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MidWeek

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PANDORA PAPERS: HIDDEN RICHES OF WORLD FAMOUS PERSONALITIES 'EXPOSED' IN 'UNPRECEDENTED' LEAK



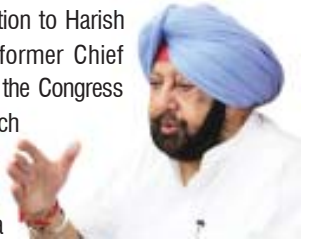
SACHIN TENDULKAR
ANIL AMBANI
KING OF JORDAN
TONY BLAIR
SHAKIRA

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CONGRESS IN PATHETIC SITUATION NOW, SAYS EX-PUNJAB CM AMARINDER

AMARINDER SINGH TO FORM 'PUNJAB VIKAS PARTY': SOURCES

CHANDIGARH, (IANS) Taking strong exception to Harish Rawat's no-holds barred attack on him, former Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Friday rejected the Congress Punjab in-charge's claims and allegations, which he said were clearly prompted by the pathetic situation the party now found itself in the state after being on a winning spree for four and a half years.



| CONTD. ON PAGE 9

PAKISTAN BUSINESSMAN, MEDIA MOGULS, MILITARY LEADERS IN PANDORA PAPERS

NEW DELHI, (IANS) More Pakistani individuals ranging from media group owners to family members of army personnel to businessmen and executives were identified in the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists' (ICIJ) Pandora Papers - a major international research into the financial holdings of high-profile individuals around the world, Dawn reported.



| CONTD. ON PAGE 11

ARYAN KHAN, SON OF SHAH RUKH KHAN, SENT TO 3-DAY NCB CUSTODY WITH 2 OTHERS



Spelling a setback, a Mumbai Magistrate Court on Monday extended the NCB custody of Aryan Khan - son of Bollywood megastar Shah Rukh Khan and producer Gauri Khan till October 7, though no drugs were found from him during the rave party bust aboard a luxury cruise ship on Saturday (October 2). At a hearing on Monday, the Additional Chief Metropolitan Court R.M. Nerlikar also sent the two co-accused Munmun Dhamecha and Arbaaz Merchant to the custody of Narcotics Control Bureau till October 7.

| CONTD. ON PAGE 15

ISIS CLAIMS RESPONSIBILITY FOR KILLING SIKH PHYSICIAN IN PESHAWAR

The terrorist organisation Islamic State (Daesh) has claimed responsibility for killing a Sikh community member earlier this week in Pakistan's Peshawar. In a statement, Islamic State (Daesh) on Friday said Satnam Singh was shot dead by IS (Daesh) members. Satnam Singh, a Hakim (physician) was inside his clinic on Thursday in Peshawar when he was shot dead. The incident comes as yet another example of the deplorable conditions under which religious minorities live in Pakistan. Religious minorities continue to face brutal suppression of their rights. They regularly become a target of rampant violence. Religious minorities remain a soft target of non-state actors and religiously inspired extremists.



Y MEDIA COVID & VACCINE REPORT

- *Merck says its covid-19 pill cuts risk of hospitalization and death in half.*
- *Pfizer prevents covid hospitalisation by 90%, but wanes against infection: study.*
- *Ontario announces 'targeted' COVID-19 rapid test program in schools.*
- *Over 88% Ontarians 12+ inoculated with first dose of covid-19 vaccine, 82% fully vaccinated.*
- *Over 87% Canadians 12+ inoculated with first dose of covid-19 vaccine, 81% fully vaccinated.*

8 KILLED IN UP, INDIA VIOLENCE

The Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh has set up a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe the Lakhimpur-Kheri incident, in which nine persons were killed on Sunday. The six-member SIT will be headed by Additional SP Arun Kumar and will include Deputy SP Sandeep Singh and three inspectors. Violence broke out in Lakhimpur-Kheri on Sunday when some people mowed down protesting farmers with their vehicle, triggering a violent backlash. Eight persons were killed in the incident. The FIR lodged against Ashish Mishra Monu, the son of Union Minister of State for Home, Ajay Mishra 'Teni', in connection with the recent violent incident in Lakhimpur Kheri, in which a total of 8 people were killed, accuses the minister's son of serious charges. As per the FIR, four of the victims were mowed down by a vehicle allegedly being driven by Ashish Mishra. The FIR has been filed under Indian Penal Code (IPC) Sections 302 for murder, 304-A for causing death due to reckless driving, 120-B for criminal conspiracy, 147 for rioting, 279 for rash driving, 338 for causing grievous injuries to any person by doing any act so rashly or negligently as to endanger human life, along with other sections at the Tikunia police station. The FIR states that the whole incident was 'premeditated' and that the entire 'conspiracy was hatched by the BJP minister and his son', who committed the act in a display of 'hooliganism'. The FIR also mentions 15-20 unnamed persons as accused. The FIR further read, "The incident took place at around 3 pm when Mishra, along with 15-20 others, who were armed with weapons,

came to the protest site in Banbirpur in 3 speeding four-wheelers. Monu Mishra, who was sitting on the left side of his Mahindra Thar vehicle, opened gunfire, mowed down the crowd and went ahead. The firing led to the death of farmer Gurvinder Singh, son of Sukhwinder, a resident of Matronia in Nanpara." The FIR also alleges that the vehicle of the BJP MP's son overturned on the side of the road and this caused injuries to several other people present on the side of the road and thereafter Mishra opened fire, escaped from his car, and hid in the nearby sugarcane field. The FIR also states that a video has already gone viral on social media, in which the BJP minister could be allegedly seen warning protesters who were opposing the Centre's three farm laws. In the video, he allegedly asked the protesters to mend their ways. On October 3, several farmers were holding protests against the visit of Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya to Lakhimpur Kheri, when four protesting farmers were killed after they were mowed down by an SUV. Allegedly, the SUV was part of the convoy of Union minister Ajay Mishra Teni. According to legal experts, the FIR has been lodged under the stringent sections of the Indian Penal Code, demanding immediate arrest of the accused. The sections levelled against Ashish Mishra are non-bailable. The Lakhimpur police, however, have claimed that they were 'busy' with the cremations of the bodies of the farmers due to which they did not find time for investigation.

Consulate General of India organized 'Varishtha Yoddha' event to felicitate veterans



CONSULATE GENERAL OF INDIA ORGANIZED 'VARISHTHA YODDHA' EVENT TO FELICITATE VETERANS, PROGRAMME TO BE BROADCASTED ON CHANNEL Y ON SAT, OCT 9 & SUN, OCT 10 FROM 4 PM- 6 PM AT ROGERS 857, BELL FIBE 828, TELUS 2418 & IGNITE 707.

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SUPREME COURT RULES AN ONTARIO LAW THAT CUT THE NUMBER OF TORONTO CITY COUNCILLORS DURING THE 2018 MUNICIPAL ELECTION WAS CONSTITUTIONAL

On May 1, 2018, a municipal election campaign started in the City of Toronto. Candidate nominations were due by July 27, 2018. Over 500 people registered as candidates. On the day nominations closed, the government of Ontario announced its intention to introduce a law to reduce the number of electoral wards from 47 to 25.

The law, known as the Better Local Government Act, 2018, came into force on August 14, 2018. Soon after, the City challenged the law in court. It argued the law violated the freedom of expression of candidates and voters, contrary to section 2(b) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It also argued the law violated certain unwritten constitutional principles, such as democracy.

The Ontario Superior Court agreed with the City. The Province of Ontario appealed that decision. In the meantime, the election was held on October 22, 2018, with 25 wards only. Later, the Court of Appeal ruled in favour of the Province. The City then appealed to the Supreme Court of Canada.

The Supreme Court has agreed with the Province.

The law did not violate the freedom of expression of candidates and voters. Writing for the majority, Chief Justice Wagner and Justice Brown said the law did not stop candidates from expressing themselves: "The candidates and their supporters had 69 days — longer than most

federal and provincial election campaigns — to re-orient their messages and freely express themselves according to the new ward structure".

The judges said the law did not restrict what candidates could say or do. They noted many candidates had successful campaigns, raised substantial amounts of money and won lots of votes. They said this would not have been possible if candidates had been prevented from meaningful expression. The majority recognized that some of the candidates' messages, made before the number of wards was reduced, may have lost their relevance. However, they said section 2(b) of the Charter does not guarantee the effectiveness or relevance of messages or campaign materials.

Unwritten constitutional principles cannot invalidate a law.

The majority said unwritten constitutional principles, such as democracy, can be used to understand and interpret the Constitution, but these principles cannot be used to invalidate laws.

The authority of provinces over municipalities was not in dispute.

Section 92(8) of the Constitution allows provinces to pass laws affecting municipalities. That means the Province could change the number of wards at any time without consulting the City beforehand. This authority was not in dispute in this case.

NEW DGP APPOINTMENT AS PER LAW, SAYS CHANNI AFTER SIDHU'S ASSERTIONS



CHANDIGARH, (IANS) Shortly after 'rebel' Congress leader Navjot Sidhu's assertions, Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Channi on Sunday clarified that the new Director General of Police (DGP) would be appointed as per the law as the state government has forwarded a panel of all senior police officers with 30 years of experience to the Centre. Channi's assertion came after Sidhu again demanded the government to roll back its decisions to appoint Advocate General A.P.S. Deol and DGP Iqbal Preet Singh Sahota.

Talking to the media on the sidelines of the state-level function of debt waiver scheme in Morinda town, the Chief Minister said now the state government was awaiting a panel from the Centre regarding three names finalised for the post of the DGP.

"Thereafter, the name of DGP would be finalized after consultation with PPCC President Navjot Sidhu, all Ministers and MLAs," the Chief Minister said. He said the state is functioning with dedication, sincerity and honesty and to ensure transparency in its administration would be the top most priority. He, however, said the organisational work is being looked after by Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee President

and a committee has been constituted for better coordination between the government and the party.

Earlier in the day, Sidhu in a tweet said: "Demand for justice in sacrilege cases and for arrest of main culprits behind the drug trade brought our government in 2017 and due to his failure, people removed the last CM (Chief Minister).

"Now, AG/DG appointments rub salt on wounds of victims, they must be replaced or we will have no face."

In his earlier tweet, Sidhu said DGP Sahota was head of SIT investigating 'Beadbi' or sacrilege case under the Badal government and he wrongfully indicted two Sikh youth for sacrilege and gave clean chit to Badals.

Unhappy over the first Cabinet expansion, allocation of portfolios and appointments on crucial posts, including the Advocate General and the DGP, by the Chief Minister, Sidhu last week resigned from his post of state Congress chief.

As his decision pushed the state Congress into deeper crisis, Sidhu, however, maintained that he would not be leaving the party.

AGITATION TO CONTINUE: SAMYUKT KISAN MORCHA

NEW DELHI (IANS) A day after an agreement with the administration over the issue of death of four farmers among nine killed at Lakhimpur Kheri in Uttar Pradesh, the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) on Tuesday said the agreement was only to pave way for the last rites of those deceased farmers, but the agitation will continue.

"The agreement with the administration on Monday was only to pave way for the last rites to be performed. Our demands remain the same. The morality or lack of it, of the present government already stands fully exposed. SKM will soon announce a programme of action for getting these main demands met, and the agitation will not be called off until then," the SKM said in a release here.

The SKM has demanded the immediate arrest of Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Ashish Mishra Teni, who belongs to BJP, and his accomplices. The SKM also demanded dismissal of Teni and Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar from their posts immediately. Farmers are protesting Teni's alleged comments, followed by his son Ashish Mishra allegedly mowing down four farmers at Lakhimpur Kheri while Khattar's video instigating violence against farmers had gone viral, both on Sunday.

"It was only a matter of time that the true narrative of the reality of the incidents in Lakhimpur Kheri had to emerge," the SKM said, referring to a video about the Lakhimpur Kheri incident that too has gone viral on social media platforms. The SKM had immediately called an emergency Panchayat and announced an agitation at that village. On Monday, for several hours together, the farmers had blocked the roads leading to the place where the incident had taken place and kept the four dead farmers' bodies in a glass-topped enclosures. They had claimed they would neither move from there, nor allow last rites of the farmers till their demands in connection with Teni and Mishra were met. Several hours later, around noon, farmers' leader Rakesh Tikait from the Bhartiya Kisan Union visited the place and held a meeting with the Uttar Pradesh administration.

Announcing that the issues are resolved, he requested the agitating farmers to make way and asked the families of the deceased and the victims to go home. "SKM leader Tajinder Virk, who was grievously injured in the Lakhimpur Kheri massacre was operated upon, with a neuro-surgery procedure, after being shifted to Medanta Hospital in Gurugram. He is reported to be out of danger now, and SKM wishes him and all other injured persons a full and speedy recovery," a release from the SKM said.

The SKM also said, it condemned the arrest and detention of Gurnam Singh Chaduni, SKM leader by the Uttar Pradesh government for many hours since Monday evening.

"The undemocratic and authoritarian behaviour of the Uttar Pradesh government is illegal and challenged by SKM. It is clear that the Yogi government is wary of the truth of Lakhimpur Kheri massacre emerging fully in front of the world and is protecting its own," the release said. The SKM condemned the attempts of the Uttar Pradesh government to prevent people from Punjab to come to Lakhimpur Kheri.



POST OR NO POST, WILL STAND BY RAHUL, PRIYANKA: SIDHU



CHANDIGARH, (IANS) Days after resigning as Punjab Congress President after being upset over some new faces in the state Cabinet, Navjot Singh Sidhu said on Saturday that whether he holds any post in the Congress or not, he will always stand by party leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi.

In a tweet on Gandhi Jayanti, Sidhu said, "Will uphold principles of Gandhi Ji & Shastri Ji..."

"Post or No Post will stand by Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi! Let all negative forces try to defeat me, but with every ounce of positive energy will make Punjab win, Punjabyat (Universal Brotherhood) win & every Punjabi win!!"

'BUCK STOPS WITH MARK': WHISTLEBLOWER BLASTS FACEBOOK 'METRICS' DRIVEN CULTURE



NEW YORK, (IANS) In more than three hours of riveting testimony, a former Facebook employee tore into the now embattled social networking giant, blaming its "metrics" driven culture for hurting children, fueling hate and walking away from ethical considerations because profits come first. Frances Haugen, testifying to the Senate Commerce Subcommittee on Consumer Protection, accused Facebook of intentionally walking away from fixing its broken algorithms that fuel some of the worst effects of addictive social media apps. Haugen claims Facebook boss Mark Zuckerberg knew about internal research showing potential negative impacts of Instagram. "The company intentionally hides vital information from the public, from the US government and from governments around the world," she said. In response, US lawmakers from across the aisle broadly united behind the idea that Facebook's role in society has become too big to ignore. Like others before her, Haugen is urging stricter government oversight of Facebook. In Haugen's telling, Facebook needs "help". "Congressional action is needed," she said. "They won't solve this crisis without your help," she told Congress. "Facebook's products harm children, stoke division and weaken our democracy," Haugen said. "The company's leadership knows how to make Facebook and Instagram safer but won't make the necessary changes because they have put their astronomical profits before people." Haugen is urging lawmakers to "break out of our previous regulatory frames." She said Facebook wants to "trick" the public into thinking that privacy protections or changes to Section 230 alone will be sufficient. "While important, these will not get to the core of the issue, which is that no one truly understands the destructive choices made by Facebook, except Facebook." Haugen's most compelling arguments came in connection with how Facebook manipulates algorithms to keep kids hooked to its platform. "The buck stops with Mark (Zuckerberg)," Haugen confirmed, in the context of current Facebook staffers dancing around the details of who takes the big calls at Facebook. Zuckerberg, she explained, controls more than 50 per cent of Facebook's voting shares. "There is no one currently holding Mark accountable but himself."

REPORT ON DRUGS TO SEE LIGHT OF DAY AFTER OVER 2 YRS DELAY: SIDHU



CHANDIGARH, (IANS) With a new special bench of the Punjab and Haryana High Court to start hearing in the multi-crore drug racket case concerning Punjab on Tuesday, Congress leader Navjot Sidhu said a report by the Special Task Force (STF) on drugs will finally see light of day after two and a half years of delay.

"Today, STF Report on Drugs will finally see light of day after 2.5 yrs of delay in sealed covers, court naming main culprits behind drug trade will be first victory for youth & suffering mothers of Punjab," Sidhu tweeted. "Hope they are given punishment that acts as a deterrent for generations!!"

The case was assigned to the division bench of Justices A.G. Masih and Ashok Kumar Verma. Earlier, the case was being heard by the bench of Justices Rajan Gupta and Ajay Tewari but the latter recused himself from hearing the case on September 1.

The new bench will take up an application seeking that the high court "may open" a report submitted in a sealed cover.

The application has been filed by advocate Navkiran Singh, pleading that the report contains the response of Punjab on a report submitted by then STF chief Harpreet Sidhu, who was asked by the high court to go through the report submitted by Enforcement Directorate Assistant Director Niranjana Singh.

Y MEDIA COVID & VACCINE REPORT



COVID: MERCK'S ORAL PILL SHOWS PROMISE AGAINST HOSPITALISATION, DEATH

Merck on Friday announced its anti-viral drug has shown "compelling results" in clinical trials — halving the risk of hospitalization or death for patients with mild or moderate cases of Covid.

Molnupiravir, co-developed with Ridgeback Biotherapeutics, is administered orally and works by inhibiting the replication of the coronavirus inside the body. The companies plan to seek emergency authorization for the drug in the US as soon as possible, the company said in a statement.

An interim analysis of a Phase-3 study, based on 775 trial participants, found that 7.3 per cent of patients treated with molnupiravir were hospitalized within 29 days. Of the patients who received a placebo, 14.1 per cent were hospitalised or died by day 29. No deaths were reported in patients who were given molnupiravir within the 29-day period, while eight deaths were reported in placebo-treated patients.

The drug's efficacy was not affected by timing of symptom onset or underlying risk factors. In addition, based on the participants with available viral sequencing data (approximately 40 per cent of participants), molnupiravir demonstrated consistent efficacy across viral variants Gamma, Delta, and Mu.

"With these compelling results, we are optimistic that molnupiravir can become an important medicine as part of the global effort to fight

the pandemic," Merck CEO and President Robert M. Davis, said in the statement.

"We will continue to work with regulatory agencies on our applications and do everything we can to bring molnupiravir to patients as quickly as possible," he added.

Moreover, adverse events were comparable in the molnupiravir and placebo groups, with around 10 per cent reporting adverse events. The Phase 3 trial was conducted at more than 170 sites, in countries including the US, Brazil, Italy, Japan, South Africa, Taiwan, and Guatemala.

Molnupiravir has also been shown to be active in several preclinical models of SARS-CoV-2, including for prophylaxis, treatment, and prevention of transmission.

If authorized by regulatory bodies, molnupiravir could be the first oral antiviral medicine for Covid. Antiviral treatments now in use, such as remdesivir, are administered intravenously, CNBC reported.

Merck has already begun producing molnupiravir. The pharmaceutical giant expects to produce 10 million courses of treatment by the end of 2021, and more doses in 2022.

The company agreed earlier this year to supply the US with around 1.7 million courses of molnupiravir if it receives emergency use authorization or full approval from the FDA.

For unvaccinated, re-infection by SARS-CoV-2 likely: Study

NEW YORK, (IANS) Immunity gained after a natural infection is short-lived and remaining unvaccinated can increase the risk of getting re-infected with Covid-19, suggests a study published in the journal *The Lancet Microbe*.

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, there has been much uncertainty about how long immunity lasts after someone who is unvaccinated is infected with SARS-CoV-2.

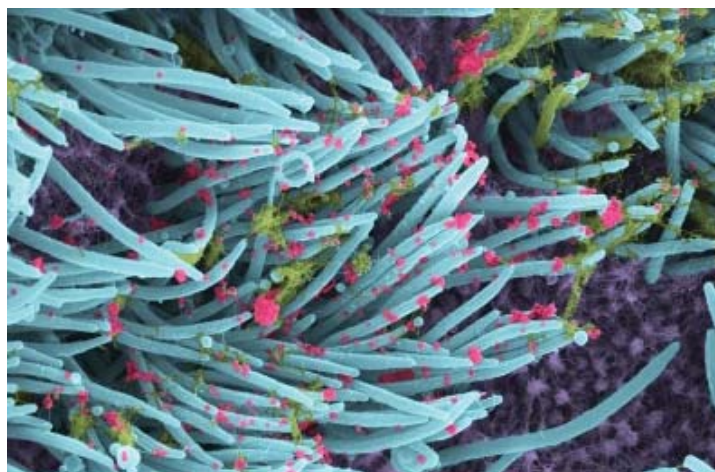
"Re-infection can reasonably happen in three months or less," said lead author Jeffrey Townsend, Professor of Biostatistics at the Yale School of Public Health.

"Therefore, those who have been naturally infected should get vaccinated. Previous infection alone can offer very little long-term protection against subsequent infections," Townsend added.

The team analysed known re-infection and immunological data from the close viral relatives of SARS-CoV-2 that cause "common colds" — along with immunological data from SARS-CoV-1 and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome. Leveraging evolutionary principles, the team was able to model the risk of Covid-19 re-infection over time.

Re-infections can and have happened, even shortly after recovery. And they will become increasingly common as immunity wanes and new SARS-CoV-2 variants arise.

"We tend to think about immunity as being immune or not immune. Our study cautions that we instead should be more focused on the risk of re-infection through time," said Alex Dornburg, Assistant Professor of bioinformatics and genomics at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.



"As new variants arise, previous immune responses become less effective at combating the virus. Those who were naturally infected early in the pandemic are increasingly likely to become re-infected in the near future," he added.

The team's data-driven model reveals striking similarities to the re-infection risks over time between SARS-CoV-2 and endemic coronaviruses. "Just like common colds, from one year to the next you may get re-infected with the same virus. The difference is that, during its emergence in this pandemic, Covid-19 has proven to be much more deadly," Townsend said. "Due to the ability of SARS-CoV-2 to evolve and re-infect, it, too, is likely to transition from pandemic to an endemic disease," added Dornburg.

WHO to decide on granting Emergency Use Listing to Covaxin next week

NEW DELHI, (IANS) The World Health Organization (WHO) will meet next week with an independent group of experts to take a final decision on whether to grant Emergency Use Listing (EUL) to Covaxin. The WHO will carry out the risk and benefit assessments next week with the experts and take a final call on granting the much-awaited EUL to Covid vaccine Covaxin.

The global health body said, "WHO and an independent group of experts are scheduled to meet next week to carry out the risk/benefit assessments and come to a final decision whether to grant Emergency Use Listing to Covaxin."

It added that the EUL process of WHO and the technical advisory group of independent experts is centred on determining if a manufactured vaccine is quality-assured, safe and effective.

Indigenous vaccine Covaxin, which has been developed by Bharat Biotech, has not received emergency use approval from the WHO. The Strategic Advisory Group of Expert on Immunization (SAGE) met earlier on Tuesday to decide on Covaxin getting EUL authorisation. However, as no decision could be reached, the global health body will meet again next week to decide on the same.

The expert panel started its four-day meet on Monday to decide on policy guidance. The SAGE and the technical advisory group are supposed to go through all the vaccine dossiers submitted to the WHO before deciding on granting EUL to Covaxin.

"Covaxin manufacturer, Bharat Biotech, has submitting data to the WHO on a rolling basis. It also submitted additional info at WHO's request on 27 September. WHO experts are currently reviewing this information & if it addresses all questions raised, WHO assessment will be finalized next week". The WHO has so far included only six Covid vaccines in its EUL list that includes the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine, manufactured as Covishield by the Serum Institute of India.

European Medicines Agency approves Covid booster doses for adults

AMSTERDAM, (IANS) The Amsterdam-based European Medicines Agency (EMA) has approved booster doses of the Pfizer/BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine for all people aged 18 and over.

The EMA said in a statement on Monday that data for the vaccine had shown a rise in antibody levels when a booster shot is administered approximately six months after the second dose in people aged 18 to 55, reports Xinhua news agency.

It recommended that the booster doses "may be considered at least six months after the second dose for people aged 18 years and older". Meanwhile, the EMA also recommended an extra dose of Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna vaccines for those with severely weakened immune systems.

The EMA said that it had given the green light after studies showed that an extra dose of these vaccines increases the ability of organ transplant patients with severely weakened immune systems to produce antibodies against the virus that causes Covid-19.

The extra dose should be given to the severely immune-compromised at least 28 days after their second dose, the EMA said.

"Although there is no direct evidence that the ability to produce antibodies in these patients protected against Covid-19, it is expected that the extra dose would increase protection at least in some patients," it said, adding that it will continue monitoring any new data on its effectiveness. The agency also added: "The risk of inflammatory heart conditions or other very rare side effects after a booster is not known and is being carefully monitored."

Member states will take decisions related to booster vaccines, according to the EMA.

'US MAKING PROGRESS AGAINST COVID, BUT NOT OUT OF THE WOODS YET': DR. FAUCI



WASHINGTON, (IANS) The US is making progress against the ongoing resurgence of the Covid-19 pandemic, but the country is not out of the woods yet, America's top infectious disease expert Anthony Fauci said. "We certainly are turning the corner on this particular surge," Xinhua news agency quoted Fauci, also the medical advisor to the White House, as saying to the ABC News on Sunday.

"But we have experienced over now close to 20 months surges that go up and then come down, and then go back up again. The way to keep it down, to make that turnaround continue to go down, is to do what we mentioned: get people vaccinated," he added. "When you have 70 million people in the country who are eligible to be vaccinated, who are not yet vaccinated, that's the danger zone right there. "So it's within our capability to make sure that that turnaround that we're seeing, that very favourable and optimistic turnaround, continues to go down and doesn't do what we've seen multiple times before, where it goes down and then it comes back up," Fauci said. The US has witnessed its first notable decline in Covid-19 metrics in more than three months, with coronavirus-related hospital admissions and average daily new cases dropping by more than 30 per cent over the last month, ABC News said in a report on Sunday. According to latest The New York Times' update, the seven-day average of confirmed cases of the pandemic stood at 108,009 nationwide on Saturday, with its 14-day change striking a 27 per cent fall. The Covid-19-related deaths were 1,882 on Saturday, with the 14-day change realising a 6 per cent decrease. According to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), a total of 214,870,696 people have received at least one dose of a Covid-19 vaccine till date, making up 64.7 per cent of the country's entire population. Meanwhile, the number of fully vaccinated people stood at 185,143,698, which accounted for 55.8 per cent of the total population. The CDC added that total of 4,742,750 people, or 2.6 per cent of the fully vaccinated group, have received booster shots. As of Monday morning, the US still continues to be the worst-hit country with the world's highest number of coronavirus cases and deaths at 43,682,974 and 701,169.

PFIZER PREVENTS COVID HOSPITALISATION BY 90%, BUT WANES AGAINST INFECTION: STUDY



NEW YORK, (IANS) Two doses of Pfizer-BioNTech (BNT162b2) are 90 per cent effective against Covid-19 hospitalisations for all variants, including delta, for at least six months, confirms a new study published in *The Lancet*. However, effectiveness against all SARS-CoV-2 infections declined, falling from 88 per cent within one month after receiving two vaccine doses to 47 after six months, stressing the need for a booster dose. The joint study by Kaiser Permanente Southern California and Pfizer underscores the importance of improving Covid-19 vaccination rates worldwide and monitoring vaccine effectiveness to determine which populations should be prioritised to receive booster shots. "In line with the recent FDA and CDC recommendations, considerations for booster shots should take global Covid-19 vaccine supply into account as people in many countries around the world have not yet received a primary vaccination series," said lead author Dr Sara Tartof from Kaiser's Department of Research and Evaluation.

The team analysed 34,36,957 electronic health records between December 4, 2020, and August 8, 2021, to assess BNT162b2 vaccine effectiveness against SARS-CoV-2 infections and Covid-19-related hospitalisation.

During the study period, 5.4 per cent of people were infected with SARS-CoV-2. Among those who were infected, 6.6 per cent were hospitalised. The average time since being fully vaccinated was between three to four months. Vaccine effectiveness against delta variant infections at one month after two doses of BNT162B2 was 93 per cent and fell to 53 per cent after four months. Effectiveness against other (non-delta) variants at one month after receiving two doses was 97 per cent and declined to 67 per cent after four months.

AS OF OCTOBER 18, OSLER INTRODUCES MANDATORY COVID-19 VACCINATION FOR VISITORS & ESSENTIAL CARE PARTNERS TO HELP KEEP EVERYONE SAFE

Effective October 18, 2021, William Osler Health System (Osler) will implement an updated Visitor and Essential Care Partner Policy that makes it mandatory for all Visitors and Essential Care Partners to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

The new requirement represents Osler's continued commitment to support the safety and well-being of all those who receive care, visit, or work at Osler and is consistent with its Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccination Policy for staff, physicians, and volunteers. This policy change is also consistent with the Province's direction to require proof of vaccination in order to access many non-essential businesses and settings effective September 22. As of October 18, all Visitors and Essential Care Partners, 12 years old or older, will be required to provide proof of full vaccination against COVID-19 along with photo identification upon entering the hospital. Some medical exemptions apply. There are also clinical exemptions for those Visitors who need to enter the hospital to support patients during unpredictable and urgent circumstances, including end-of-life and unexpected labour and delivery of a baby. "At Osler, we understand how important it is for patients to have family members by their side," said Kiki Ferrari, Chief Operating Officer, William Osler Health System. "The communities served by Osler are now in the midst of a fourth wave of the COVID-19 pandemic and it is more important than ever to take every step we can to further support the safety and well-being of those who receive care, visit, or work in Osler's facilities."



TORONTO REGIONAL REAL ESTATE BOARD SAYS 11,033 HOMES CHANGED HANDS IN REGION LAST MONTH, UP FROM 9,046 LAST SEPTEMBER

September marked the transition from the slower summer market to the busier fall market in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Every year, we generally see an uptick in sales, average selling price and listings after Labour Day, and September 2021 was no different. Sales increased relative to August and were also at the third-highest mark on record for the month of September. The average selling price was up both month-over-month and year-over-year. GTA REALTORS® reported 9,046 sales through TRREB's MLS® System in September 2021 - up in line with the regular seasonal trend from August. Compared to last year, market conditions tightened noticeably, with sales representing a substantially higher share of listings, and a significantly lower number of new listings across the board. Resurgence in the condo market was a factor in the higher share of listings sold. The total number of sales was down 18 per cent from 2020's record September result, in large part due to the lower number of new listings, which were down 34 per cent from the same time last year. "Demand has remained incredibly robust throughout September with many qualified buyers who would buy a home tomorrow provided they could find a suitable property. With new listings in September down by one third compared to last year, purchasing a home for many is easier said than done. The lack of housing supply and choice has reached a critical juncture.

Bandaid policies to artificially suppress demand have not been effective. This is not an issue that can be solved by one level of government alone. There needs to be collaboration federally, provincially, and locally on a solution," said Kevin Crigger, TRREB President. The MLS® Home Price Index Composite Benchmark was up by 19.1 per cent year-over-year in September 2021. The average selling price for all home types combined was up by 18.3 per cent year-over-year to \$1,136,280. "Price growth in September continued to be driven by the low-rise market segments, including detached and semi-detached houses and townhouses. However, competition between buyers for condo apartments has picked up markedly over the past year, which has led to an acceleration in price growth over the past few months as first-time buyers re-entered the ownership market. Look for this trend to continue," said Jason Mercer, TRREB Chief Market Analyst. "Housing was a key issue in last month's federal election. Ontario provincial and municipal elections are on the horizon in 2022. Much of the heavy lifting required to bring more housing online, from a policy perspective, happens at the provincial and local levels. These levels of government need to be on the same page. This should be an important topic for debate during the upcoming elections," said John DiMichele, TRREB CEO.

India asks UN panel to condemn Pakistan's attempts to disrupt disarmament efforts

UNITED NATIONS, (IANS) India has called on the UN committee dealing with disarmament to condemn Pakistan for its "nefarious and vicious" attempts to disrupt its work.

"This Committee should not only categorically reject Pakistan's nefarious and vicious designs but collectively condemn Pakistan for its repeated efforts to politicise its work and hijack its mandate," an Indian delegate said on Monday at the UN General Assembly's (UNGA) First Committee, which deals with disarmament.

He was replying to Pakistan's Permanent Representative Munir Akram's attack on India that went outside the committee's framework by raising the Kashmir issue.

The Indian delegate said: "As the epicentre of global terrorism, Pakistan is the biggest destabilising force in the world and has repeatedly indulged in cross-border terrorism. They have no regard for UN principles."

"While Pakistan's Permanent Representative speaks about peace and security here, his Prime Minister (Imran Khan) glorifies global terrorists like Osama Bin Ladin as 'martyrs'. What more could be a better proof of the utter duplicity that this country is infamous for."

Earlier, India's Geneva-based Permanent Representative to the Conference on Disarmament, Pankaj Sharma, warned the committee about the dangers of "terrorists acquiring weapons of mass destruction" and called on UN members to "work together to address this grave danger". "Through its annual consensus resolution at the UNGA, titled 'Measures to Prevent Terrorists from Acquiring Weapons of Mass Destruction,' India has been drawing the attention of the world towards these threats and the need to strengthen international cooperation to address them," Sharma said.

He also drew attention to the havoc caused by terrorists getting small arms and light weapons (SALW).

"Weapons in the hands of terrorists are the most threatening form of illicit SALWs. Therefore, India values the full and effective implementation of the UN PoA (Programme of Action) as a means to combat terrorism and transnational crime."

Sharma reiterated India's commitment to "universal, non-discriminatory and verifiable nuclear disarmament".

This would require all countries, including the five permanent members of the Security Council which take cover behind the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT), to give up their nuclear weapons.

Laying out India's nuclear doctrine that has been stated at the UN in



previous years, Sharma said that "as a responsible nuclear weapon State and is committed as per its nuclear doctrine, to maintain credible minimum deterrence with the posture of no-first use and non-use against non-nuclear weapon states".

He did not elaborate on it, but a close reading of the statement, unchanged from previous years, leaves open the option of preemptive action against a nuclear-armed state.

But Sharma said that it was important "to commence negotiations to reach agreement on an international convention prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons and urgent steps to reduce the risks of unintentional and accidental use of nuclear weapons, respectively".

This has been highlighted in the annual resolutions introduced by India at the Assembly, Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons and Reducing Nuclear Danger, he said.

Akram held out an implied nuclear threat to India saying, "Pakistan will do whatever it takes to preserve full spectrum deterrence to prevent and defeat any potential Indian aggression."

In keeping up with Pakistan's policy of raising Kashmir and what it calls "Hindutva" in all UN forums regardless of their area of work or the topic of discussion, Akram representing the non-secular, officially Islamic state that works with Islamist extremists, alleged that the threat to South Asia came from "Hindutva". He went on to rekindle Islamabad's criticism of India over Kashmir. Akram also brought up the Indo-Pacific and Islamabad's patron China, which he called "the rising Asian great power." He asserted that "70 per cent of India's weaponry and forces are deployed against Pakistan, not to serve its promised role as a counter to the rising Asian great power in the so-called 'Indo-Pacific' region".

PANDORA PAPERS: HIDDEN RICHES OF WORLD LEADERS 'EXPOSED' IN 'UNPRECEDENTED' LEAK



Millions of leaked documents and the biggest journalism partnership in history have uncovered financial secrets of 35 current and former world leaders, more than 330 politicians and public officials in 91 countries and territories, and a global lineup of fugitives, con artists and murderers. The secret documents expose offshore dealings of the King of Jordan, the presidents of Ukraine, Kenya and Ecuador, the prime minister of the Czech Republic and former British Prime Minister Tony Blair. The files also detail financial activities of Russian President Vladimir Putin's "unofficial minister of propaganda" and more than 130 billionaires from Russia, the United States, Turkey and other nations. The leaked records reveal that many of the power players who could help bring an end to the offshore system instead benefit from it – stashing assets in covert companies and trusts while their governments do little to slow a global stream of illicit money that enriches criminals and impoverishes nations.

Among the hidden treasures revealed in the documents:

A \$22 million chateau in the French Riviera – replete with a cinema and two swimming pools – purchased through offshore companies by the Czech Republic's populist prime minister, a billionaire who has railed against the corruption of economic and political elites.

More than \$13 million tucked in a secrecy-shaded trust in the Great Plains of the United States by a scion of one of Guatemala's most powerful families, a dynasty that controls a soap and lipsticks conglomerate that's been accused of harming workers and the earth.

Three beachfront mansions in Malibu purchased through three offshore companies for \$68 million by the King of Jordan in the years after Jordanians filled the streets during Arab Spring to protest joblessness and corruption.

The secret records are known as the Pandora Papers.

The International Consortium of Investigative Journalists obtained the trove of more than 11.9 million confidential files and led a team of more than 600 journalists from 150 news outlets that spent two years sifting through them, tracking down hard-to-find sources and digging into court records and other public documents from dozens of countries. The leaked records come from 14 offshore services firms from around the world that set up shell companies and other offshore nooks for clients often seeking to keep their financial activities in the shadows. The records include information about the dealings of nearly three times as many current and former country leaders as any previous leak of documents from offshore havens.

In an era of widening authoritarianism and inequality, the Pandora Papers investigation provides an unequalled perspective on how money and power operate in the 21st century – and how the rule of law has been bent and broken around the world by a system of financial secrecy enabled by the U.S. and other wealthy nations.

The findings by ICIJ and its media partners spotlight how deeply secretive finance has infiltrated global politics – and offer insights into why governments and global organizations have made little headway in ending offshore financial abuses.

An ICIJ analysis of the secret documents identified 956 companies in offshore havens tied to 336 high-level politicians and public officials, including country leaders, cabinet ministers, ambassadors and others. More than two-thirds of those companies were set up in the British Virgin Islands, a jurisdiction long known as a key cog in the offshore system. At least \$11.3 trillion is held "offshore," according to a 2020 study by the Paris-based Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. Because of the complexity and secrecy of the offshore system, it's not possible to know how much of that wealth is tied to tax evasion and other crimes and how much of it involves funds that come from legitimate sources and have been reported to proper authorities. The Pandora Papers investigation unmasks the covert owners of offshore companies, incognito bank accounts, private jets, yachts, mansions, even artworks by Picasso, Banksy and other masters – providing more information than what's usually available to law enforcement agencies and cash-strapped governments. People linked by the secret documents to offshore assets include India's cricket superstar Sachin Tendulkar, pop music diva Shakira, supermodel Claudia Schiffer and an Italian mobster known as "Lell the Fat One."

The mobster, Raffaele Amato, has been tied to at least a dozen killings. The documents provide details about a shell company, registered in the United Kingdom, that Amato used to buy land in Spain, shortly before fleeing there from Italy to set up his own crime gang. Amato, whose history helped inspire the highly praised movie "Gomorrah," is serving a 20-year prison sentence. Amato's attorney did not respond to ICIJ's request for comment.

Tendulkar's attorney said the cricket player's investment is legitimate and has been declared to tax authorities. Shakira's attorney said the singer declared her companies, which the attorney said do not provide tax advantages. Schiffer's representatives said the supermodel correctly pays her taxes in the U.K., where she lives.

In most countries, it's not illegal to have assets offshore or to use shell companies to do business across national borders. Businesspeople who operate internationally say they need offshore companies to conduct their financial affairs.

But these affairs often amount to shifting profits from high-tax countries, where they are earned, to companies that exist only on paper in low-tax jurisdictions. Using offshore shelters is especially controversial for political figures, because they can be used to keep politically unpopular or even illicit activities from public view.

In popular imagination, the offshore system is often seen as a far-flung cluster of palm-shaded islands. The Pandora Papers show that the offshore money machine operates in every corner of the planet, including the world's largest democracies. The key players in the system include elite institutions – multinational banks, law firms and accounting practices – headquartered in the U.S. and Europe.

A document in the Pandora Papers shows that banks around the world helped their customers set up at least 3,926 offshore companies with the assistance of Alemán, Cordero, Galindo & Lee, a Panamanian law firm led by a former ambassador to the U.S. The document shows that the firm – also known as Alcojal – set up at least 312 companies in the British Virgin Islands for clients of the American financial services giant Morgan Stanley.

A Morgan Stanley spokesperson said: "We do not create offshore companies. . . . This process is independent of the firm and at the discretion and direction of the client." The Pandora Papers investigation also highlights how Baker McKenzie, the largest law firm in the U.S., helped create the modern offshore system and continues to be a mainstay of this shadow economy.

JAYAPAL EMERGES AS POWERFUL CONGRESSIONAL LEADER FORCING BIDEN LEFTWARD

NEW YORK, (IANS) Pramila Jayapal, the Indian-American leader of the progressive faction of the Democratic Party, has emerged as a powerful force in US politics pushing President Joe Biden leftward after holding his signature multi-trillion-dollar programmes hostage.

In Congress, where the Democratic Party holds a slim majority, she shot down a plan carefully crafted by Speaker Nancy Pelosi to get moderates' support by sequentially getting voted in the House of Representatives Biden's \$1 trillion plan for the nation's infrastructure and then another plan for over \$2 trillion for wide-ranging social and climate change programmes. Jayapal heads the leftist Congressional Progressive Caucus (CPC), a group of 95 within the 220 Democratic Party in the House of Representatives where the party has a slim edge of only eight over the Republicans giving her a potential veto.

In addition, the CPC has one senator.

Biden, who was expected to support Pelosi, instead came to Congress last week and agreed with Jayapal sending the legislations to a limbo where party leaders are now trying to work out a compromise.

The imbroglia arises because of the factionalism in the Democratic Party and the deep suspicions the left and the moderates have for each other. In August, the Senate had passed the \$1 trillion infrastructure programme known as the 'American Jobs Plan (AJP)' which had the support of Democrats and some Republicans, but hasn't taken up the \$2 trillion social programme called the 'American Family Plan (AFP)' because of the opposition from the moderates over its cost and the range of programmes from free community college education to care for children and seniors. The AFP would also raise taxes on the rich, whom Biden said would be those earning over \$400,000 per year. The CPC has refused to back the AJP in the House unless it first passes the AFP because Jayapal and other Caucus leaders fear that the moderates would not back it. The CPC wants to capitalise on the fact that Biden, Pelosi and many leaders from both sides desperately want to get the AJP passed. It is less controversial and has wide voter support among the voters of both parties because it deals with matters like roads, bridges, public transportation, electric vehicles and internet broadband. They can't get it unless Jayapal and the CPC get behind it. "It's not about trusting the speaker, it's not about trusting the president, it's really about the vote as an ironclad assurance from the Senate" that the AFP would be passed, Jayapal said.



WHAT DOES TALIBAN'S TRIUMPH MEAN FOR POLITICAL ISLAM?

BY TALMIZ AHMAD

NEW DELHI: Over several months before the Taliban took control of Kabul in August 2021, their spokespersons asserted that they were now a "new" Taliban--a Taliban who would be moderate in doctrine and accommodative of the country's diversity. During the last six weeks, there have been few indications of change. On women's education and employment, the Taliban have not yet taken a final view: though women at present are not permitted access to higher education or employment, the door has not been finally closed on these claims. In the broad area of ideology, there have been three developments: one, there are reports that numerous Salafi mosques and madrassas in 16 provinces have been shut down. Two, Taliban militants have committed themselves to conflict with the ISK, which the latter has cheerfully accepted.

Three, the Taliban have made no call for jihad or for attacks on western targets; in fact, the emergence of Taliban in power suggests the efficacy of dialogue with major powers. This is affirmed by the Taliban's recent engagements with Russia and China, both of which have been important interlocutors for the nascent administration, despite being associated with abiding hostility to their domestic Muslim communities -- the Uyghurs in China and the Chechens in Russia.

What implications does this have for Afghanistan emerging as the bastion of violent extremism?

The Taliban's hostility to Salafi influences in Afghanistan and specifically the ISK would suggest that it is unlikely to provide sanctuary to jihadi groups and allow the country to become the playing field for extremist activity. In fact, the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), the erstwhile Al Qaeda-affiliated Jabhat Nusra in Syria, has seen the value of re-inventing itself on the Taliban precedent -- confine its activities to Syria, back Turkey and Russia in fighting extremist groups at Idlib, and seek international recognition and support as a legitimate opposition movement in Syria.

While HTS cadres have welcomed the Taliban's success, their leaders have cautioned that they view Afghanistan as a refuge for them as civilians and not as a base for violent attacks as the Taliban will not tolerate them.

The crucial issue is that of international recognition -- like any liberation movement that has come to power after prolonged struggle, the Taliban would like broad international acceptance. Failure in this regard could have serious consequences: as Russian commentator Kirill Semonov has noted, if international recognition is not forthcoming, the Taliban could use extremist groups to perpetrate violence in neighbouring countries, posing a particularly serious threat to the Central Asian republics.



The success of the Taliban in Afghanistan is thus a victory for freedom from foreign occupation, but it is not yet a triumph for representative governance. Developments over the next few months will tell us in which direction that country will move.

Outlook for political Islam: Today, in West Asia, neither jihad nor the Brotherhood have the state sponsors they had earlier. Saudi Arabia and the UAE, that, besides Pakistan, had been the only countries to recognise the "emirate" at Kandahar, now espouse moderate Islam; neither has shown any enthusiasm for the Taliban victory in Kabul. The UAE has given sanctuary to former president Ashraf Ghani, while the kingdom has called for an "inclusive" government in Kabul. A Saudi commentator has said Saudi Arabia would like to see an Afghanistan that is not driven by extremist religious ideology. It now only views the country through the prism of its geopolitical competition with Iran and is expected to work with Pakistan to stem Iranian influence rather than back extremist ideological politics in that country. Again, Turkey and Qatar, both champions of Brotherhood-affiliated political Islam, are shaping fresh ideological approaches. Both have called for an inclusive government in Kabul; in fact, Turkey has made its management of Kabul airport conditional on the fulfilment of this requirement.

Turkey has also been similarly cautious in its criticism of the Tunisian president's attack on Ennahda, despite close ties of the AKP with its ideological partner. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has remained silent, in contrast with the rallies he had personally led when President Mohamed Morsi of Egypt was ousted. Turkish spokespersons have merely described events in Tunisia as "worrisome", "illegitimate" and a source of "deep concern".

Turkey's low-key responses reflect its interest to revive its ties with Egypt and Saudi Arabia and promote a new political order in Libya in cooperation with Egypt. A commentator has noted that Turkey will sacrifice the Brotherhood to appease Cairo and Riyadh "in the hopes of securing new friends in the region".

In an ironical twist, Saudi Arabia is also reviewing its ties with the Brotherhood-affiliated Al-Islah party in Yemen. Contrary to its traditional hostility to the Brotherhood and its off-shoots, the kingdom has maintained close relations with the Al-Islah for several decades and has in recent years used the party in its fight against the Houthis. This is an opportunistic alliance as the two sides differ on important matters: Al-Islah rejects the sectarian approach of the Saudis and supports a united Yemen made up of all its diverse groups and ideologies. These differences have come to the fore in recent months: Saudi Arabia has voiced strong criticisms of Al-Islah as an Islamist

organisation. The kingdom's clerics have called it a "terrorist" organisation and accused it of "sedition, wreaking havoc, committing violence and terrorism". Al-Islah member and Nobel laureate, Tawakkol Karman, has responded sharply by calling the Saudi clerics "hypocrites for bin Salman and his shoe polishers", pointing out that the Brotherhood is struggling for freedom, and that Saudi Arabia is "the mother and father of terrorism". This divide has pushed Al-Islah closer to the Houthis.

These developments reflect a region in the throes of uncertainty as the US prepares to disengage from the region's competitions and conflicts. But they certainly do not portend the demise of political Islam, even if its principal parties are experiencing pressure from authoritarian rulers.

Despite severe repression in Egypt, the Brotherhood remains resilient today largely due to the depth and spread of its leadership, the discipline and commitment of its members, and the free debate that is going on through social media on how the movement should face the current challenges and where it should affect major changes.

Ideas being discussed include: accommodation with the al-Sisi government; recourse to violent opposition; and even a shift away from Islam towards the adoption of a broader agenda that would include matters that concern the global South: issues of culture and identity; ethnic, communal and sectarian extremism; poverty, inequality and exploitation, and environmental degradation and food security, etc. In order to understand the place of Islamism in West Asian affairs we should see it, not as movements with diverse expressions, but as a solid platform of resistance to authoritarian rule. The only relevant political issue in West Asian politics, as Peter Mandaville has learnt from Brotherhood activists, is whether one supports or opposes the authoritarian regime -- Islam, he points out, "provides a culturally and politically permissible means of registering dissent".

Recent developments in Tunisia and Morocco are setbacks in the struggle for popular participation in governance. However, given the persistence of authoritarian rule in the region, political Islam will remain for several years the principal and enduring instrument of resistance in West Asia.

Disclaimer: The author, a former ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Oman and the UAE, holds the Ram Sathe Chair for International Studies, Symbiosis International University, Pune. The opinions expressed within this article are the personal ideas of the author. The facts and conclusions appearing in the article do not reflect the views of Y Media and Midweek Newspaper, and Y Media does not assume any responsibility or liability for the same.

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Statistics Canada says 'Real gross domestic product (GDP) edged down 0.1% in July following a 0.6% increase in June'

Real gross domestic product (GDP) edged down 0.1% in July following a 0.6% increase in June. Total economic activity in July was approximately 2% below the pre-pandemic level of February 2020. Overall, 13 of 20 industrial sectors were up, led by a second strong monthly increase in the accommodation and food services sector. However, these increases were more than offset by declines in agriculture, utilities, manufacturing and wholesale trade. Preliminary information indicates an approximate 0.7% increase in real GDP for August. The increases in the accommodation and food, manufacturing and retail trade sectors were partly offset by lower activity in agriculture, as drought conditions continued to impact crop production. Because of its preliminary nature, this estimate will be revised on October 29 with the release of the official GDP data for the August reference month.

Easing of public health measures helps growth in accommodation and food services

The accommodation and food services sector rose 12.5% in July, the second double-digit growth in a row. Both subsectors were up. Food services and drinking places rose 9.5%, following a 14.4% gain in June. Summer weather, expanded patio capacity and loosened public health restrictions on indoor and outdoor dining across the country, all contributed positively to the growth. Accommodation services rose 21.2% in July, driven by a jump in traveller accommodation, as both domestic and international travel rose in the month. As of July 5, fully vaccinated eligible travellers entering Canada were no longer required to complete a mandatory 14-day quarantine.

Growth in the arts, entertainment and recreation sector

The arts, entertainment and recreation sector was up 8.1% in July, mainly on the strength of the amusement, gambling and recreation industries. The easing of restrictions across many parts of the country facilitated reopening or increased capacity at amusement parks, indoor and outdoor recreational facilities (including gyms, yoga studios, pools, and arenas) and casinos.

Transportation rises

The transportation and warehousing sector grew 1.1% in July, following a 0.8% uptick in June, with growth in air transportation leading the way. Air transportation rose 67.7% as movements of passengers both domestically and internationally increased. There was also an uptick in the movement of goods. Nevertheless, the air transportation subsector was nearly 83% below its pre-pandemic level of activity.

Support activities for transportation rose 2.4%, while transit, ground passenger, and scenic and sightseeing transportation (+3.4%) benefitted from an increase in public transit ridership. Offsetting some of the gains were postal service, couriers and messengers (-2.3%) and rail transportation (-1.8%).

Extreme heat stymies agriculture, forestry and fishing

Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting dropped 5.5% in July as record-setting heat and drought conditions in Western Canada greatly affected the national annual crop production estimates.

Crop production (except cannabis) dropped 13.2% in July, reaching its lowest level since the fall of 2007, driven by ongoing drought conditions in Western Canada which have severely impacted wheat, canola and other grains production.

Forestry and logging was down in July (-3.9%), as forest fires in British Columbia's interior and in northwestern Ontario affected production activities. Animal production rose 2.9%, while support activities for agriculture and forestry were unchanged.

Utilities contract

After increasing 3.6% in June, utilities fell 4.9% in July, driven by a drop in electric power generation, transmission and distribution (-6.0%). Even though Western Canada continued to endure extreme heat and drought, cooler-than-usual temperatures in central and eastern regions of the country led to a decrease in national demand for electricity for cooling purposes.

Natural gas distribution edged down 0.3%, while water, sewage and other systems fell 0.9%.

Manufacturing declines

The manufacturing sector contracted 1.1% in July, largely driven by declines in durable-goods manufacturing.

Durable-goods manufacturing decreased 1.9% in July, the third decline in four months. Miscellaneous (-12.2%), fabricated metal product (-5.2%) and non-metallic mineral product (-4.6%) manufacturing were the main factors in this drop. Non-durable goods manufacturing edged down 0.1%, and its subsectors were evenly split between increases and decreases. Gains in food (+1.6%) and plastics and rubber products (+3.3%) manufacturing were more than offset by declines in chemical (-2.8%), printing and related support activities (-6.5%) and petroleum and coal product (-1.0%) manufacturing.

Construction continues to fall

Construction contracted 0.9% in July, a third consecutive decline, largely as a result of lower residential building construction.

Residential building construction fell 2.7% in July, a third straight monthly decline, after reaching a record high in April. Almost all types of residential buildings construction activity were down, led by single-family homes and home alterations and improvements.

Repair construction decreased 1.6% while engineering and other construction activities rose 1.1%.

Non-residential building construction was up 0.5%, as an increase in institutional building construction more than offset drops in commercial and industrial building construction.

Wholesale continues to decline

Wholesale trade fell 1.9% in July, down for the fourth month in a row. Seven of the nine subsectors were contracted, and building material and supplies wholesaling (-9.0%) was responsible for most of the decline.

Offsetting some of the drop were machinery, equipment and supplies (+0.3%) and petroleum and petroleum products wholesaling (+0.9%).

Public sector continues to grow

The public sector (educational services, health care and social assistance, and public administration) advanced 0.4% in July.

Health care and social assistance increased 0.6% as all its subsectors were posting gains, but the increase was led by ambulatory health care services (+1.0%) and hospitals (+0.2%).

GOLFERS TEE UP TO RAISE NEARLY \$220,000 FOR LOCAL HEALTH CARE AT 25TH ANNUAL ETOBICOKE INVITATIONAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

Once again, avid golfers and William Osler Health System (Osler) supporters came together for the 25th Etobicoke Invitational golf tournament, raising funds for Osler's Etobicoke General Hospital.

The 2021 tournament, hosted at The Country Club in Woodbridge, saw a total of 152 golfers tee off in a safe and staggered start in support of the William Osler Health System Foundation (Osler Foundation). With 'to-go style meals to start and end their day, golfers also enjoyed a gourmet sandwich lunch at the Halfway House. The event raised close to \$220,000 to fund the most urgent equipment needs at Etobicoke General Hospital.



"This pandemic continues to be a long road for all of us. COVID-19 has presented incredible challenges in our community, and especially to our hospitals and our health care heroes," said Ken Mayhew, President & CEO, William Osler Health System Foundation. "It is your support of Osler Foundation, and events like this one that helps our heroes rise to the occasion day after day, month after month. Thank you for always standing by us, and for showing up to golf with enthusiasm, and care for your community."

All equipment in a hospital in Ontario must be funded by the community. And now more than ever, vital life-saving equipment is needed to help Etobicoke General and all Osler hospitals keep up with the increased demand from the COVID-19 pandemic for quality health care close to home. "As we carefully and gradually set out on the road to recovery, Osler remains committed to safe, quality patient care, thanks to the life-saving equipment and facilities you help support," said Dr. Naveed Mohammad, President & CEO, William Osler Health System. "The \$220,000 raised at the Etobicoke Invitational will help to purchase essential items such as ventilators, vital signs monitors, electric beds and wheelchairs, so we can continue to deliver much-needed health care for you, your family, friends and neighbours."

The Osler Open: Etobicoke Invitational Golf Tournament was made possible with generous support from Downsway Kitchens and Dolan Foods, who provided golfers with an exclusive Wagyu experience from Kingsway Finest Meats. To support the cause, visit www.oslerfoundation.org. Photos from the Osler Open: Etobicoke Invitational are available on the Osler Foundation Facebook page. To learn more about Etobicoke General Hospital, visit www.williamoslerhs.ca.

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.

WINTERFEST RETURNS TO CANADA'S WONDERLAND NOV. 13 AND HERE'S WHAT TO EXPECT



Canada's Wonderland this year will once again transform into a magical, winter wonderland for WinterFest – an immersive holiday experience for the whole family.

Running select dates Nov. 13 to Dec. 31, 2021, this event features ice-skating on Snow Flake Lake, more than a dozen live shows and holiday entertainment, millions of spectacular lights, themed areas and hundreds of beautiful Christmas trees throughout the park, including two 50-foot Christmas trees on International Street. Tickets are on sale now. Admission to WinterFest is included for GOLD and Platinum passholders, but reservations are still required for all guests. We are also currently HIRING for the event! Positions are available in entertainment, food and beverage, décor and creative services, maintenance and security.

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CONSULATE GENERAL OF INDIA ORGANIZED 'VARISHTHA YODDHA' EVENT TO FELICITATE VETERANS



Celebrating 75 years of India's independence as 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', the Consulate General of India, Toronto organized a felicitation event titled 'Varishtha Yoddha' to honour the veterans of the Indian Army, Navy and Air Force on Oct. 3rd, 2021 at 1100 Hrs at Hotel Holiday Inn Toronto International Airport, Toronto.

During the event, a total of 87 veterans who are above the age of seventy-five years were felicitated in recognition of their invaluable service to the nation. A written message from Hon'ble Raskha Mantri, Shri Rajnath Singh was read out by Consul General Ms. Apoorva Srivastava during the event and Hon'ble High Commissioner of India to Canada, Sh. Ajay Bisaria & India's Defence Attaché to US and Canada based in Washington, Brig. Anoop Shinghal also graced the

felicitation ceremony. The felicitation event also comprised of various cultural performances and some experiences sharing by some of the veterans. Due to the pandemic situation and the restrictions at large gatherings, only the veterans and their family members were invited and the event was live-streamed on CGI Toronto's 'Facebook' and 'Youtube' pages for the Diaspora members. CGI Toronto is thankful to the Veterans Association of Ontario, The Air Force Veterans Community Association and The Naval Foundation, Canada for their valuable contribution in connecting CGI with the veterans and making the event possible. The Consulate will continue to work towards the welfare of ex-servicemen including by organizing an exclusive camp for issuing life certificates to veterans in the Greater Toronto Area.

Canada marked first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

OTTAWA, (IANS) Canada marked its first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation to honor lost children and survivors of the notorious indigenous residential school system in the country.

The day was made a federal statutory holiday by the government earlier in June, as the truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) recommended in its 94 calls to action in 2015. It will be observed annually on September 30, reports Xinhua news agency.

An estimated 150,000 indigenous children attended residential schools, which were designed to strip them of their culture and language, between the 1860s and 1996. The TRC documented stories from survivors and families and issued a report in 2015. The report detailed mistreatment at the schools, including emotional, physical and sexual abuse of children, and at least 4,100 deaths. Hundreds of people gathered at a ceremony held on Parliament Hill in Ottawa to mark the day on Thursday.

Wakerakatste Louise McDonald Herne, a condoled Bear Clan Mother for the Mohawk Nation Council, called on Canadians to "know the history of this country and the corruption it was built upon," saying "You need to correct the wrongs and you have to own your own truth".

Algonquin Elder Claudette Commanda said the discovery of unmarked graves near former residential school sites has awakened the country to its history. "Two-hundred and fifteen little voices woke the country, 215 voices spoke to the world," Commanda said in reference to the remains of 215 children that were first discovered near a former residential school site in Kamloops, Canada in May.

Hundreds more graves have been found since near other former school sites, prompting calls for justice that have resonated beyond Canada's border. She called on Canadians to open their hearts and listen to the truth to move forward with reconciliation.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau released a statement on Thursday, pointing to

the hundreds of unmarked graves near former school sites that have been discovered in May and June this year.

"The tragic locating of unmarked graves at former residential school sites across the country has reminded us of not only the impacts of colonialism and the harsh realities of our collective past but also the work that is paramount to advancing reconciliation in Canada," Trudeau said in the statement. "Today, we also recognize the harms, injustices, and intergenerational trauma that Indigenous peoples have faced - and continue to face - because of the residential school system, systemic racism, and the discrimination that persists in our society.

"We must all learn about the history and legacy of residential schools. It's only by facing these hard truths, and righting these wrongs, that we can move forward together toward a more positive, fair, and better future," Trudeau said in the statement.

Mary Simon, Canada's first indigenous governor general, said that the holiday is a poignant one for her.

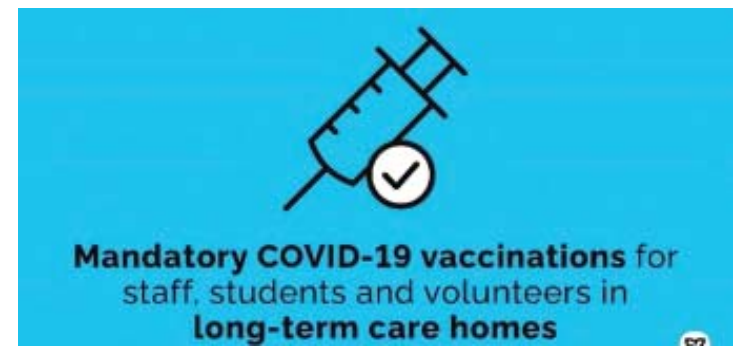
Simon said Canada's legacy of colonization is "hard to accept," but necessary to address as the country works towards reconciliation.

"Reconciliation is a way of life, continuous, with no end date," Simon said. "As we strive to acknowledge the horrors of the past, the suffering inflicted on Indigenous peoples, let us all stand side-by-side with grace and humility, and work together to build a better future for all."

The UK's Queen Elizabeth II issued a statement to mark the holiday, saying that Canada's history in regards to its treatment of indigenous people is "painful".

"I join with all Canadians on this first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation to reflect on the painful history that Indigenous peoples endured in residential schools in Canada, and on the work that remains to heal and to continue to build an inclusive society."

ONTARIO MAKES IT MANDATORY FOR LONG-TERM CARE STAFF, VOLUNTEERS TO BE FULLY VACCINATED BY NOV. 15



TORONTO — As part of the government's plan to protect long-term care residents and staff during the Delta-driven fourth wave, Ontario is taking further action with an additional suite of tools. This includes making COVID-19 vaccinations mandatory for all in-home staff, support workers, students, and volunteers by November 15, 2021, unless a staff member has a valid medical exemption, as well as expanded inspections of homes and redirecting provincial resources to enhance and audit existing testing in homes. "We know that long-term care residents have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. As new variants continue to spread, we are seeing a growing number of outbreaks in long-term care homes where the risk to those most vulnerable remains high," said Rod Phillips, Minister of Long-Term Care. "This enhanced suite of measures, including mandatory vaccinations for those working in the homes of long-term care residents, is one more way we will provide them the greatest level of protection possible." Vaccination rates of staff in many homes are not high enough in the face of the risk posed by the Delta variant, and this is putting vulnerable residents at risk. To ensure the health and safety of staff and residents, mandating vaccination for in-home staff has now become essential, and homes are now required to meet the following requirements: Staff, support workers, students, and volunteers will have until November 15, 2021, to show proof that they have received all required doses of a COVID-19 vaccine, or to show proof of a valid medical exemption. Staff who do not have all required doses or a valid medical exemption by the deadline will not be able to enter a long-term care home to work. Newly hired staff will be required to be fully vaccinated before they begin working in a home unless they have a valid medical exemption. Homes will begin randomly testing fully vaccinated individuals, including staff, caregivers and visitors, to help detect possible breakthrough cases of COVID-19 as early as possible.

In addition to adding randomized testing of vaccinated individuals, homes will continue to regularly test individuals who are not fully vaccinated. The ministry will leverage provincial testing resources to inspect and audit these results by sending testing teams into homes to validate the results that homes have been reporting to the province. The ministry will also step up rigorous inspections of homes infection, prevention and control measures. These new measures are the latest tools among a suite of actions the Ministry of Long-Term Care has taken to protect residents in long-term care, including:

- * rigorous inspections to reinforce infection prevention and control
- * regularly testing all individuals who are not fully vaccinated
- * providing a COVID-19 vaccine promotion toolkit available in 12 languages
- * organizing mobile clinics at homes with lower vaccination rates and homes experiencing outbreaks
- * providing homes with support so they can administer vaccines themselves in a timely manner
- * working to increase the hours of direct care for residents to an average of four hours per day by 2024-25
- * collecting more accurate vaccination data at the home level
- * offering third doses to long-term care residents. As of September 30, 64 per cent of residents have already received their third dose.

Fully vaccinated staff will continue to be able to work in more than one long-term care home, retirement home or other health service provider setting. Homes will continue to be required to track and report on the implementation of their policies, including overall staff immunization rates. To promote transparency, the Ministry of Long-Term Care is publicly posting long-term care home staff vaccination rates. To protect staff privacy, individual immunization status is not shared with the province.

TRILLIUM HEALTH PARTNERS' INSTITUTE FOR BETTER HEALTH TURNS TO THE CLOUD TO IMPROVE HOSPITAL OCCUPANCY PLANNING

Ontario hospitals frequently operate at occupancy rates above 100%, a percentage that has increased since the start of the pandemic. Being able to better match bed supply with patient demand is key to improving overall patient care, safety and operational costs.

Trillium Health Partners' (THP) Institute for Better Health (IBH) is leveraging cloud technology to improve the hospital's 2-7 day capacity forecasting by analyzing bed-use data to identify patterns and better anticipate capacity requirements. As a hospital-embedded institute that is focused on research and innovation in health service delivery and population health, IBH creates and evaluates novel solutions that address local community needs that can be scaled for greater impact.

"Adopting cutting-edge technology will help us better serve patients and forwards our vision for a new kind of health care," says Shalu Bains, Vice President, Performance and Business Intelligence, THP. "It allows us to manipulate the data for greater insights and to focus on performance."

Bed occupancy, a process that involves analyzing admission and discharge data, has traditionally been done manually. By leveraging cloud computing, the process has been sped up significantly, and the resulting modeling helps staff to quickly identify an expected increase in demand for beds, and to respond accordingly. THP is one of the first healthcare organizations in Canada to apply cloud computing and analytics in this way and develop a predictive occupancy planning model.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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CONGRESS IN PATHETIC SITUATION NOW, SAYS EX-PUNJAB CM AMARINDER

AMARINDER SINGH TO FORM 'PUNJAB VIKAS PARTY': SOURCES

CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

"Three weeks before stepping down as CM, I had offered my resignation to Sonia Gandhi but she had asked me to continue," said Amarinder Singh, adding the humiliating manner in which he was pushed into resigning just hours before the Congress Legislative Party (CLP) meeting, that was clearly convened to oust him, was a matter of public record.

"The world saw the humiliation and the insult heaped on me, and yet Rawat is making claims to the contrary," he remarked.

The ex-CM of Punjab recalled that Rawat himself had publicly stated after meeting him that he was satisfied by his government's track record on the 2017 poll promises.

In fact, Rawat had categorically stated, as recently as September 1, that the 2022 elections would be fought under his (Amarinder's) leadership and the high command had no intention of replacing him, he pointed out.

"So how can he now claim that the party leadership was dissatisfied with me, and if they were, then why did he deliberately keep me in the dark all this time?" he asked.

Ridiculing Rawat's remarks that he seemed to be under pressure, the former CM said the only pressure he had been under for the past few months was that of his own loyalty to the Congress, because of which he continued to tolerate insult after insult.

"If the party did not intend to humiliate me then why was Navjot Singh Sidhu allowed to openly criticise and attack me on social media and other public platforms for months? Why did the party give the rebels, led by Sidhu, a free hand in undermining my authority? Why was no cognizance given to the uninterrupted spree of electoral wins I handed over to the party through the four and a half years I was in the saddle?" he asked.

Amarinder Singh asked why the Congress was allowing Sidhu even now to hold the party to ransom and continue to dictate terms.

"What is the pressure he exerts on the party leadership that they are so defenceless against him and are allowing him to have his way even at the cost of the Congress' future in Punjab?" he asked.

Reacting to Rawat's comment regarding his secular credentials, Amarinder

Singh said even his worst critics and enemies could not doubt his integrity in this regard.

"But I am no longer surprised that a senior and seasoned Congress leader like Rawat is questioning my secular credentials. It is quite evident that I am no longer trusted and respected in the party that I have served loyally all these years," he added.

Former Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh is soon going to announce a new party. According to sources, the name of Captain's new party will be 'Punjab Vikas Party'.

According to sources, Amarinder Singh will convene a meeting of leaders close to him in a few days to consider the formation of his new party, which will include all the leaders of the anti-Sidhu faction.

Earlier, the Captain had said that his first goal is to defeat former Punjab Congress President Navjot Singh Sidhu. In such a situation, a strong contender will be fielded in the upcoming Assembly elections against Sidhu from his newly-formed party.

Meanwhile, Singh will also contact all the farmers' leaders of Punjab. He will also get in touch with small parties, sources said.

On Thursday, Amarinder Singh said: "I have been in politics for 52 years, but they treated me like this. At 10.30 Congress President Sonia Gandhi asked me to resign. I did not ask any question. At 4 o'clock I went to the Governor and submitted my resignation. If you still doubt me after 50 years... My credibility is at stake and there is no trust, then there is no point in being in the party."

After this statement, he announced that he was quitting the Congress. He made it clear that he was leaving the Congress, but will not join the BJP. He also said that he was deeply hurt by the humiliation that he had to face from the top leadership of the Congress.

It is not the first time that Amarinder Singh has announced to quit the Congress party.

In 1980 he won the Lok Sabha elections on the Congress symbol, but after the Operation Blue Star in 1984, he left the Congress to join the Akali Dal. He rejoined the Congress in 1998.

Rebound Galore: Moody's changes India's rating outlook to stable

NEW DELHI, (IANS) Global ratings agency Moody's Investors Service on Tuesday changed India's ratings outlook to stable from negative. Accordingly, Moody's affirmed the country's foreign-currency and local currency long-term issuer ratings and the local-currency senior unsecured rating at Baa3.

Moody's also affirmed India's other short-term local currency rating at P-3. "The decision to change the outlook to stable reflects Moody's view that the downside risks from negative feedback between the real economy and financial system are receding," the agency said in its ratings report. "With higher capital cushions and greater liquidity, banks and non-bank financial institutions pose much lesser risk to the sovereign than Moody's previously anticipated." Besides, it pointed out that risks stemming from a high debt burden and weak debt affordability remain.

Furthermore, Moody's expects that the economic environment will allow for a gradual reduction of the general government fiscal deficit over the next few years, preventing further deterioration of the sovereign credit profile. "The affirmation of the Baa3 ratings balances India's key credit strengths, which include a large and diversified economy with high growth



potential, a relatively strong external position, and a stable domestic financing base for government debt, against its principal credit challenges, including low per capita incomes, high general government debt, low debt affordability and more limited government effectiveness."

FOR NEXT ASSEMBLY POLLS, BJP EYEING SEATS IT NEVER WON IN RAJ

NEW DELHI, (IANS) The Rajasthan unit of BJP is strengthening its organization in those seats which the saffron party has never won so far. There are about 19 such seats and in its recent two-day 'Chintan Baithak' of the state unit, the BJP has decided to put special focus on these seats. A senior party functionary said that the BJP, which was in power in the state for many terms, has never won these seats and so it has decided that special attention will be given to these Assembly constituencies while preparing for the next Assembly polls scheduled in the latter part of 2023. In the last Assembly polls held in 2018, the BJP had lost power to Congress. Currently, in the 200-member state Assembly, the Congress has 106 members while the BJP has 71 members. Two seats are vacant.

Another senior party functionary said that a special campaign to strengthen the organizational structure in these 19 Assembly constituencies will be drawn. "We are working to win these seats in the next state elections. These seats comprise around 10 per cent of the total strength of the state Assembly. By winning these constituencies, we will be able to expand our party in a new area which is currently a stronghold of our political rivals," he said. A party insider claimed that winning these seats will not only increase the party's tally in the Assembly but also balance any possible loss of existing seats and simultaneously weaken the opposition parties.

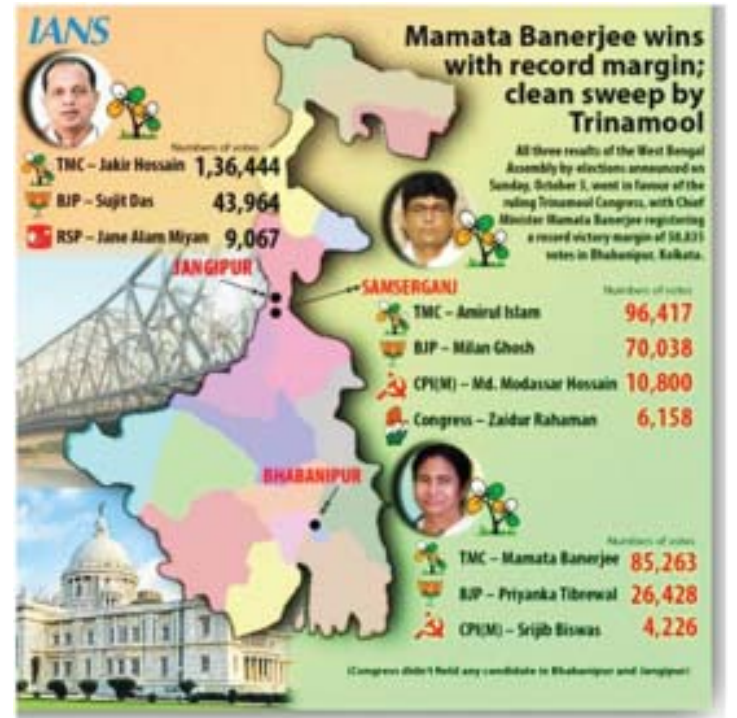
It is learnt that the BJP state unit will soon finalize the specific plan for these 19 Assembly constituencies, which also include grooming the local leadership there. "To win any election, the first criteria is the presence of strong organizational structure on the ground, and secondly, the presence of strong local leadership. We are finalizing plans to address both the issues in these Assembly constituencies," a party leader said. The BJP leadership believes that there is strong anti-incumbency against the Ashok Gehlot-led Congress government in Rajasthan and by winning these seats, the party can win the next Assembly polls by a historic mandate.

SYSTEMATIC ATTACK ON FARMERS, SAYS RAHUL GANDHI; DENIED PERMISSION TO VISIT LAKHIMPUR

Upping the ante against the government before leaving for Uttar Pradesh where he intends to meet the families of the victims who were killed in Lakhimpur Kheri last Sunday, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Wednesday said the party intends on putting pressure on the government so it will take action against the accused. Gandhi said he wants to send a message of hope to the farmers through his visit, that, in this country, even if a farmer is killed by the Home Minister's son, the culprits cannot get away scot-free.

Gandhi said the country's institutions have been taken over by BJP and RSS, who are trying to snatch farmers' rights from them, and are systematically attacking them and provoking them, which he said is very "dangerous". The Congress, he said, wants to tell the BJP governments that they should not interfere with the democratic processes of the country, as they are a safety valve. Regarding his sister Priyanka Gandhi Vadra's detention in Sitapur since early Monday morning, Gandhi said the focus is the plight of farmers, and it didn't matter if the Gandhi family was manhandled, detained or killed. "Whether it is Priyanka, or me, or anyone else from our family, we are not bothered by manhandling. We don't care at all, you can do whatever to us. We are talking about the farmers. You can detain us, manhandle us, kill us, it doesn't matter, this is our training. We have got this training in our family for years," Gandhi said.

MAMATA SECURES CM'S POST, WINS WITH A RECORD MARGIN



KOLKATA, (IANS) West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in the by-election in Bhabanipur assembly constituency in South Kolkata defeated her nearest rival Priyanka Tibrewal of BJP by a record margin of 58,832 votes. Previously Banerjee had the record of winning from this constituency by a margin of 54,213 votes in 2011. With this win Banerjee secured her position as the chief minister of West Bengal. After 21 rounds of counting, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee secured 84,709 of the total 1,17,875 votes, securing more than 71 per cent of the total votes polled while Tibrewal secured 26,350 votes, little more than 22 per cent of the votes. CPI(M) candidate Shreejib Biwas managed to get only 4,201 votes.

"I am indebted to the people to Bhabanipur because they helped me win with a record margin. The most interesting thing is we didn't lose in any of the ward. The polling in Bhabanipur has always been low and there was rain. Despite that people came out in numbers and gave us votes," Chief Minister who was flanked by All India Trinamool Congress General Secretary and his daughter said.

"There was a lot of conspiracy against us and the people of Bhabanipur have given the answer. When we won in all the seats, we lost in Nandigram. The matter is subjudice and so I shall not say more," she said adding, "I shall not show victory signs raising two fingers. I am not selfish. Two of my colleagues are contesting from Jangipur and Samsanganj and so I shall raise three fingers. They are also leading and blessing them so that they can win".

Speaking to the media state transport minister Frihad Hakim who was also instrumental in facilitating the victory of the chief minister said, "I had no doubt about her win. It was my curiosity to see whether she can win with a margin of more than 50,000 votes and she did that". "It is a victory for the people of Bhabanipur. It is a victory of the people of West Bengal. It's an answer to the way she was treacherously defeated in Nandigram. People have taken revenge. They have shown that Mamata Banerjee cannot be stopped in this way. She will become the prime face against BJP nationally and that is the verdict of the people," Hakim said. Meanwhile Mamata Banerjee announced the names of the candidates for the three of the four assembly constituencies that are going for the by-elections on October 30. "Our candidate from Khardha will be Sovondeb Chattopadhyay, for Shantipur in Nadia the candidate is Broj Kishore Goswami and for Dinhaba in Coochbehar the candidate will be UdayanGuhua. The chief minister said that the name of the candidate for Gosaba in South 24 Parganas is yet to be decided. Sovondeb Chattopadhyay who won from Bhabanipur by a margin of 28,189 votes in the assembly election resigned to make room for Mamata Banerjee. Banerjee who lost to Suwendu Adhikari in the assembly election had to win within six months to retain her position as the chief minister of the state. In two other constituencies - Jangipur and Samsanganj the Trinamool Congress candidates have maintained their lead. Jakir Hossain who is contesting from Jangipur assembly constituency is also leading by a margin of 57,935 votes after the sixteenth round of counting. Trinamool Congress candidate from Samsanganj Amirul Islam is also leading by a margin of 17,863 votes after the fourteenth round of counting.

CONGRESS THE LEGACY OF INDIA'S DEMOCRACY, SAYS KANHAIYA

NEW DELHI, (IANS) The recent entry of Kanhaiya Kumar, earlier associated with the Communist Party of India (CPI) and its student wing the All India Students Federation - including in his stint as President of the JNU Students Union, into the Congress has created ripples in the political circles. It is believed that Kanhaiya, known for his stirring oratory and debating skills, may be given a key role in the Congress, with sources indicating that he could be made the Bihar unit's Working President, like Hardik Patel in Gujarat, or a party Secretary.

In an interview with IANS, Kanhaiya, who is noted for dwelling on ideology, was unfazed on a question about switching between parties with different ideologies. "Ideas can evolve. On hearing the word 'ideology', we get a pre-conceived idea in our mind. Change is a constant of the universe, but the foundation does not alter," he said.

Kanhaiya said that for him, the foundation of his thought, or ideology, is related to Indian culture's ethos of welfare of all and 'VasudhaivaKutumbakam'. Then training his guns on the BJP, he said that the present rulers of the country are those who do not like to be questioned, and are seeking to remove all vestiges of critical questioning and thought, which will undermine the country's foundations.

Along with this, he also lauded the Congress' historical legacy of taking along the cultural and civilizational ethos of the country. That is why he chose to be associated with the party, Kanhaiya said.

Internal rifts are rising in the Congress, and on the day of his induction, the party's Punjab Congress President Navjot Singh Sidhu used Twitter to announce his resignation.

Asked to comment on this shortcoming, Kanhaiya contended that the focus on such aspects is a ploy by the ruling party to divert attention from the burning national issues and portray the opposition as incapable.

Rising prices of essential goods, unemployment, the farmers' protests against the agriculture laws, and such key issues are the matters that should figure in the discourses, he said. He claimed that the BJP is itself not free of differences. "Is everything okay between Amit Shah and (UP Chief Minister) Yogi (Adityanath)? Why is (Union Minister) Nitin Gadkari never seen with Prime Minister (Narendra) Modi," he asked. Kanhaiya also said that the various issues that the opposition should raise are being taken up by the Congress. These include issues affecting the common man, which prompted his association with the party.

Tony Blair, King of Jordan, Czech PM figure in Pandora Papers



NEW DELHI, (IANS) Millions of leaked documents have uncovered financial secrets of 35 current and former world leaders, more than 330 politicians and public officials in 91 countries and territories, and a global lineup of fugitives, con artists and murderers, International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) said. The secret documents expose offshore dealings of the King of Jordan, the presidents of Ukraine, Kenya and Ecuador, the prime minister of the Czech Republic and former British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

The files also detail financial activities of Russian President Vladimir Putin's "unofficial minister of propaganda" and more than 130 billionaires from Russia, the United States, Turkey and other nations.

The leaked records reveal that many of the power players who could help bring an end to the offshore system instead benefit from it -- stashing assets in covert companies and trusts while their governments do little to slow a global stream of illicit money that enriches criminals and impoverishes nations. Among the hidden treasures revealed in the documents: A \$22 million chateau in the French Riviera -- replete with a cinema and two swimming pools -- purchased through offshore companies by the Czech Republic's

populist prime minister, a billionaire who has railed against the corruption of economic and political elites.

More than \$13 million tucked in a secrecy-shaded trust in the Great Plains of the United States by a scion of one of Guatemala's most powerful families, a dynasty that controls a soap and lipsticks conglomerate that's been accused of harming workers and the earth.

Three beachfront mansions in Malibu purchased through three offshore companies for \$68 million by the King of Jordan in the years after Jordanians filled the streets during Arab Spring to protest joblessness and corruption. The secret records are known as the Pandora Papers.

The International Consortium of Investigative Journalists obtained the trove of more than 11.9 million confidential files and led a team of more than 600 journalists from 150 news outlets that spent two years sifting through them, tracking down hard-to-find sources and digging into court records and other public documents from dozens of countries. The leaked records come from 14 offshore services firms from around the world that set up shell companies and other offshore nooks for clients often seeking to keep their financial activities in the shadows. The records include information about the dealings of nearly three times as many current and former country leaders as any previous leak of documents from offshore havens.

In an era of widening authoritarianism and inequality, the Pandora Papers investigation provides an unequaled perspective on how money and power operate in the 21st century -- and how the rule of law has been bent and broken around the world by a system of financial secrecy enabled by the US and other wealthy nations.

The findings by ICIJ and its media partners spotlight how deeply secretive finance has infiltrated global politics -- and offer insights into why governments and global organizations have made little headway in ending offshore financial abuses.

An ICIJ analysis of the secret documents identified 956 companies in offshore havens tied to 336 high-level politicians and public officials, including

PAKISTAN OPPOSITION CRITICAL OF GOVT'S MOVE TO OPEN TALKS WITH TTP



NEW DELHI, (IANS) The Pakistan opposition has criticised the government for its decision to hold talks with some groups of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) without consulting it and has called on Prime Minister Imran Khan to take Parliament into confidence over the issue, Geo News reported. A few days ago, Khan had revealed in an interview with TRT World that his government was holding peace talks with some groups of the TTP. PML-N Senator Irfan Siddiqui said negotiations with the TTP was a very sensitive issue, adding that it was not appropriate to keep the opposition in the dark over it. He referred to former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's move to include all stakeholders in the process of peace talks with militants, the Geo News report said. "Negotiations in the Nawaz Sharif tenure were approved by Parliament," he said. He demanded the government immediately convene a session of the Parliament to discuss the issue further. PPP leader Shazia Marri flayed the government, questioning the terms based on which it intended to forgive the banned outfit, the report said. In his interview to TRT World, Khan admitted that the Afghan Taliban were involved in both parties talking to each other. "I think some of the Pakistani Taliban groups actually want to talk to our government. You know, for some peace, for some reconciliation," he had said. When asked to confirm whether Pakistan is actually in talks with the TTP, the premier had clarified to say that talks are ongoing "with some of them".

PAKISTAN BUSINESSMAN, MEDIA MOGULS, MILITARY LEADERS IN PANDORA PAPERS

CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

The exposé was unveiled on Sunday and some of the names already reported include prominent figures from the PTI-led government including Pakistan Finance Minister Shaukat Tarin and Senator Faisal Vawda.

A report by The News published on Monday said Jang group editor-in-chief Mir Shakilur Rehman, Dawn CEO Hameed Haroon and Express Media Group CEO Sultan Ali Lakhani also owned offshore companies. Renowned journalist and editor of Pakistan Today, the late Arif Nizami was also among those who had their names in the report. He owned New Mile Production Limited in BVI that was incorporated in July 2000 with him and his wife declared as its beneficial owners.

The report by The News identified more former military leaders and their family members named in the Pandora Papers.

According to the report, the son-in-law of former Punjab governor Lt Gen (ret) Khalid Maqbool, Ahsan Latif, owned an offshore company Dylan Capital Limited that was registered in the BVI jurisdiction.

It added that according to the documents, the company was incorporated

for "investment holding for certain properties in the UK and the UAE, but it was used for importing LPG (liquid petroleum gas) from Russia's Vacus Oil Company Ltd".

Zahra Tanvir, the wife of Lt Gen (ret) Tanvir Tahir, was also identified by the report as owning an offshore company, Ener Plastic Limited, in the BVI jurisdiction.

Javed Afridi, owner of the Peshawar Zalmi franchise, also owns three offshore companies according to revelations from the Pandora Papers: Old Trafford Properties Ltd, Sutton Gas Works Properties Ltd and Gas Works Property Ltd.

According to the report, National Bank President Arif Usmani incorporated a company, Sasa Partners Inc, in the BVI offshore tax havens in March 2018. It added that the Pandora Papers revealed him to be the company's beneficial owner where he kept bankable assets.

The report also identified the managing director of National Investment Trust, Adnan Afridi, as having registered an offshore company, Veritas Advisory Services Ltd, in the BVI jurisdiction in October 2011.

AUSTRALIA ORDERS 300K COURSES OF 'PROMISING' COVID TREATMENT

CANBERRA, (IANS) The Australian government has secured access to 300,000 courses of the "promising" treatment for Covid-19 as the country continues to battle the third wave of the pandemic, Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Health Minister Greg Hunt announced on Tuesday. In a joint statement, Morrison and Hunt said that the government has ordered 300,000 courses of oral antiviral treatment Molnupiravir, which is currently in late stage clinical trials, reports Xinhua news agency. The makers of Molnupiravir, US pharmaceutical company Merck Sharp & Dohme (MSD) and Ridgeback Biotherapeutics, have recently announced that Molnupiravir reduced the risk of hospitalisation or death from Covid-19 by 50 per cent at a planned interim analysis of the Phase 3 trial. Under the agreement announced on Tuesday, MSD will supply Molnupiravir pills to Australia if it is approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA), which Morrison and Hunt said could occur early in 2022. Molnupiravir is a capsule that is taken twice a day for five days by adult patients with mild-to-moderate Covid-19 symptoms and does not need to be refrigerated, allowing it to be used in the community or as a targeted intervention at high-risk locations and in rural areas.



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Westwood Square Mall	Westwood Square Mall	T.L. Kennedy Secondary School	7205 Goreway Drive, Mississauga	7205 Goreway Drive, Mississauga	3100 Hurontario St, Mississauga
L4T	L4T	L5B	L4T	L4T	L5B

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