grid but primarily to settle payment dues to generators will support the dominant fossil fuels generators more than renewable energy. Also, state-level fuel policies, transport policies, development of power projects and transmission infrastructure are categorized as other energy. "If a state promotes more incumbent fossil fuels than emerging clean technologies under such programmes, it is again likely to benefit the fossil fuel sector more," added Garg. The report points out that India's energy-related commitments in the EPT are only an 'at least' value and could, in fact, be much higher than \$122 billion.

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Conservative Leader Erin O'Toole unveils Canada's Recovery Plan

OTTAWA, ON – Tonight, speaking virtually to party members from across the country, Leader of Canada's Conservatives Erin O'Toole unveiled his plan to secure jobs, the health of Canadians, and Canada's economic future. "Every Canadian deserves the security and dignity of a secure, stable, and well-paid job," O'Toole said. "Canada's Conservatives will enact a comprehensive job plan to recover a million jobs lost during the pandemic within one year – and we won't stop there." O'Toole laid out Canada's Recovery Plan with five priority areas that Conservatives will focus on, with commitments to:

- Secure jobs by recovering the one million jobs lost during the pandemic within one year;
- Secure accountability by enacting a new Anti-Corruption law to clean up the mess in Ottawa;
- Secure mental health through a Canada Mental Health Action Plan;
- Secure our country by creating a strategic stockpile of essential products and building the capacity to manufacture vaccines at home; and
- Secure Canada's economy by balancing the budget over the next decade.

Sharing his vision at the largest convention in Canadian history, O'Toole



reaffirmed his relentless focus to see Canada through the economic downturn facing the country and protect the Canadian way of life. "Canada may be lagging in this crisis, but we will lead again," O'Toole promised. "We will be leaders for human rights around the world. We will be leaders for equality and liberty. And, when we win the next election, we will be leaders in the pandemic recovery with job creation that ensures no Canadian, from any walk of life, gets left behind."

Federal Government announces extension of Canada Emergency Business Account to June 30 help small businesses



Today, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, the Honourable Chrystia Freeland, and the Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade, the Honourable Mary Ng, announced that the deadline for new Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA) applications is being extended from March 31 to June 30, 2021. This deadline extension applies to any new applications for CEBA loans of \$60,000 or to new applications from businesses that have already received the \$40,000 loan and intend to apply for the additional \$20,000. The extension will allow more businesses to access the support they need as Canada's economy continues to deal with localized public health restrictions and, for a number of businesses, reduced opening hours or reduced demand for services. Extending the application deadline to June 2021 also aligns CEBA with the timelines of other federal government support programs for business. The extension of the application deadline and other adjustments that the government has made to CEBA, such as introducing the non-deferrable expense stream and increasing the loan amount from \$40,000 to \$60,000, demonstrate the government's commitment to stand by small businesses.

QUOTES

"By supporting Canadian businesses, Canadian jobs and Canadian families, we are not only helping our communities through difficult times; we are preventing economic scarring. This support will allow us to have a full and robust economic recovery, when the virus is fully defeated. Extending the CEBA application deadline will allow more businesses to access this support and help them manage their operating costs during these hugely difficult times."

The Honourable Chrystia Freeland, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance

"Our government is committed to bridging businesses through the pandemic until we are ready for recovery. CEBA, along with our other emergency support programs, has been crucial to businesses paying their bills, keeping their doors open and their workers on the payroll. Recognizing that businesses are facing challenges as we continue to fight the pandemic, we are extending the CEBA deadline to ensure they have the essential support they need. We are listening to business owners and will continue to be there to support them."

The Honourable Mary Ng, Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade

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# 560,200 job vacancies in fourth quarter of 2020, up 51,600 (+10.2%) from fourth quarter of 2019: StatsCan

**HIGHLIGHTS**  
There were 560,200 job vacancies in the fourth quarter of 2020, up 51,600 (+10.2%) from the fourth quarter of 2019. The job vacancy rate rose 0.5 percentage points year over year to 3.5% in the fourth quarter of 2020. Health care and social assistance accounted for more than two-thirds of the increase in job vacancies. Job vacancies fell sharply in accommodation and food services, and arts, entertainment and recreation. **JOB VACANCIES AND JOB VACANCY RATE BOTH UP**  
There were 560,200 job vacancies in the fourth quarter of 2020, up 51,600 (+10.2%) from the fourth quarter of 2019. The job vacancy rate-representing vacant positions as a proportion of all positions (vacant and occupied)-was 3.5% in the fourth quarter of 2020, up 0.5 percentage points from a year earlier. In all previous quarters, the job vacancy rate had ranged from 2.2% to 3.5%.

**MORE THAN TWO-THIRDS OF THE INCREASE IN JOB VACANCIES WAS IN HEALTH CARE AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE**  
Most of the increase in the total number of vacancies in the fourth quarter of 2020 was in health care and social assistance, up by 36,400 (+56.9%) on a year-over-year basis. This brought vacancies in the sector to a record high of 100,300. Increases were spread across all subsectors, led by hospitals (+15,700) and nursing and residential care facilities (+10,800). The job vacancy rate in health care and social assistance grew by 1.7 percentage points year over year to 4.7% in the fourth quarter of 2020, one of the highest rates among all sectors. **JOB VACANCIES UP IN SIX PROVINCES**  
From the fourth quarter of 2019 to the fourth quarter of 2020, the number of job vacancies rose in six provinces, with more than three-quarters (79.3%) of the total increase coming from Quebec and Ontario. The number of job vacancies was little changed in Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and in the three territories.

## Ontario government provides over \$1.2 billion to help Ontario’s public hospitals recover from financial pressures created & worsened by COVID-19

The Ontario government is providing over \$1.2 billion to help Ontario’s public hospitals recover from financial pressures created and worsened by COVID-19. This investment will ensure hospitals can continue to provide the high-quality patient care Ontarians need and deserve. Details were provided today by Premier Doug Ford, Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health, and Peter Bethlenfalvy, Minister of Finance and President of the Treasury Board. “Hospitals have been at the centre of the pandemic from day one providing excellent care for our sick and vulnerable, and responding to the various outbreaks without hesitation,” said Premier Ford. “Clearly, this additional care comes at a cost, so as a government we must step up and support them. We need to ensure that our hospitals remain viable and are there for people long after COVID-19 has been beaten.” To ensure Ontario’s hospitals remain on stable financial footing at a critical time, \$696.6 million in funding will be allocated to help cover historic working funds deficits for qualifying public hospitals, with a focus on small, medium as well as specialty and rehabilitation hospitals that carry a large fiscal strain due to their unique situations and historical funding challenges. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, all

hospitals have felt financial challenges not only through direct costs but also through the loss of other forms of revenue such as co-payments for private rooms and the reduction of retail services, all of which contribute to patient care and support clinical services. In order to help address these fiscal challenges, the province is setting aside \$572.3 million to reimburse qualifying portions of these losses. “Ontario’s hospitals have been on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic and our government is using every tool at our disposal to support them during these unprecedented times,” said Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health. “This funding will ensure Ontario’s hospitals can continue to provide high-quality care to all Ontarians as we work together to stop the spread of this virus.” The pandemic has put pressure on the health care sector and amplified pre-existing problems. Ontario currently spends more on Ontario’s public hospitals than it receives in federal funding. The Ontario government will continue to work in collaboration with the federal government, and with other provinces and territories to ensure the Canada Health Transfer is increased and Ontarians get the quality health care they deserve.

## Regional Councillor Gurpreet Singh Dhillon, Wards 9 & 10, Peel Police Host Trucking Online Town Hall

**BRAMPTON, ON** – On the evening of March 18th, 2021, Regional Councillor Gurpreet Singh Dhillon, Wards 9 & 10, collaborated with the Peel Police is hosting a virtual Commercial Trucking Town Hall for members of the public who work in the trucking and logistics industry. The town hall, which was the first of its kind, focused on safety issues within the industry, mainly truck and trailer thefts, and included presentations from panellists from the Peel Police Services Board, Commercial Auto Crime Unit and Crime Prevention Unit, along with industry experts from the Ontario Trucking Association, Toronto Trucking Association, and the Insurance Bureau of Canada.

## Canada joins international partners in imposing new sanctions in response to human rights violations in Xinjiang

Canada announced it is imposing new sanctions against 4 officials and 1 entity under the Special Economic Measures (People’s Republic of China) Regulations, based on their participation in gross and systematic human rights violations in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR). These measures are being taken in coordination with the United States and the United Kingdom, and in solidarity with the European Union. Effective March 22, 2021, Canada is imposing sanctions against Chinese officials and a Chinese entity in response to gross and systematic human rights violations that have been committed in China. Canadian Measures  
The Special Economic Measures (People’s Republic of China) Regulations impose on listed individuals a prohibition on any transaction (effectively, an asset freeze) by prohibiting persons in Canada, and Canadians outside Canada, from engaging in any activity related to any property of these individuals or providing financial or related services to them. The individuals listed in the schedule to the regulations are also rendered inadmissible to Canada under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. The specific prohibitions are set out in the regulations.



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# EVERYONE ABOVE 45 YEARS OF AGE ELIGIBLE FOR VACCINATION FROM APRIL 1, SAYS GOVT



EARLIER, ONLY SENIOR CITIZENS AND PEOPLE IN THE AGE GROUP OF 45-60 WITH SPECIFIC COMORBIDITIES WERE ELIGIBLE FOR COVID-19 VACCINATION.

With several states experiencing a second wave of surge in Covid-19 cases, the Union Cabinet Tuesday decided to further open up the vaccination, making every person above the age of 45 years eligible for a vaccine shot from April 1. Earlier, only senior citizens and people in the age group of 45-60 with specific comorbidities were eligible for Covid-19 vaccination. From April 1, anyone above the age of 45 years can either register online or on the spot for vaccination. The decision comes with the cumulative vaccination figures touching

the 5 crore-mark. Significantly, on Monday, a record 32 lakh (32,53,095) vaccine doses were administered in India. The decision also comes in the backdrop of six states — Maharashtra, Punjab, Karnataka, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, and Tamil Nadu — reporting a surge in daily new cases. On Tuesday, the health ministry said that Maharashtra reported 24,645 cases. It continues to report the highest daily share of new cases (60.53%) in the country. It is followed by Punjab with 2,299 while Gujarat reported 1,640 new cases.

## 81% OF PUNJAB NEW COVID SAMPLES SHOW UK VARIANT; AMARINDER URGES PM TO WIDEN VACCINATION AMBIT



With 81 per cent of the latest 401 samples sent by the state for genome sequencing turning up positive for the new UK Covid variant, Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh Tuesday issued an appeal to people to get them vaccinated. Singh also urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to widen the vaccination ambit to cover those younger than 60 as the mutant has been found to be infecting young people more. Expressing concern over the emerging situation, Singh stressed the need for the central government to urgently open up the vaccination for a bigger section of the populace. The process needs to be expedited, he said, pointing to the fact that experts had found the existing Covishield vaccine to be equally effective against the UK variant-B.1.1.7. It was essential to vaccinate more and more people to break the chain of transmission, he added. Amarinder also urged people to strictly adhere to all Covid safety protocols, including wearing of masks and maintaining social distancing. The state government, which has already announced fresh restrictions, will be forced to impose more curbs if people do not follow the Covid appropriate behaviour, he warned. The appeal from the Chief Minister came after the state's Covid expert

committee head, Dr K.K. Talwar apprised him of the developments on the new variant in the state, which has been witnessing a surge in number of Covid positive cases during the last few weeks. The state health department had sent 478 Covid positive samples to NIB, IGI, and NCDC for genome sequencing, of which results of 90 samples were received and those showed only two samples for the N440K variant. Subsequently, a team from the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India, visited the state to review the increase in positivity. The team was informed about the pending results of genome sequencing. Thereafter, 401 more samples, collected between January 01-March 10, were sent to NCDC for genome sequencing. The result of these samples was worrying as it showed the presence of B.1.1.7 variant in 326 COVID samples, said Dr K.K. Talwar. The Chief Minister said he had been informed by Dr Talwar that though the UK variant is more infectious, it is however not more virulent. Further, the Covishield vaccine is equally effective against this new UK variant. It is noteworthy that the UK variant is now spreading rapidly in many parts of the world, representing 98 per cent of the new cases in the United Kingdom and 90 per cent in Spain. UK authorities have suggested it is up to 70% more transmissible than the original virus.

## INTERNATIONAL FLIGHT SUSPENSION EXTENDED TILL APRIL 30, CARGO FLIGHTS TO CONTINUE

The Indian government on Tuesday (March 23) extended the suspension on international commercial flights till April 30, 2021. However, international passenger flights under air travel bubble arrangements will continue, the Director-General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said in a circular. "In partial modification of circular dated 26-6-2020, the competent authority has further extended the validity of circular issued on the above subject regarding Scheduled International commercial passenger services to/from India till 2359 hrs IST of April 30. This restriction shall not apply to international all-cargo operations and flights specifically approved by DGCA" the circular stated. "However, International Scheduled flights may be allowed on selected routes by the competent authority on case to case basis," it added. The circular states that the restrictions shall not apply to international all-cargo operations and flights specifically approved by DGCA. India currently has air bubble arrangements formed with 27 countries wherein special international flights have been operating since July last year. These countries are Uzbekistan, US, UK, United Arab Emirates, Ukraine, Tanzania, Seychelles, Russia, Rwanda, Oman, Qatar, Nigeria, Netherlands, Nepal, Maldives, Kuwait, Kenya, Japan, Iraq, Germany, France, Ethiopia, Canada, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Bahrain and Afghanistan. Passenger air services were suspended on March 25, 2020 due to the nationwide lockdown to contain the spread of Covid-19. However, domestic flight services resumed from May 25, 2020.



## IT'S TIME TO BURY THE PAST, SAYS PAK ARMY CHIEF



**NEW DELHI, (IANS)** Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Ahmed Bajwa has called for India and Pakistan to "bury the past". Bajwa's statement is being seen as an outreach to India as relations between the two neighbours have been hostile for some time now. Bajwa, however, said that the burden is on India to create a "conducive environment", adding that Washington also has a role to play in ending regional conflicts. "We feel it is time to bury the past and move forward," Bajwa said at a conference in Islamabad. "But our neighbour (India) will have to create a conducive environment, particularly in Kashmir," he added. Bajwa said the economic potential of South and Central Asia has "forever remained hostage" to the India-Pakistan disputes. He added that Pakistan has "hope" in the form of US President Joe Biden's new administration, which he said could help facilitate peace in the region.

## Need to educate politically, not consolidate Muslim vote: Salman Khurshid



That's an organic problem. What the party does periodically is pick people across the spectrum, which includes minority leaders, backward leaders, Dalits, to ensure that the message is that nobody is kept out of the leadership circle. But what has happened in recent years is that we've been restricted in numbers. So, the chance to accommodate the largest choice is not there anymore. And this is a problem of paucity; if you have ten seats, you can accommodate a range of people, but if you are stuck with two seats, then how do you arrange your people. This is a physical problem of our times. Therefore, when people say there is no Muslim to represent us, I think that maybe justified in one manner, it's a fact that there is no one to represent, (but) I think it's not only a Muslim who can represent Muslims. Any Rajasthan leader is just as capable and equipped to represent Muslims, as he is to represent any other community. When it comes to giving seats in an Assembly election, if we didn't give them seats, then you might say it's not fair.

## ‘Bhagat Singh wished for secular, egalitarian India, but inequality still exists’



As the nation observes martyrdom day of Bhagat Singh Tuesday, experts on his life and writings said that issues picked up by him decades ago continue to be relevant even today across the country. "Bhagat Singh did not merely wish to free India from colonial bondage but dreamed of independent India, which would be egalitarian and secular," said Prof Jagmohan Singh, Bhagat Singh's nephew and the chairperson of Shaheed Bhagat Singh Centenary Foundation and general secretary of Democratic Rights Association who had worked to highlight the true ideology of the martyr. He mentioned that in the June 1928 issue of the Kirti, the Journal of the Kirti Kisan Sabha, published from Amritsar, Bhagat Singh wrote two articles titled Achoot Ka Sawaal (Question of Untouchability) and Sampradayik Dange Aur Unka Ilaj (Communal riots and their solutions). What Bhagat Singh wrote in 1928 appears to be valid even today when we see communal riots across the country, he added. "Let it be known that Bhagat Singh and his companions carried forward the revolutionary nationalism of Aurbindo Ghosh, Sardar Ajit Singh and Gadar revolutionaries and had very distinct views of organising society on equality and fraternity along with liberty from social evils like communalism and casteism. Whereas today the Centre government led by BJP stands for Hindu nationalism against the secular culture of the country and tends to act for the benefits corporates," said Prof Jagmohan. Gurmit Singh, a trustee of Desh Bhagat Yadgar Hall, Jalandhar, said: "Bhagat Singh had diagnosed that inequality in the society can never bring real freedom and advocated socialist way of working where everyone has equal rights to work and earn. He wrote about the universal brotherhood and this is what our farmers' protest is representing where farmers are being treated just as a farmers and not as individuals belonging to any religion." "He was aware that when the government and government systems fail to solve the issues of the people they adopt tactics to divide them on the name of religion and caste and the same is happening today," said another expert. Communal riots was a tool used by the British to divide people in India and the same is happening in free India, he added.



# 10 KILLED IN US MASS SHOOTING HIGHLIGHTING SCOURGE OF GUN VIOLENCE



THE LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS SAID THAT THE SUSPECT HAS BEEN TAKEN INTO CUSTODY AND ESCORTED AWAY FROM THE SCENE OF CRIME.

**NEW YORK, (IANS)** Ten people have been killed in a mass shooting in Boulder in Colorado state putting the focus on gun violence, the intractable scourge of the US that is deeply rooted in ideology. At a news conference on Tuesday, Boulder Police chief Maris Herold identified the shooter in the Monday evening incident as Ahmad Al Aliwi Alissa, a 21-year-old man. The killings at a grocery shop followed another another massacre last Tuesday in which eight people were killed in Atlanta. Herold said that Alissa, who was taken to a hospital after being taken into custody, was in a stable condition. She said that he has been charged with ten murders but did not provide a motive. FBI Special Agent Michael Schneider said officials were conducting a "thorough investigation which includes identifying the subject's motives". A Senate committee started a previously scheduled hearing on gun violence on Tuesday morning, which brought out the political differences between the Democrats and Republicans on guns. "We face a pandemic of coronavirus. We have another epidemic in America called guns," said Judiciary Committee Chair Dick Durbin, a Democrat Senator. According to the Gun Violence Archive, 19,223 people were killed in the US in shootings last year, an increase of 25 per cent over the previous year. One of those killed in Boulder was a police officer, Eri Talley, Herold said. Calling the shootings "an absolute tragedy", Vice President Kamala

Harris said: "A police officer who is performing his duties, and with great courage and heroism" is a victim. She added that ten people "going about their day, living their lives, not bothering anybody" have been killed. President Joe Biden has ordered flags to be flown at half-mast to mourn the victims and he is to speak to the nation about the gun violence later on Tuesday, the White House said. The shootings brought renewed calls for stricter laws to control gun violence. At the Senate committee hearing on "Constitutional and Common Sense Steps to Reduce Gun Violence", Durbin asked: "What are we doing, other than reflecting and praying?" The House of Representatives passed two bills to tighten background checks for gun-buyers but faces Republicans opposition making it unlikely to pass the Senate. Republican Senator Ted Cruz expressed his party's scepticism over laws to restrict gun ownership, saying: "Every time there's a shooting we play this ridiculous theatre where this committee gets together and proposes a bunch of laws that would do nothing to stop these murders." The shootings in the Atlanta region by a White man last Tuesday targeted three massage parlours and six of the victims were Asian women raising fears of racial violence against Asians. According to officials, the killer in the Atlanta region, also 21 years old, told them he had a sex addiction and shot the massage places to root out the source of temptation for him.

## PAK PM IMRAN KHAN ISOLATES AFTER TESTING COVID POSITIVE; PM MODI WISHES SPEEDY RECOVERY

**NEW DELHI, (IANS)** Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan has tested positive for the novel coronavirus. Faisal Sultan, Special Assistant to the



Prime Minister on National Health Services, Regulations & Coordination confirmed the development on Saturday. Sultan said that the 68-year-old former cricketer-turned-politician has quarantined himself at home. "PM Imran Khan has tested positive for Covid-19 and is self isolating at home," Sultan said in a tweet. Pakistan is using the Chinese vaccine, Sinopharm against Covid-19 pandemic. Recently a batch of 5,00,000 doses was received in Pakistan from China. The vaccination drive in Pakistan is currently underway for senior citizens.

## CPEC CONTRIBUTES TO REGIONAL PROSPERITY: PAK FM

**ISLAMABAD, (IANS)** Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi said that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a "quintessential" connectivity project that contributes to regional prosperity. Speaking at the government-sponsored Islamabad Security Dialogue on Thursday, Qureshi described CPEC as a hallmark of Pakistan's all-weather strategic cooperative partnership with China, reports Xinhua news agency. "Besides contributing to Pakistan's economic turnaround, CPEC is poised to contribute to regional prosperity," the Foreign Minister said. The main theme of the Islamabad Security Dialogue is "Comprehensive Security Framework" that will enable the country to unfold its untapped potential in becoming a hub of regional development, according to Qureshi. Pakistan plans to make the dialogue an annual event to parallel the world's leading security dialogues, he said, adding: "We envision Pakistan emerging as the gateway to landlocked Central Asia and Afghanistan. "We will endeavour to reap peace dividends in Afghanistan in the form of enhanced connectivity with central Asia." The CPEC is a flagship \$62 billion projects of Chinese President Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative that aims to connect Asia, Africa and Europe through a vast network of highways, rail lines and sea lanes. The multi-billion-dollar corridor connects the Chinese city of Kashgar with Pakistan's Gwadar port on the Arabian Sea.

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