
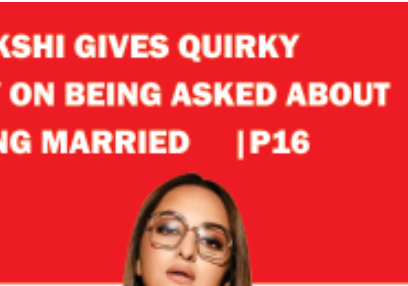


HINDU-MUSLIM NARRATIVE BEING KEPT ALIVE TILL THE ELECTIONS, SAYS RAKESH TIKAIT | P5



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SONAKSHI GIVES QUIRKY REPLY ON BEING ASKED ABOUT GETTING MARRIED | P16

SOUTH ASIAN **Mid Week** NEWS WEEKLY

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AKALI DAL FIELDS BIKRAM MAJITHIA AGAINST SIDHU, IN AMRITSAR EAST.



DETAILS ON PAGE 5

ONTARIO TO ALLOW INDOOR SOCIAL GATHERINGS UPTO 10, OUTDOOR SOCIAL GATHERINGS UPTO 25, 50% INDOOR DINING IN RESTAURANTS, OPEN MOVIE THEATRES FROM JANUARY 31ST 2022

TORONTO - With key public health and health care indicators starting to show signs of improvement, the Ontario government, in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health, today released details of steps to cautiously and gradually ease public health measures, starting on January 31, 2022. "The evidence tells us that the measures we put in place to blunt transmission of Omicron are working," said Premier Doug Ford. "We can be confident that the worst is behind us and that we are now in a position to cautiously and gradually ease public health measures. While February will continue to present its own challenges, given current trends these are challenges we are confident we can manage." As a result of the additional public health measures enacted on January 5, 2022, the province is beginning to see signs of stabilization in key public health and health system indicators. Per cent positivity has fallen and new admissions to hospital have started to stabilize with length of stay shortening considerably. Over the coming days and weeks, these trends are expected to continue, allowing the province to begin cautiously easing public health measures.

CONTD. ON PAGE 7



RECEIVED REQUEST FROM PAKISTAN PM TO TAKE SIDHU IN MY CABINET: AMARINDER

NEW DELHI, (IANS) Former Punjab chief minister Amarinder Singh on Monday said that he received a request from Pakistan Prime Minister to take Congress leader Navjot Singh Sidhu in his cabinet. Amarinder Singh made this disclosure while addressing a joint press conference with BJP chief J.P. Nadda and Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa's Shiromani Akali Dal (Sanyukt) here. Singh called Sidhu a totally incompetent, incapable and useless man as a minister. "I removed Sidhu from my cabinet because that man is totally incompetent, incapable and totally useless. Sidhu was looking after local self-government. For 70 days he did not complete a file. I called him a few times and offered to give him more power if he wanted, which Sidhu denied," Singh said. "After two or three weeks, I got a message from somebody whom we both (Sidhu and Singh) knew, saying that he (Pakistan Prime Minister) requested me to include Sidhu in my government and remove if it doesn't work," Singh said. Talking about the message he received, Singh said, "Message was that the Pakistan Prime minister has sent a request that if you can take Sidhu in your cabinet he will be grateful. He (Sidhu) is an old friend of mine (Pakistan Prime Minister) and if he doesn't work then you can remove him."



PADMA AWARDS 2022 FULL LIST OF RECIPIENTS: FROM LATE CDS BIPIN RAWAT, KALYAN SINGH TO OLYMPIAN NEERAJ CHOPRA - PADMA VIBHUSHAN, PADMA BHUSHAN AND PADMA SHRI AWARDEES THIS YEAR. | DETAILS ON PAGE 3

90% OF ELIGIBLE PEEL RESIDENTS 12 YEARS AND OVER ARE DOUBLE VACCINATED

BRAMPTON, ON- Peel Public Health is excited to announce that 90% of eligible residents aged 12+ have received at least two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine. This news comes on the heels of Peel's milestone of 3 million total doses administered across all age groups, and provides a strong basis for protection against COVID-19 in our community during this time of transition.

CONTD. ON PAGE 8

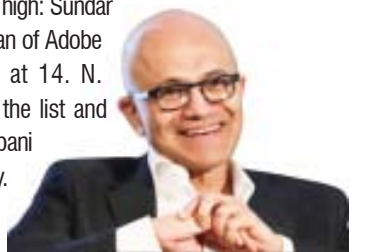
JAISHANKAR GETS ENVOYS TO US, CANADA CRACKING ON DEATH OF 4 INDIANS BEING SMUGGLED

NEW YORK, (IANS) External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on Friday instructed Indian envoys to Canada and the US, Ajay Bisaria and Taranjit Singh Sandhu, "to urgently respond to the situation" where four Indian nationals including an infant have lost their lives at the US-Canada border. Following his public tweet, both missions have responded on the microblogging site. "This is a grave tragedy. An Indian consular team is travelling today from @IndianToronto to Manitoba to coordinate and help. We will work with Canadian authorities to investigate these disturbing events. @HCI_Ottawa," Bisaria tweeted.

CONTD. ON PAGE 8

NADELLA RANKED NO 1 AMONG CEOS IN BRAND FINANCE LIST, WOMEN CEOS LOSE, TECH, TIKTOK AND CHINA SURGE

NEW YORK, (IANS) The Brand Finance Brand Guardianship Index just in has ranked Microsoft boss, Satya Nadella, as the top CEO in the world. Nadella, a first-generation Indian immigrant to the US, "has been credited with overhauling Microsoft's fortunes by changing its culture towards one of teamwork, innovation, and inclusivity, and instilling a growth mindset throughout the business". Three other Indian-origin expat CEOs rank high: Sundar Pichai of Google is at 5, Shantanu Narayan of Adobe at 6, and Puneet Renjen of Deloitte at 14. N. Chandrasekhar of the Tatas is at 25 in the list and Anand Mahindra of M&M and Mukesh Ambani of Reliance are at 41 and 42, respectively. State Bank of India's Dinesh Kumar Khara is at 46.



CONTD. ON PAGE 11

INDIA WARNS PAKISTAN IT WILL TAKE 'FIRM, DECISIVE STEPS' AGAINST CROSS-BORDER TERROR

UNITED NATIONS, (IANS) India has warned Pakistan that it will continue to act firmly and decisively against cross-border terrorism while it is also committed to resolving issues bilaterally in a terror-free atmosphere. Madhu Sudan, a counsellor in India's Permanent Mission, said on Tuesday, "Any meaningful dialogue can be held only in an atmosphere free of terror, hostility and violence. The onus is on Pakistan to create such a conducive atmosphere."

"Till then, India will continue to take firm and decisive steps to respond to cross-border terrorism," he warned while responding to an attack on India by Pakistan's Permanent Representative Munir Akram at the Security Council. "India desires normal neighbourly relations with all countries, including Pakistan, and is committed to addressing outstanding issues, if any, bilaterally and peacefully in accordance with the Shimla Agreement and the Lahore declaration," Sudan said. The Shimla Agreement signed in 1972 by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who was then the president of Pakistan, committed the two neighbours to resolve their differences bilaterally. In the 1999 Lahore Declaration signed by Prime Ministers Atal Behari Vajpayee of India and Nawaz Shari of Pakistan the two countries undertook to resolve Kashmir and other disputes through bilateral dialogue.




Appointments available for kids aged 5-11

Your 5 to 11-year-olds can get their 1st or 2nd dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, and here's what you can expect at our clinics: Visit [Peel region.ca](http://Peel.region.ca) for more details



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AMRITSAR: BORDER SECURITY FORCE EXCHANGE SWEETS WITH PAKISTAN RANGERS AT JCP ATTARI ON INDIA'S 73RD REPUBLIC DAY, IN AMRITSAR ON WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 26, 2022.

PUNJAB: IN SECOND LIST OF 23, CONG DROPS THREE MLAS, GIVES TICKET TO SIDHU, BHATTAL KIN

The Congress Tuesday released its second list of 23 candidates for Punjab assembly elections, dropping three sitting MLAs, renominating four, and giving tickets to two leaders who joined it from the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). Relatives of two leaders including former Chief Minister Rajinder Kaur Bhattal and PPCC chief Navjot Singh Sidhu have also got party tickets.

The list comes ahead of Rahul Gandhi's proposed visit to Punjab on Thursday when he plans to pay obeisance at the Golden Temple and sit down for a langar with party's all 117 candidates. In the first list, the party had announced 86 candidates. Now only eight candidates remain to be named ahead of Gandhi's visit even as filing of nominations started Tuesday.

The three MLAs that the party has dropped include Amrik Singh Dhillon from Samrala, Satkar Kaur from Ferozepur (Rural) and Nirmal Singh Shutrana from Shutrana. Son of former minister Karam Singh Gill, Rupinder Singh Raja Gill has been nominated from Samrala, a retired government official Darbara Singh has been fielded from Shutrana, and AAP leader who switched to Congress recently, Ashu Bangar has been nominated from Ferozepur (Rural).

Another party MLA from Amargarh, Surjit Singh Dhiman, who wanted to change his constituency got his son, Jaswinder Singh Dhiman a ticket from Sunam as a part of a compromise deal. Sidhu's nephew and confidant, Smit Singh has been fielded from Amargarh. Sidhu had been backing him strongly. Vikram Bajwa, the son-in-law of former CM Rajinder Kaur Bhattal, has been fielded from Sahnewal.

Bhattal too is a candidate from Lehra. During 2017 elections, Vikram Bajwa was denied ticket under one-family-one-ticket rule. This time also, the Congress has denied ticket to Cabinet Minister Tripat Rajinder Singh Bajwa's son.

Another former MLA Ajit Inder Singh Mofar's son Bikram Inder Singh Mofar has been nominated from Sardulgarh.

Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi has had his way in case of



sitting MLA Joginder Pal from Bhoja segment, who has been renominated despite strong protests by former PPCC chief Sunil Kumar Jakhar. Sitting MLA Ramanjit Singh Sikki too has been renominated from Khadoor Sahib even though his ticket was stated to be "iffy." Sitting MLA from Gill Kuldeep Singh Vaid has been renominated even though the party wanted to shift him to Jagraon. From Jagraon, the Congress has nominated sitting AAP MLA Jagtar Singh Jagga Hissawal, who had crossed over to Congress recently during the last Assembly session saying that Channi was his Chief Minister. The party has again posed its confidence in sitting MLA from Fazilka Davinder Singh Ghubaya despite having reservations. Sidhu has had his way in case of Ashwini Sekhri, an former MLA from Batala, who has been fielded finally. Tript Bajwa was eyeing the constituency for his son. He has been lately criticising PPCC chief for one family one ticket rule stating the emphasis should be on winnability. In Banga, former Congress MLA, who had once hurled a shoe at Akali leader Bikram Singh Majithia in the Assembly, has been nominated. A former PPP-turned-AAP-turned Congress leader Dr Navjot Dahiya has been fielded from Nakodar. In Kharar, CM Channi got the ticket for his aide Vijay Sharma Tinku.

PM Modi to host first India-Central Asia Summit on Jan 27



Prime Minister Narendra Modi will host the first India-Central Asia Summit in a virtual format on Thursday during which the leaders are expected to deliberate on steps to take forward relations to newer heights as well as the evolving regional security situation.

The virtual summit will see the participation of the five presidents — Kazakhstan's Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, Uzbekistan's Shavkat Mirziyoyev, Emomali Rahmon of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan's Gurbanguly

Berdimuhamedow and Sadyr Japarov of Kyrgyz Republic.

This will be the first engagement of its kind between India and the Central Asian countries at the level of leaders, the Ministry of External Affairs had said.

The summit is symbolic of the importance attached by the leaders of India and the Central Asian countries to a comprehensive and enduring India-Central Asia partnership.

The participation of the secretaries of National Security Councils of Central Asian countries in the Regional Security Dialogue on Afghanistan held in New Delhi in November last year outlined a common regional approach on Afghanistan. The summit is being held a day after the Republic Day which saw no foreign head of state or government as the chief guest. The leaders of the five central Asian countries were likely to be the chief guest but the country saw a rise in COVID-19 cases which led to a curtailed Republic Day celebrations. The first India-Central Asia Summit, the MEA had said, is a reflection of the country's growing engagement with the Central Asian countries, which are a part of India's "extended neighbourhood". Modi had paid a visit to all Central Asian countries in 2015. Subsequently, there have been exchanges at high levels at bilateral and multilateral forums.

PFIZER BEGINS TESTING OMICRON-MATCHED COVID-19 SHOTS IN ADULTS



Pfizer Inc and BioNTech SE said on Tuesday they started a clinical trial to test a new version of their vaccine specifically designed to target the COVID-19 Omicron variant, which has eluded some of the protection provided by the original two-dose vaccine regimen. Banking on volunteers in the United States, the companies plan to test the immune response generated by the Omicron-based vaccine both as a three-shot regimen in unvaccinated people and as a booster shot for people who already received two doses of their original vaccine. They are also testing a fourth dose of the current vaccine against a fourth dose of the Omicron-based vaccine in people who received a third dose of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine three to six months earlier. The companies plan to study the safety and tolerability of the shots in the more than 1,400 people who will be enrolled in the trial.

CHINESE PLA RESPONDED POSITIVELY ON HANDING OVER MISSING ARUNACHAL TEEN: RIJJU



ITANAGAR, (IANS) Union Law and Justice Minister Kiren Rijju said on Wednesday that the Chinese Peoples Liberation Army (PLA) has responded positively on handing over of missing Arunachal Pradesh teenager Miram Taron and suggested a place of release.

Taron was reportedly kidnapped by the PLA a week ago from the Indian territory. Rijju tweeted: "Hotline exchanged on Republic Day by Indian Army with Chinese PLA. PLA responded positively indicating handing over of our national and suggested a place of release. They are likely to intimate date and time soon. Delay attributed to bad weather conditions on their side."

On Tuesday, the Union minister had said in a tweet: "We are constantly following the case from day one. I appeal to everyone to be cautious in making statements which are not based on facts because the safety and safe return of our Young Arunachal Pradesh youth is the priority." The Arunachal Pradesh government had also sought the Defence Ministry's intervention to ensure the safe return of Taron. Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu had earlier said that the Defence Ministry has taken up the matter with the Chinese authority through diplomatic channels.

"I am hopeful that the youth would be released and return to his village soon," the Chief Minister had told the media in Itanagar.

R-DAY: PROUD MOMENT FOR FRENCH AMBASSADOR AS RAFALE SOARS HIGH

NEW DELHI, (IANS) It was a proud moment for French Ambassador Emmanuel Lenain when the Rafale fighter jets formed a part of the largest aerial display at the 73rd Republic Day celebrations.



Seated in the diplomatic lounge, it seemed tough for the French envoy to shoot the video while the French-made Rafale flew past Rajpath, but he did and shared it on social media. Later Lenain tweeted: "Always a proud moment to witness IAF Rafale fighter jets in the Republic Day flypast! Truly breathtaking maneuvers by @IAF_MCC's talented pilots."

The French made Rafale fighter jets were the part of Indian Air Force contingent this year for the fly past on the Republic day celebrations. Baaz formation comprising a Rafale, and two Jaguars, MiG-29s, Su-30 MKIs each in a seven aircraft 'Arrowhead' formation stunned the spectators. In recent years, the defence cooperation between India and France have scaled new heights. France hosted the sixth edition of the joint Army exercise "EX SHAKTI" from November 15 to 26. The joint drills took place in south-eastern France.

Meeting of the 17th France-India High Committee on Defence Cooperation between DGRIS Alice Guitton and Defence Secretary Dr Ajay Kumar took place in Paris on November 25, 2021.

UK PM BORIS JOHNSON 'WELCOMES' POLICE PROBE AS PARTYGATE REPORT DUE



British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has said that he welcomes the Scotland Yard investigation into the so-called "partygate" scandal of alleged lockdown breaches at 10 Downing Street and other government offices during 2020-2021. There was an earlier expectation that the police probe could delay the internal Cabinet Office inquiry being conducted by top civil servant Sue Gray, but ministers indicated on Wednesday that the report is ready for release soon. The focus has now turned to whether the findings will be released in full, a decision to be made by Downing Street, and if it will be ahead of the crucial Prime Minister's Questions (PMQs) session in the House of Commons scheduled for Wednesday afternoon. "A few weeks ago I commissioned an independent inquiry into a series of events in Downing Street, in the Cabinet Office as well as some other Whitehall departments that may have constituted potential breaches of the COVID regulations," Johnson said in a parliamentary statement on Tuesday.

PADMA AWARDS 2022 FULL LIST OF RECIPIENTS: FROM LATE CDS BIPIN RAWAT, KALYAN SINGH TO OLYMPIAN NEERAJ CHOPRA - PADMA VIBHUSHAN, PADMA BHUSHAN AND PADMA SHRI AWARDEES THIS YEAR

Padma Awards 2022: Every year, on the occasion of Republic Day, the Padma Awards are announced. The Padma Awards, one of the highest civilian Awards of the country, are conferred in three categories, namely, Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri. The Home Ministry on Tuesday, January 25, 2022, announced the list of recipients of the Padma awards. This year, 128 people have been honoured with the Awards.

The awards are given in various disciplines/ fields of activities, viz.- art, social work, public affairs, science and engineering, trade and industry, medicine, literature and education, sports, civil service, etc. 'Padma Vibhushan' is awarded for exceptional and distinguished service; 'Padma Bhushan' for distinguished service of high order and 'Padma Shri' for distinguished service in any field, as per padmaawards.gov.in.

This year the President has approved the conferment of 128 Padma Awards including two duo cases. The list comprises four Padma Vibhushan, 17 Padma Bhushan and 107 Padma Shri Awards. Among them, 34 of the awardees are women and the list also includes 10 persons from the category of foreigners, NRI and OCI and 13 Posthumous awardees.

Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat was awarded the Padma Vibhushan posthumously this year, for his contribution to the country in civil services. Kalyan Singh, former chief minister of Uttar Pradesh, was also honoured with the Padma Vibhushan posthumously. Cyrus Poonawalla of the Serum Institute of India, which manufactured COVID-19 vaccine Covishield, and Krishna Ella and Suchitra Ella of Bharat Biotech, which produced India's indigenous coronavirus vaccine Covaxin, were also given Padma Bhushan. Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella and Google CEO Sundar Pichai were conferred Padma Bhushan, the third-highest civilian award.

Late Punjabi folk singer Gurmeet Bawa, actor Victor Banerjee and former Union Home Secretary Rajiv Mehrishi have been awarded Padma Bhushan.

Olympic gold medallist Neeraj Chopra and singer Sonu Nigam were awarded Padma Shri.



RAHUL TO BEGIN PUNJAB CAMPAIGN BY PAYING OBEISANCE AT GOLDEN TEMPLE

NEW DELHI, (IANS) Former Congress President Rahul Gandhi will begin his campaign in Punjab for the upcoming Assembly elections on Thursday by paying a visit to Golden Temple in Amritsar, a party source said on Wednesday.

As per the schedule, the Congress leader will pay obeisance at Sri Harmandir Sahib and take part in Langar along with 117 other party

candidates. He would later visit Durgiana Mandir in Amritsar.

The Congress leader is also scheduled to visit Bhagwan Valmiki Tirath Sthal along with the candidates and pay obeisance there after which he would address the "Navi Soch Nava Punjab" virtual rally at Mithapur in Jalandhar.

Punjab will go to the polls for the 117 assembly seats on February 20.

BADAL, 94, TO BE IN FRAY FROM STRONGHOLD LAMBI



CHANDIGARH, (IANS) The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) on Wednesday said its patriarch Parkash Singh Badal, 94, would be in fray again from the Lambi constituency, the seat in Punjab's Muktsar district that he emerged victorious for five consecutive terms.

An announcement in this regard was made by SAD MP Harsimrat Kaur in Amritsar.

Five-time Chief Minister Badal had won the 2017 Assembly elections from this seat by defeating Capt Amarinder Singh with 22,770 votes. Last week, Prime Minister Narendra Modi called up Badal on phone to enquire about his health as he tested positive for the Covid-19.

The Akali patriarch had started contesting from Lambi in 1997 and won the seat by 28,728 votes, by 23,929 votes in 2002, by 9,187 votes in 2007.

In 2012, he defeated his nearest rival by 24,739 votes.

Punjab will go to the polls for the 117 assembly seats on February 20.

THIS COMEDIAN HAS ALWAYS RAISED PUNJAB'S ISSUES: BHAGWANT MANN TO AMARINDER



The Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) chief ministerial candidate in Punjab, Bhagwant Mann, on Tuesday said that if Captain Amarinder Singh was receiving calls and messages from Pakistan to make Navjot Singh Sidhu a minister, then why did he keep it a secret for so long. Was it at the behest of Pakistan that the Captain later offered a ministry to Sidhu, Mann sought to know. He also reacted to Amarinder Singh's comment calling him a comedian, by saying that this comedian has always raised the issues of Punjab's water, agriculture, farmers and mafia in the Parliament. Addressing the media in Chandigarh, Mann said Tuesday that Amarinder Singh was making such statements to disturb the atmosphere of Punjab during the elections as he had nothing left now. Without naming anyone, the AAP leader remarked that "Pakistan" himself used to live with him in his house. "Captain used to appoint ministers, DGP and Chief Secretary of the state only after asking Pakistan. Captain used the services of senior officers of Punjab to take care of the sitaphal and chiku at his Siswan farmhouse," he added. "When Captain Amarinder was an MP, he did not even go to Parliament. His attendance was the worst, let alone his chances of raising any issue pertaining to Punjab and its people. Even as the chief minister, he deceived the people of Punjab. Instead of fulfilling promises, he was spending time in his farm house."

AMARINDER SINGH TO FIGHT MOSTLY RURAL SEATS IN TIE-UP WITH BJP



Amarinder Singh's Punjab Lok Congress will be fighting mostly rural seats in its alliance with the BJP. On Monday, the parties had announced that the BJP will be contesting 65 constituencies and the PLC 37 in the coming Assembly elections.

The BJP is largely contesting the urban seats. Its share includes all the 23 Assembly segments that it used to contest when in alliance with the Shiromani Akali Dal.

The urban constituencies in the PLC share are Amritsar South, Raja Sansi, Nawanshahr, Bathinda Urban, Ludhiana South, Ludhiana East, Atam Nagar, Patiala Urban, Samana and Malerkotla.

Almost all the seats in the PLC's share, 26 of 37, fall in the Malwa region — Budhlada, Mansa, Rampura Phul, Bathinda (Urban), Bathinda (Rural), Dharamkot, Nihal Singh Wala, Dakha, Ludhiana South, Atam Nagar, Ludhiana East, Patiala, Sanaur, Samana, Shutrana, Patiala (rural), Bhadaur, Amargarh, Ferozepur (rural), Zira, Kotkapura,, Bassi Pathana, Kharar, Gidderbaha, Malout and Malerkotla.

Most of these are predominantly rural seats. Amarinder's pocket borough Patiala is also a part of Malwa.

The biggest Punjab region, it gave the Aam Aadmi Party a foothold in the state and was the epicentre of farm protests.

However, the BJP has kept as many as four of the nine Assembly segments falling under Patiala Lok Sabha constituency, from where Amarinder's wife Preneet Kaur is a five-time MP. The five segments that have gone to the PLC include Patiala Urban and Rural seats, Sanaur, Samana and Shutrana. Amarinder's native Mehraj village falls in Rampura Phul constituency, a part of Bathinda district.

SAD LEADER MAJITHIA SEEKS NIA PROBE INTO DGP CHATTOPADHYAYA'S LEAKED AUDIOS



CHANDIGARH, (IANS) Senior Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) leader Bikram Singh Majithia on Wednesday demanded a probe by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) into the reported audio-tape expose of Punjab DGP Siddharth Chattopadhyaya, saying the security breach during Narendra Modis visit to Punjab earlier this month could have even resulted in an assassination bid on the Prime Minister.

Majithia also appealed to the Election Commission of India to hold the Congress government accountable for violating high court directives and conducting raids at his residence and harassing his family members even before the court passed its final verdict on his anticipatory bail plea. Majithia, who was addressing the media here, said attempts are being made to prevent him from contesting the February 20 Assembly elections and that is why the police have been pressed into service to raid his residences even before the high court passed

its verdict on his anticipatory bail plea application.

The Akali leader said, "It seems the law is different for me as the same rules are not applied to Congressmen, be it Sukhpal Khaira, who is accused of drug smuggling, or Sidhu Moosewala, who is accused to firing an AK -47, or even Lok Insaaf Party (LIP) leader Simarjit Singh Bains, against whom non-bailable warrants have been issued. "No raids have been conducted at either of their houses. Sukhpal Khaira's residence was not raided even though he failed to get any relief from the high court. The Congress government has not even proceeded against Bhupinder Honey, from whom Rs 10 crore was recovered by the ED, for illegally using the security cover of the Chief Minister." Stating that there are two sets of laws for him and others accused of serious crimes, Majithia, who is contesting the Assembly polls from Majithia in Amritsar district, said the Congress government is yet to proceed against DGP Chattopadhyaya, who was caught on tape addressing a proclaimed offender as his son and even discussing sharing of drug money and fake encounters. "The proclaimed offender in the Jagdish Bhola drugs case even talked about recovering RDX and bombs during the Prime Minister's visit. Only a NIA probe can get to the bottom of this case as well as the subsequent security breach during the PM's visit, which could have even resulted in an assassination bid on the PM," Majithia said.

He demanded that all CCTV footage of the DGP's residence as well as his phone and the phones of Chief Minister Charanjit Channi, Home Minister Sukhjinder Randhawa and Vigilance head Harpreet Sidhu be examined to uncover the entire conspiracy to register a false case against him as well as the compromise of the PM's security.

He said the NIA inquiry in this context should not be delayed at any cost. Majithia also said that his legal team is considering moving a contempt petition against Congress government functionaries for violating court directions as well as harassing his family members.

BJP LEADERSHIP 'CUTTING HIM TO SIZE'; CAN ONLY BE ONE 'SUPREME LEADER': PRIYANKA AS ADITYANATH FIELDER FROM GORAKHPUR

Days after the BJP fielded Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath from his pocket borough of Gorakhpur for the Uttar Pradesh assembly polls, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Tuesday said that the move indicated that the BJP leadership is attempting to "cut him to size" as in an "autocratic system like theirs, there can only be one supreme leader".

The BJP had on January 15 fielded Adityanath from Gorakhpur Urban seat, a decision that had put to rest speculation that he may contest from Ayodhya, as the five-time Lok Sabha MP enters the state poll fray for the first time from his home turf.

Asked about her comments on the BJP fielding Adityanath from his home turf Gorakhpur, Priyanka Gandhi said, "Looks to me like his leadership is attempting to cut him to size. It's an open secret that they have been wanting to do so for sometime."

"Their internal pushes and pulls are beginning to reveal themselves in public now. I suppose in an autocratic system like theirs, there can only be one supreme leader," the Congress general secretary told PTI in an exclusive interview.

Ayodhya and Mathura along with his traditional constituency Gorakhpur, which he has represented in Lok Sabha a number of times, had been seen as the most likely seat of choice for Adityanath.

Priyanka Gandhi also attacked the Adityanath government for the handling of the Covid pandemic, especially of the second wave, alleging that it failed to protect people, and provide them with health facilities, oxygen, medication and hospital beds.

"Even worse was the fact that while failing to do all of this it acted as an aggressor towards the public and those providing health services.

"Whether it was the 'asha bahu' who risked their lives to help others or doctors, nurses and health care professionals; instead of incentivising and supporting them the government created an atmosphere of fear," she alleged. "The BJP government's efforts were focussed on covering up the truth rather than saving lives," she said, adding that this compounded the problem because people could not even appeal for help while enduring the most terrifying and tragic circumstances.

"Having said that, I cannot say how deeply this will affect the upcoming elections — people tend to put tragedies behind them and move forward. However, I feel that a government must be held accountable for its actions," the Congress leader said. "When so many lives are lost and people go through so much suffering, it should not be brushed under the carpet. It



is up to us, as people to demand accountability from those in power. This is a fundamental aspect of democracy," Gandhi asserted.

On her party making a strong pitch for women in the polls and basing its campaign on it, she said the purpose of giving the Unnao rape victim's mother a ticket to fight the election is to convey a very direct message — the person who destroyed her family could do so and get away with it because he was an MLA, he had political power, and "we are enabling her to take that very same power, become an MLA, and use her power to rebuild her life and help others". "The same goes for others like her who have genuinely struggled for the rights of their community, whether it is Poonam Pandey, the 'asha bahu' who was thrashed by the Yogi government just for demanding to be heard, or Ramraj Gond who led the struggle of the people of Umbha after the heinous massacre that took place with the collusion of the government and police in their village," she said.

"Political power rightfully belongs to them, and not to the mafias and criminals whom the government "protects," Priyanka Gandhi said, adding that her party is offering people such as Pandey and Gond the opportunity to claim it and use it to do good.

Asked about the importance of social media in the polls amid Covid restrictions and whether it gives the BJP an advantage, she said that it certainly does give the BJP a certain advantage as they have the most resource rich and elaborate social media machinery.

"I believe the Samajwadi Party has made an appeal to the EC in this regard already. But why should we be daunted by this? If we use it intelligently, we can meet the challenge too," she asserted.

Y MEDIA POLITICAL SENSEX, 5-STATES ELECTION, 2022



AKALI DAL FIELDS BIKRAM MAJITHIA AGAINST NAVJOT SIDHU FROM AMRITSAR EAST

SAD chief Sukhbir Singh Badal on Wednesday announced that senior party leader and his brother-in-law Bikram Singh Majithia will also fight the state assembly elections from Amritsar East against Punjab Congress chief Navjot Singh Sidhu. Sukhbir Badal also announced the candidature of his 94-year-old father and five-time state Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal from the Lambi assembly seat. The SAD chief made the twin announcements while talking to reporters in Amritsar. Majithia will ensure that Sidhu would forfeit his security deposit, said Badal. He had already been announced as the SAD candidate from the Majitha seat earlier.

Booked under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act last month, Majithia has been trying to secure an antici-

patory bail from courts.

Majithia was denied relief by the Punjab and Haryana High court early this week but was given three-day protection from arrest to move the Supreme Court to challenge the high court order and seek the reprieve.

With the announcement of candidates for two more seats, the SAD has declared candidates on all 97 seats on which it is going to contest the February 20 assembly polls. The SAD has tied up with the BSP for the coming elections.

According to the seat-sharing arrangement between the two parties, the BSP will field candidates on 20 of the 117 assembly seats in Punjab while the rest will be contested by the Shiromani Akali Dal.

IN SP-RLD, NOT JAYANT CHAUDHARY BUT AZAM KHAN WILL RULE: AMIT SHAH TO JAT LEADERS

With less than a month left for assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday met Jat leaders from western UP and held discussions on a number of issues. The meeting took place at the residence of BJP MP Parvesh Sahib Singh Verma. Amit Shah said that Jats have always supported the BJP.. whenever he went to the community and campaigned for the party, Jats have always voted for the saffron party.

In SP-RLD alliance, it won't be Jayant Chaudhary but Azam Khan who will rule, he said.

Speaking in the meeting, Amit Shah said that Rahul Gandhi does not know the difference between Kharif and Rabi crops and he talks about farmers... In our time, project announcement, foundation stone laying, and inauguration, also take place during the same tenure. During BJP's rule, not a single sugarcane mill was shut down... mills were modernised and record production of sugar took place in UP, Amit Shah said.

Not even a single riot took place in UP.. hasn't the law and order situation in the state improved, the Home Minister asked Jat leaders. BJP MP Parvesh Verma said that both are nationalists, the BJP and Jats... both love their country... there are a lot of possibilities even after the elections... Jat leaders put their views forward to Amit Shah. Muzaffarnagar BJP MP Sanjeev Balyan, who was also present in the meeting, said that both sides have discussed issues... Jat leaders have assured hope.

Balyan also said that Jats can never see Akhilesh Yadav as their Chief



Minister. A range of issues were discussed in the meeting with Jat leaders... and there was one view on some issues... the meeting was held in a good atmosphere, Balyan said.

Speaking to India TV, Sanjeev Balyan said even if there are some issues on which Jats are not happy with the BJP government, they will still vote for the party as they cannot see Akhilesh Yadav as CM. Jats know that BJP respects them... but they also know how they will be treated under Akhilesh's rule, he added.

Jat leaders assured that they will support BJP once again, party said. A Jat leader who attended the meeting said that sugarcane payment, electricity bills are their issues... Home Minister also assured them on the reservation demand for Jats... now when Jats have assured the BJP then they will not look back.

'CHANNI AN AMAZING HUMAN BEING, SHOULD BECOME CM AGAIN', SAYS SONU SOOD



Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi should be given one more chance, actor Sonu Sood said on Monday, ahead of the assembly elections in Punjab. Speaking while campaigning in Moga, Sonu Sood said Channi is an amazing human being and should be given more chances. "Channi sahib has done amazing work in the last few days. I want him to become CM again. He is an amazing human being. He had little time, it takes some time to adjust. But in such a short span of time, great enthusiasm and passion had been shown by him and he should be given more chance," Sood said.

"Congress has an edge this time," he claimed.

On being asked about his sister, Malvika Sood, contesting upcoming Punjab polls from Moga, Sonu Sood said, "My mother, a professor, taught children all her life. My father was a social worker. Schools, colleges and dharamshalas here are constructed on our plots of land. So, it is in our blood." "My sister took more responsibility, maximum vaccinations in our city were facilitated by her. As far as education and helping people is concerned, she had worked in Moga on a large scale. People pushed her to be a part of the system," he added.

HINDU-MUSLIM NARRATIVE BEING KEPT ALIVE TILL THE ELECTIONS, SAYS RAKESH TIKAIT



Bharatiya Kisan Union National Spokesperson, Rakesh Tikait has said that the "Hindu-Muslim" and "Jinnah" rhetoric will be kept alive in the state only till the state Assembly elections." He cautioned his supporters and farmers "not to be influenced by such divisive statements, meant only for political gains".

Tikait, while talking to media in Aligarh, added the 'propaganda' is only for two and half months. "People should be wary of the statements being given by the leaders from the 'Sarkari manch'. Though I cannot predict which party will form the next government, people will certainly not vote for such people," he said.

Rakesh Tikait's statement comes days after his brother and BKU Chief Naresh Tikait had appealed to his supporters and khaps of western Uttar Pradesh to ensure victory for the Samajwadi Party-Rashtriya Lok Dal alliance. However, he later retracted his statement and added that he had made a 'mistake' in giving such a call publicly. Tikait said that farmers are frustrated with the government as they are being forced to sell their crops at half of its price. He added that they are fully conscious of the importance of their choice in the forthcoming Assembly elections and do not need any prompting. "The 13 months of training in Delhi at the time of the farmers' movement against the government's three contentious farm laws was enough for them to decide what they need to do. A massive farmers protest is scheduled on January 31 because the committee on minimum support price is yet to be formed by the Centre. The country where political leaders seek votes in the name of caste and religion can never progress," he added.

WHY BJP? RPN SINGH REVEALS REASON FOR JOINING THE SAFFRON PARTY



RPN Singh joins BJP: Former Union minister and senior Congress leader RPN Singh joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Tuesday (January 25, 2022). Singh's move is being seen as a big setback for the Congress which is trying hard to revive itself in poll-bound Uttar Pradesh under the leadership of Priyanka Gandhi. Singh is second top leader from UP after Jitin Prasad to leave the Congress and join the saffron party in the recent past.

"I worked hard for 32 years in Congress but it is no longer what it used to be," Singh said soon after he joined the BJP in presence of Union Ministers Dharmendra Pradhan, Anurag Thakur and Jyotiraditya Scindia, deputy Chief Ministers of Uttar Pradesh Dinesh Sharma and Keshav Prasad Maurya, state BJP president Swatantra Dev Singh and party national media head Anil Baluni at party headquarters in New Delhi. In an exclusive interaction with India TV, RPN Singh said he was impressed by the work done by the 'double engine' government in Uttar Pradesh in the last five years.

When asked what made him leave the Congress for BJP, Singh said, "The way PM (Modi) has worked to rebuild a new India by connecting our heritage and culture with the 21st century is really remarkable. I belong to Uttar Pradesh, I have joined BJP after being impressed by the double engine government led by Yogiji in the last 5 years".

When whether he was miffed after being ignored by the Congress following the Jharkhand assembly elections, and his views not being sought before naming Ajay Kumar Lallu as party UP chief, Singh, who was party's Jharkhand incharge, said, "I may have made mistake in Jharkhand, but the party performed well in the state. As far as Ajay Kumar Lallu is concerned, why should I be angry? He is from our area, I gave him ticket to contest election for the first time."

SIDHU QUESTIONS BHAGWANT MANN AS AAP'S CM FACE, CALLS KEJRIWAL 'MASQUERADER'

Punjab Congress chief Navjot Singh Sidhu on Monday questioned AAP leader Bhagwant Mann's selection as CM candidate for the upcoming assembly polls in the state. He called Arvind Kejriwal a 'masquerader' and questioned the AAP national convenor's method for selecting the CM candidate, wherein he circulated a number and asked for responses from the public on it before he announced Mann's name as AAP's CM face.

Sidhu slammed Kejriwal's claim that over 21 lakh responses were received on the number in 24 hours. He said, "Arvind Kejriwal launched a number for (AAP) CM face & said he received about 21 lakh messages... Even if it's 24*7, a Pvt number won't receive over 5000 messages or calls. It's a scam to trick people. He's a 'masquerader', trying to fake a perception".

Sidhu went on to call Arvind Kejriwal a 'scamster'. He said that a complaint in the matter has been filed with the Election Commission. "Congress has complained over this issue to Election Commission...A show-cause notice has been sent today. He's trying to befool the people of Punjab through his dirty tricks...AAP has created a hybrid model of fake news", he told news agency ANI.

DELHI CM LAUNCHES AAP'S NEW CAMPAIGN FOR POLL-BOUND STATES

Aam Aadmi Party national convenor and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Monday launched a campaign for poll-bound states, asking Delhiites to upload videos of the Delhi government's good work on social media platforms. Assembly polls in Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Goa and Manipur are scheduled to be held from February 10 to March 7 and the counting of votes will be taken up on March 10.

Addressing the media in Delhi, Kejriwal said his government has done a number of good works like providing free electricity and water. He asked Delhiites to urge voters in poll-bound states to give a chance to the AAP.

"Upload videos on good works of Delhi government and telling how you benefitted from it on Twitter, Instagram Facebook. Also, WhatsApp people known to you in these states appealing them to give a chance to Kejriwal," he said while launching 'Ek Mauka Kejriwal Ko' campaign. "People from the United Nations came to see the mohalla clinics run in Delhi. The wife of US President visited schools in Delhi. Delhi is now getting 24-hour electricity. All this was possible because you the people of Delhi gave us a chance," he said.

U.S. ENVOY WARNS COUNTRIES OFF TRACK ON CLIMATE GOALS

The world is "not on a good track" to meet a global goal to avoid the worst impacts of climate change and needs to step up efforts to move away from fossil fuels this decade, John Kerry, the U.S. special envoy on climate change, said on Monday. "We're in trouble. I hope everyone understands that," Kerry told an event called Building Momentum to UN COP27 hosted by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and officials from Egypt, the host of the next UN climate summit.

Kerry told the event that he is concerned about the recent uptick in the use of coal globally and about plans to build new coal plants without carbon capture technology.

Egypt will host in November the next UN climate summit, known as COP27, in Sharm el-Sheikh where the government will look to showcase its own work to phase out coal in power generation, improve management of waste water, and launch the construction of public transportation projects.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Hassan Shoukry said as the host of the UN climate summit, Egypt will aim to be a voice of African nations who are among the most affected by climate change and focus on implementing what has been codified in the Paris climate agreement. "We will be listening to the needs and priorities of Africa and other developing countries who have suffered greatly from the negative effects of climate change," Shoukry said.

PAKISTAN ON A NEW TRACK?

ASAD MIRZA

Pakistan after 75 years of its existence has released its first ever National Security Policy (NSP), which it claims will ensure human security for the ordinary Pakistani masses.

A critical review of the recently released National Security Policy (NSP) of Pakistan by its National Security Advisor, Yusuf Moeed, reveals that it's a document which contradicts itself through its various promises and their delivery mechanism. Further it also reveals that how the military-political combine in Pakistan has controlled so far and plans in the future too, how to control the distribution of resources in the country, consolidate its power over every aspect of the governance, every state organ and the civil society.

The unclassified part of the NSP spread over a 62-page document loftily talks about the parameters of the national security framework, enunciates its implementation strategy, outlines policy guidelines for bolstering national unity and securing the country's economic future, besides ensuring its defence, territorial integrity, and internal security, guiding principles for foreign policy in the changing world and linking all this to the human security.

The NSP peppered with ostensibly altruistic claims, looks like a bunch of hollow words with no apparent practical roadmap for the future. The policy claims to have been a result of consensus with 'all stakeholders', but strangely enough, no defence or security expert, economist, social scientist and most all any parliamentarian has not been consulted on the issues handled by the NSP.

NSP has finally been formulated for the first time in 75 years, since the existence of Pakistan but without taking parliament into confidence. The policy formulators in a bid to undermine Parliament's role stated that policy formulation, especially the one pertaining to national security, is a prerogative of the executive branch in the entire democratic world.

Thought that might be the case. But in a parliamentary democracy there is a unwritten understanding that the executive branch will always be answerable to the parliament and that no policy, no law could be made without addressing the concerns of the various stakeholders in the government and above all the people's will. It is ensured by not only allowing the parliament to debate and discuss every aspect of the government's decisions but also by including the gist of those discussions.

Further, one wonders how a new strategy could be formulated without delving into the past's mistakes or misadventures, as has happened with Pakistan and its neighbours.

Perhaps for the first time in Pakistan's history, a civil government has admitted that without ensuring economic security, "traditional security", i.e. defence, is not possible. Though in reality the



“ THE NSP PEPPERED WITH OSTENSIBLY ALTRUISTIC CLAIMS, LOOKS LIKE A BUNCH OF HOLLOW WORDS WITH NO APPARENT PRACTICAL ROADMAP FOR THE FUTURE. THE POLICY CLAIMS TO HAVE BEEN A RESULT OF CONSENSUS WITH 'ALL STAKEHOLDERS', BUT STRANGELY ENOUGH, NO DEFENCE OR SECURITY EXPERT, ECONOMIST, SOCIAL SCIENTIST AND MOST ALL ANY PARLIAMENTARIAN HAS NOT BEEN CONSULTED ON THE ISSUES HANDLED BY THE NSP.

NSP HAS FINALLY BEEN FORMULATED FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 75 YEARS, SINCE THE EXISTENCE OF PAKISTAN BUT WITHOUT TAKING PARLIAMENT INTO CONFIDENCE. THE POLICY FORMULATORS IN A BID TO UNDERMINE PARLIAMENT'S ROLE STATED THAT POLICY FORMULATION, ESPECIALLY THE ONE PERTAINING TO NATIONAL SECURITY, IS A PREROGATIVE OF THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH IN THE ENTIRE DEMOCRATIC WORLD.

THOUGHT THAT MIGHT BE THE CASE. BUT IN A PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY THERE IS A UNWRITTEN UNDERSTANDING THAT THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH WILL ALWAYS BE ANSWERABLE TO THE PARLIAMENT AND THAT NO POLICY, NO LAW COULD BE MADE WITHOUT ADDRESSING THE CONCERNS OF THE VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS IN THE GOVERNMENT AND ABOVE ALL THE PEOPLE'S WILL.

IT IS ENSURED BY NOT ONLY ALLOWING THE PARLIAMENT TO DEBATE AND DISCUSS EVERY ASPECT OF THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISIONS BUT ALSO BY INCLUDING THE GIST OF THOSE DISCUSSIONS.

country's impoverished economy has collapsed under the burden of the traditional military-security combine. The document seems to have provided only disjointed and abstract thoughts and views and fails to provide a clear connection between traditional security and human security and ways to implement it.

Though human security is mentioned in the title of the document, yet it is mentioned only casually and superficially, and that too in the last chapter of the document.

The NSP's emphasis is undoubtedly on defence. And here too it reflects Pakistan's obsession with its traditional rival and bemoans the imbalance between the two in the sphere of conventional weapons.

If the Pakistan government really wants to be seen as the one, which is committed to rebuilding the fragile economy of the country, then different contradictions and demands have to be set right first. Then all aspects of traditional security must be subjected to economic imperatives, which could warrant fruitful results for the economy and could flow directly to the masses.

In the current background of 'global village' Pakistan should try for peaceful settlement of its disputes with all neighbours, in concurrence with mutually beneficial trade and investment policies, and building economic synergies to strengthen economic interdependence.

The NSP ignores the fact that all aspects of traditional security are linked to economic imperatives. This further requires resolution of 'core issues' through negotiations – not a reiteration of the earlier strategy, which has not worked.

For ensuring economic security, every country requires to strengthen regional cooperation and economic partnerships, rather than regional conflicts. But, the NSP lists several geostrategic compulsions – which may not help it to consolidate economic potential at a regional scale.

To deliver human security for the country's masses and ensure a sustainable and participatory development model Pakistan needs to rework the whole paradigm of its governance, only then it could talk about the priorities of human security to raise the quality of life of its masses.

Further, the Imran Khan government, if it has to deliver for the masses then first it will have to demolish the old military combine of the country, which has prospered at the cost of the masses, filling the pockets of its generals and political leaders in the name of pursuing a defensive policy against its neighbour. This goal seems insurmountable given the manner in which the Pakistan's political and military have supplemented and complemented each other over the years and they are in a position to destroy every move against them, in the future too.

Disclaimer: Asad Mirza is a political commentator based in New Delhi. He writes on Muslims, educational, international affairs, interfaith and current affairs. 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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CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

In the absence of concerning trends in public health and health care indicators, Ontario will follow a cautious and phased approach to lifting public health measures, with 21 days between each step.

January 31, 2022

Effective January 31, 2022 at 12:01 a.m. Ontario will begin the process of gradually easing restrictions, while maintaining protective measures, including but not limited to:

- * Increasing social gathering limits to 10 people indoors and 25 people outdoors.
- * Increasing or maintaining capacity limits at 50 per cent in indoor public settings, including but not limited to:
 - * Restaurants, bars and other food or drink establishments without dance facilities;
 - * Retailers (including grocery stores and pharmacies)
 - * Shopping malls;
 - * Non-spectator areas of sports and recreational fitness facilities, including gyms;
 - * Cinemas;
 - * Meeting and event spaces;
 - * Recreational amenities and amusement parks, including water parks;
 - * Museums, galleries, aquariums, zoos and similar attractions; and
 - * Casinos, bingo halls and other gaming establishments
- * Religious services, rites, or ceremonies.
- * Allowing spectator areas of facilities such as sporting events, concert venues and theatres to operate at 50 per cent seated capacity or 500 people, whichever is less. Enhanced proof of vaccination, and other requirements would continue to apply in existing settings.

February 21, 2022

Effective February 21, 2022, Ontario will lift public health measures, including:

- * Increasing social gathering limits to 25 people indoors and 100 people outdoors.
- * Removing capacity limits in indoor public settings where proof of vaccination is required, including but not limited to restaurants, indoor sports and recreational facilities, cinemas, as well as other settings that choose to opt-in to proof of vaccination requirements.
- * Permitting spectator capacity at sporting events, concert venues, and theatres at 50 per cent capacity.
- * Limiting capacity in most remaining indoor public settings where proof of vaccination is not required to the number of people that can maintain two metres of physical distance.
- * Indoor religious services, rites or ceremonies limited to the number that can maintain two metres of physical distance, with no limit if proof of vaccination is required.
- * Increasing indoor capacity limits to 25 per cent in the remaining higher-risk settings where proof of vaccination is required, including nightclubs, wedding receptions in meeting or event spaces where there is dancing, as well as

bathhouses and sex clubs.

Enhanced proof of vaccination, and other requirements would continue to apply in existing settings.

March 14, 2022

Effective March 14, 2022, Ontario will take additional steps to ease public health measures, including:

- * Lifting capacity limits in all indoor public settings. Proof of vaccination will be maintained in existing settings in addition to other regular measures.
 - * Lifting remaining capacity limits on religious services, rites, or ceremonies.
 - * Increase social gathering limits to 50 people indoors with no limits for outdoor gatherings.
- To manage COVID-19 over the long-term, local and regional responses by public health units may be deployed based on local context and conditions. "Thanks to the sacrifices of Ontarians we are starting to see glimmers of hope. However we know the coming weeks will continue to pose challenges, especially for our hospital partners," said Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health. "As we continue to chart our path forward, we will continue to take a gradual and cautious approach to lifting public health measures to protect our hospital capacity and ensure patients can continue to access the care they need."

"Thanks to the efforts of Ontarians going out to get their booster dose and adhering to current public health and workplace safety measures, we are in a position where we can begin planning to gradually and cautiously ease restrictions," said Dr. Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health. "The months ahead will require continued vigilance, as we don't want to cause any further disruption to people's everyday lives. We must continue to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 in our communities by following the measures in place and by vaccinating those who have not yet received their doses."

To support businesses required to close or reduce capacity due to the public health measures put in place to blunt the spread of the Omicron variant, the government has launched the Ontario Business Costs Rebate Program. Through the new program, the government will provide eligible businesses with a rebate payment of up to 100 per cent for property tax and energy costs they incur while subject to these restrictions. Applications for the program opened on January 18, 2022. Learn more about the program and apply here.

The government is also introducing a new COVID-19 Small Business Relief Grant that will give businesses subject to closure under the modified Step Two of the Roadmap to Reopen a \$10,000 grant.

The money will flow to eligible businesses in February. In addition, the government is also improving cash flows for Ontario businesses by making up to \$7.5 billion available through a six-month interest- and penalty-free period for Ontario businesses to make payments for most provincially administered taxes. This penalty and interest-free period started on January 1, 2022. This supports businesses now and provides the flexibility they will need for long-term planning.

ONTARIO GIVES BOOST TO PUBLIC TRANSIT IN MISSISSAUGA

MISSISSAUGA/PEEL – The Ontario government is providing \$18,932,146 to the City of Mississauga and \$482,539 to the Region of Peel, to support the expansion and improvement of public transit services in Mississauga. The funding is part of the province's Gas Tax program which will allocate \$375.6 million this year to 107 municipalities that deliver public transit.

"Our government recognizes the importance of public transit systems and the challenges our communities face in order to maintain service levels during this pandemic," said Nina Tangri, MPP for Mississauga-Streetsville. "This Gas Tax Program will provide funding of over \$18 million to the City of Mississauga and over \$400,000 to the Region of Peel, which will continue to benefit our community, as it will help municipalities support local public transit systems and help increase overall ridership."

Funding for the Gas Tax program is determined by the number of litres of gasoline sold in the province during the previous year. Municipalities that support public transit services in their community receive two cents per litre of provincial Gas Tax revenue, which can be used to extend service hours, buy transit vehicles, add routes, improve accessibility or upgrade infrastructure.

To make up for reduced gas sales due to COVID-19, this year's Gas Tax funding includes one-time additional funding of \$120.4 million to ensure municipalities can support their transit systems.

"Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen how critical public transit is for frontline workers and for Ontarians who depend on these services to get to medical appointments, the grocery store and other important locations," said Caroline Mulroney, Minister of Transportation. "Gas Tax funding remains a vital source of long-term transit funding that municipalities can rely on to help operate and expand existing public transit services – ensuring people have access to safe and reliable transportation when they need it."



SUPPLY CHANGES ALLOW FOR CHOICE OF PFIZER OR MODERNA AT PEEL CLINICS



BRAMPTON, ON – Effective today, the adult Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine will be available as an option for individuals 30 years and older at all Peel clinics. Due to provincial supply constraints in late December, Peel clinics previously reserved their existing supply of Pfizer for those aged 12-29 based on direction from the Ministry of Health.

The Ontario government has confirmed a shipment of adult Pfizer will arrive in Peel next week which when combined with supply on-hand will allow immediate availability of both mRNA vaccines.

This change in policy means that all residents aged 18+ will have the choice of receiving either Moderna or Pfizer as booster protection ahead of provincial reopening.

Appointments are available at Peel clinics across Brampton, Caledon and Mississauga. Book now at Get your vaccine - Region of Peel (peelregion.ca).

"While the widespread transmission we've seen with the Omicron wave to date is starting to slow down, we know that getting vaccinated with two doses and a booster continues to be the cornerstone of protection for our residents against ending up in hospital with severe illness. Both mRNA vaccines provide strong protection, but we know that some residents have chosen to not book an appointment and even walked away from clinics when faced with just one vaccine option. The opportunity to offer residents a choice of mRNA vaccine for first, second, or booster doses is thus critical to our continued efforts. With reopening on the horizon, I urge all eligible residents to get protected as soon as possible, without delay."

Lawrence C. Loh, Medical Officer of Health, Region of Peel

ONTARIO LAUNCHING NEW AGENCY TO BETTER SERVE TRADESPEOPLE

TORONTO — The Ontario government has launched Skilled Trades Ontario, a new Crown agency, to improve trades training and simplify services. The new agency will promote and market the trades, develop the latest training and curriculum standards, and provide a streamlined user-friendly experience for tradespeople. These changes will result in more workers for in-demand jobs and prepare Ontario for a strong economic comeback.

"We're redrawing the system to address Ontario's labour shortage and make the trades a career of choice for more people," said Monte McNaughton, Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development. "The skilled trades provide well-paying and rewarding careers that are vital for our economy. By creating this new agency, we are working for workers and delivering the generational change that labour leaders and employers have been calling for."

The new online services will help apprentices conveniently manage their careers in one place with an online one-stop-shop for scheduling classes and exams, submitting forms, paying fees and more. These changes will reduce the skilled labour shortage the province currently faces – estimated at 350,000 by 2025 – by making it easier for more people to learn about and enter the trades, including reduc-

ing processing and registration times for applicants from 60 days to 12. "The creation of Skilled Trades Ontario is an important milestone, and one I am thrilled to be a part of leading," said Michael Sherrard, Chair of Skilled Trades Ontario. "The implementation of a successful apprenticeship and skilled trades system is critical to the economic growth and success of our province, and today's announcement is the next step in securing that future for us all." An independent Board of Directors will lead the agency in delivering on the government's Skilled Trades Strategy to break the stigma surrounding the trades, simplify the system, and encourage employers to hire more apprentices. "The skilled trades are the backbone of our province – offering 144 well-paying and in-demand careers for people to choose from," said Chief Executive Officer and Registrar Melissa Young. "I commend this government for bringing generational change that will remove the stigma surrounding the trades, cut down on red tape, and ensure all young people know these jobs offer a clear path to a better life." Launching this new agency builds on the government's ongoing efforts to attract, support, and protect workers, making Ontario the top place in the world to work, live and raise a family.

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CITY OF BRAMPTON SECURES \$945K INVESTMENT FOR REVITALIZATION OF SIX MAIN STREET AREAS THROUGH PARTNERSHIP WITH MY MAIN STREET

BRAMPTON, ON- The City of Brampton has been approved for a \$945,000 non-repayable contribution through the My Main Street Local Business Accelerator program to support the revitalization of six main street communities in Brampton: Downtown, Mount Pleasant, Uptown, Kennedy Road (from Orenda Court to south of Glidden Road), Bramalea GO and Queen Street (Centre Street to 410, Dixie Road to Bramalea Road and Torbram Road to CN rail line).

These six main street communities will be supported by a dedicated Main Street Ambassador within the City's Economic Development Office. As part of the program, the communities will also receive customized market research, data analysis and non-repayable funding contributions to support new and existing small businesses. The program will be delivered over two years and focuses on creating and maintaining vibrant and inclusive local main streets while providing residents, new entrepreneurs, and existing businesses with economic opportunities in the main street communities. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of Canada, through the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario), announced a \$23.25-million investment to the Canadian Urban Institute (CUI) and the Economic Developers Council of Ontario (EDCO) to establish My Main Street - a two-year program to support the recovery and revitalization of main streets and local businesses in southern Ontario through two program streams. EDCO is delivering the My Main Street Local Business Accelerator program stream, which supports the revitalization of 65 main street communities and provides non-repayable contributions for more than 650 local businesses across southern Ontario.

or program details and further information, visit www.mymainstreet.ca or contact the Brampton Entrepreneur Centre at Bec@brampton.ca.

Quotes

"Brampton is a City of Opportunities, and we are dedicated to supporting our local businesses as we work to overcome the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, together. Collaboration will all levels of government and community partners plays a key role in this. We are grateful to receive \$945,000 for six communities across our city through the My Main Street Local Business Accelerator program. It will help us to support local business and elevate market opportunities in our great city."

- Patrick Brown, Mayor, City of Brampton

"Main street communities play a central role in a city's economy, and are often where community building and relationships take form. We are grateful for this key investment from our partners at FedDev Ontario, and look forward to experiencing the economic opportunities it will bring our residents, new entrepreneurs and existing businesses across these six main street Brampton communities. "

- Martin Medeiros, Regional Councillor, Wards 3&4; Chair, Economic Development, City of Brampton

"The My Main Street \$945,000 contribution for Brampton will help ensure our main streets grow and thrive as we navigate and move forward from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. These six communities are central to our city's economy, and in providing them with enhanced opportunities, our entire city will benefit."

ONTARIO BUILDING SAFER COMMUNITIES THROUGH ADDITIONAL CCTV CAMERA INVESTMENTS

WINDSOR — The Ontario government is providing an additional \$1 million in the fight against gun and gang violence across the province. The funding is being provided through the Ontario Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) Grant program and will help an additional nine police services fund projects to replace outdated equipment, enhance current technology, and expand CCTV camera coverage in areas where gun and gang violence and correlated crimes such as drug and human trafficking are most prevalent. The grant program, launched in August 2020, represents an investment of \$6 million over three fiscal years (2020-21 to 2022-23).

"CCTV surveillance cameras are an essential tool in helping police detect, prevent and deter criminal activity and keep Ontarians safe," said Solicitor General Sylvia Jones. "Tackling gun and gang violence requires all levels of government to work together. Ontario has stepped up to do its part, and we are pleased to support these locally led initiatives to help stamp out violence in communities across the province." The Ontario CCTV Grant program is part of the province's Guns, Gangs, and Violence Reduction Strategy. Projects funded through the grant, which will help deter criminal activity and improve public safety, build on a recent provincial investment of \$75.1 million to support initiatives including a multi-jurisdictional gun and gang specialized prosecution unit and the Office of Illicit Drug Intelligence. To date, approximately \$187 million has been invested to combat guns and gangs in Ontario.

"Securing the funds provided by the province through the CCTV Grant will allow us to work with the City to upgrade and modernize the traffic camera infrastructure in the city of Windsor while significantly expanding the number of intersections covered by the cameras," said Windsor Police Chief Pamela Mizuno. "The technology of the new cameras will provide high-quality video captures which, in turn, will result in access to an increased amount of valuable video evidence for our investigators. We are confident that this technology will have a positive impact on public safety and are grateful for the province's ongoing commitment to guns, gangs and violence reduction."

"Safety in our communities is the top priority of the provincial government," said Sarnia-Lambton MPP Bob Bailey. "Investing in new CCTV equipment will mean better coverage and quality of captured video. This will help to deter criminal activity and support both the investigation and prosecution processes."

QUICK FACTS

The Ontario CCTV Grant program is intended to help with the purchase of CCTV cameras, associated supplies and software as well as installation costs.

The grant funding covers 50 per cent of project costs up to a maximum of \$200,000 for each successful project.

All municipal and First Nations police services, as well as the Ontario Provincial Police are eligible to apply for funding.

MiWay Route 110 University Express Resumes Service on February 7

MiWay will be restoring service on Route 110 University Express as in-person learning and work activities at the University of Toronto Mississauga (UTM) campus resume.

Route 110 was temporarily suspended earlier this year in response to schools delaying in-person learning, which reduced customer demand and transit operator staff shortages due to COVID-19 self-isolation requirements.

MiWay continues to implement temporary service changes in response to COVID-19 related staff shortages (symptomatic and isolations) to free up resources for re-allocation and deliver more reliable service where it is needed most.

"We continue to use the resources that we have to deliver an essential service each and every day," said Geoff Marinoff, Director, Transit. "We're pleased to restore this service as in-person learning and work activities increase at the UTM campus on February 7. Once our staffing levels stabilize, MiWay plans to restore more services."

Before a route is suspended, MiWay staff carefully consider various scenarios to lessen the impact service reductions have on customers, including:

- Monitoring ridership levels on each route to ensure MiWay is adapting to changes in demand, while balancing daily service delivery challenges as it relates to current staffing shortages
- Allocating longer buses (60-foot articulated) on routes where ridership is higher to reduce potential overcrowding
- Ensuring alternate routes are available so customers can access other service options
- Updating customers about service changes in advance so customers can plan ahead

At this time, Route 101/101A Dundas Express remains suspended. Customers can access Route 1C Dundas-Collegeway as an alternate service that travels to and from UTM. MiWay is also re-allocating available 60-foot articulated buses to Route 1C to increase passenger capacity and prevent potential instances of overcrowding.

Customers that are planning to ride MiWay can check on the status of routes by using MiWay's trip planner at miway.ca.

FATAL DOUBLE SHOOTING IN BRAMPTON

REGION OF PEEL – Officers from the Homicide and Missing Persons Bureau are currently investigating a fatal double shooting in Brampton. On January 20, 2022, at 2:00 a.m., police received a call to check on the wellbeing of the occupant of a vehicle in the area of Redcastle Street and Kershaw Street in the City of Brampton. Police located a 23-year-old Brampton man suffering from apparent self-inflicted gunshot wound outside of a vehicle. Police also located a 23-year old Brampton woman inside the vehicle suffering from an apparent gunshot wound. Both individuals were pronounced dead at the scene.

Investigators are treating this as an isolated incident and a case of domestic violence between two individuals that were in a relationship. Investigators are not looking for any further suspects.

"Our service offers our sincere condolences to all those affected by this tragedy. It is a heartbreaking demonstration of the realities of gender based violence. It reinforces the need for our community to continue collective efforts towards ending violence against women," said Deputy Chief Nick Milinovich.

Anyone with information on this incident, surveillance footage, or dashcam that may have captured the moments leading up to, during, or after the incident is asked to contact investigators at 905-453-2121 extension 3205. Anonymous information may also be submitted by calling Peel Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477), by visiting peelcrimestoppers.ca.

Subscribe to us on YouTube and follow us on Twitter, Facebook, TikTok, and Instagram.

For media inquiries, please contact the on-duty Public and Media Relations Officer at 905- 453-2121, extension 4027.

QUICK POLICE RESPONSE RESULTS IN CARJACKING ARRESTS

REGION OF PEEL – Investigators from the Central Robbery Bureau have charged an 18-year-old man and a 17-year-old youth involved in two attempted violent carjackings.

On Wednesday, January 19th, 2022, at 7:40 a.m., two suspects approached the victim in their driveway in the area of Dearbourne Boulevard and Bramalea Road in Brampton. The suspects made demands for the victim's vehicle. The victim screamed and ran inside for assistance. The two suspects fled the area on foot, and the vehicle was not stolen. The victim sustained no physical injuries.

Minutes later at 7:50 a.m., the suspects approached another victim in the same neighbourhood where they again demanded the victim's vehicle, this time while brandishing a firearm. The suspects pulled the victim out of his vehicle, and the victim managed to get away from the suspects. The victim ran inside for help and contacted police. The vehicle was not stolen, and the victim sustained no physical injuries.

Police responded to the incident immediately, locating and arresting the two suspects in a wooded area, a short distance from the second attempted carjacking. With the assistance of 21 Division Uniform officers and the K-9 Unit, a loaded firearm was recovered on scene.



CITY OF MISSISSAUGA REOPENING INDOOR FACILITIES STARTING JANUARY 31

Following yesterday's provincial announcement to gradually ease restrictions related to COVID-19, the City of Mississauga is reopening many of its indoor facilities including libraries, community centres, recreational facilities and gyms, sports venues and cultural facilities beginning January 31. These facilities will reopen according to the provincial capacity limits that remain in place. "I'm so happy residents will soon be able to use our facilities again as they're vital to people's physical and mental health," said Mayor Bonnie Crombie. "We do have to remember that Omicron is still spreading in our community. That's why we're maintaining important public health measures at City facilities, including masking, distancing and proof of vaccination, to protect those at the highest risk."

90% OF ELIGIBLE PEEL RESIDENTS 12 YEARS AND OVER ARE DOUBLE VACCINATED

CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

Residents have hundreds of clinic options to get vaccinated, including:

- * Large clinics in Brampton, Caledon, and Mississauga
- * Mobile clinics and "vax vans" in accessible and convenient locations, such as malls, workplaces and parks (weather permitting)
- * Community clinics in trusted locations, such as schools and places of worship, co-designed with community partners
- * Primary care and pharmacy clinics
- * In-home vaccinations for those living in long term care, retirement homes or cannot get out of their homes

Residents can get their first, second or booster dose at any Peel Clinic. New clinics are added regularly as community needs are identified and clinics are now delivering both mRNA vaccine products approved for use in Canada.

As well, this weekend, Peel will host a second special family clinic and two dedicated clinics for our Black, African and Caribbean communities. Clinic details are posted on the Region's website. Vaccination remains the foundation for protection as we continue to face the Omicron variant, and Peel's vaccine system continues to offer vaccines to residents at locations that best meets their needs. Peel Public Health urges all eligible residents to get their booster ahead of the province's scheduled reopening plan.

For more information on the COVID-19 vaccine, including how to book an appointment check peelregion.ca/covid19vaccine

We are grateful to the residents who have supported our collective efforts to save lives and keep each other safe through the pandemic response. Despite the many challenges and barriers we faced, our community came together through four waves, first staying apart to keep each other safe and then, getting vaccinated. I'd also like to acknowledge the tremendous effort of our staff and all of our partners; without whom reaching these milestones would not be possible.

Dr. Lawrence Loh, Medical Officer of Health, Region of Peel

JAISHANKAR GETS ENVOYS TO US, CANADA CRACKING ON DEATH OF 4 INDIANS BEING SMUGGLED

CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

"An unfortunate and tragic incident. We are in touch with US authorities on their ongoing investigation. AA consular team from @IndianChicago is travelling today to Minnesota to coordinate and provide any assistance required," Sandhu tweeted.

In a statement Thursday without identifying the victims, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) stated that "on the morning of January 19, 2022, RCMP officers with the Integrated Border Enforcement Team received concerning information from their counterparts in the United States".

"Specifically, the information outlined that officers with the US Customs and Border Protection had apprehended a group of individuals who had crossed into the US from Canada, near the town of Emerson, Manitoba. Further, it indicated that one of the adults had items meant for an infant but that no infant was with the group."

"Upon receiving this information at 9.23 a.m., a search was immediately launched on both sides of the border.

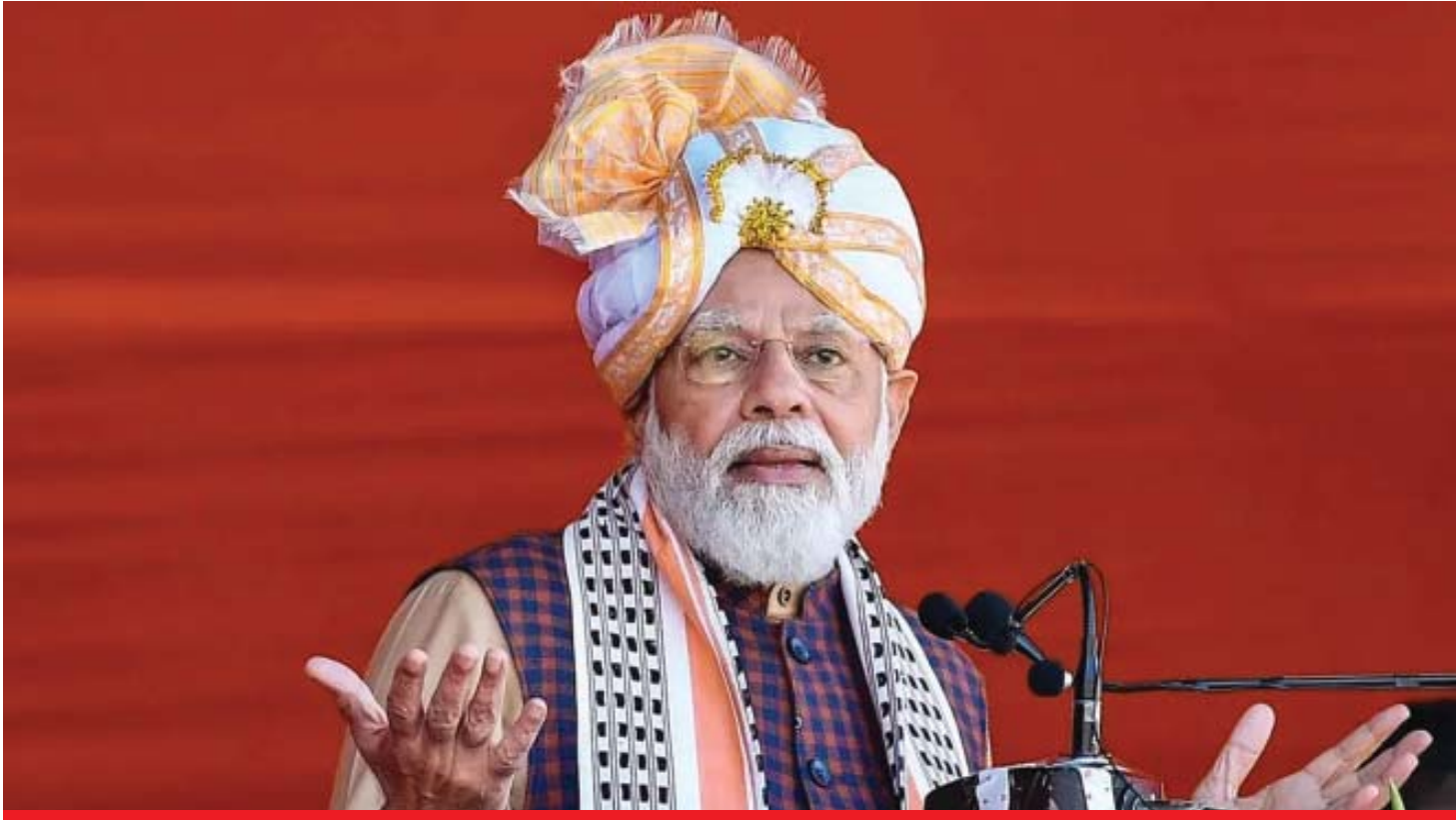
RCMP officers were already patrolling the area and the search began at 9.24 a.m. Extensive patrols were conducted and, at approximately 1.30 p.m, the bodies of three individuals were located on the Canadian side of the border, approximately 10km east of Emerson."

RCMP identified the group as: an adult male, an adult female, and an infant. "Fearing there may be additional victims, officers continued their search and located the body of an additional male, believed at this time to be in his mid-teens."

"All victims were located approximately 12 metres from the US/Canada border."

As speculation was rife that the group was being smuggled, The Toronto Star reported that a Florida man has been charged with human-smuggling as authorities investigate the deaths of four people, including a baby, who were found some 12 metres away from the Canada-US border in Manitoba.

"The discovery of the bodies marked a tragic ending to a case of irregular immigration that officials, it was revealed Thursday, believe is part of a larger human-smuggling operation from Canada to the US - in a part of the continent more accustomed to migrants travelling the other way," it said.



NATIONAL VOTERS' DAY: PM MODI URGES BJP WORKERS TO HELP RAISE VOTER TURNOUT TO 75%

On National Voters' Day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has urged his party workers to see that the voter turnout in their respective areas is increased to 75% to mark the 75th anniversary of Independence. Virtually addressing the BJP's "panna pramukhs" (page in-charge) in Gujarat via the NaMo app, Modi asked them to see that each one of them is connected to every voter in their list and to their families, and to get the details of those who had worked and sacrificed for the party since the Jana Sangh days on the Kamal Pushp. Kamal Pushp is an initiative by the BJP as part of the Azadi Ka Amrut Mahotsav Parv to collate the stories of BJP and Jana Sangh karyakartas. The Prime Minister also asked them to get every member on the voter page to participate in the party's micro donation campaign to build the organisation and fight against malnutrition from the booth level. In his opening remarks, Modi reminded the party workers that January 25 is National Voters' Day. Pointing out that India's Election Com-

mission, which was established in 1951 to ensure free and fair polls, has become a model for other democratic nations, he said the voter turnout has over the years gone up from 45% in the first election to just 67% (in 2019). "All of you, in fact every party should think why the voter turnout is so low. Why the urban people who are active on social media do not come out and vote. It should be changed," he said. "Can we take a pledge that our panna pramukhs will see that in this 75th year of Independence, there is 75% voter turnout in their booth." He, however, expressed happiness that youths see the "inked finger" as a "cool statement or fashion statement" when voting takes place in their localities. The Prime Minister also called to keep alive the debate on One Nation, One Election as well as One Nation, One Voter List. "The discourse should continue, then only some outcome would be there. We all know how frequent elections affect works." Modi has been emphasising the idea of a single election since he came into power in 2014.

939 POLICE MEDALS INCLUDING 189 FOR GALLANTRY AWARDED ON REPUBLIC DAY EVE

A total of 939 service medals, including 189 for gallantry, was announced by the Union government on Tuesday for personnel of various central and state police forces on the eve of Republic Day. The Union home ministry published a list containing names of personnel who have been decorated with the police medal for gallantry, president's police medal for distinguished service and police medal for meritorious service.

Among the 189 gallantry awards, 134 personnel are being awarded for their gallant action in the Jammu and Kashmir region, 47 for their bravery in Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected areas and one personnel for similar conduct in the north-east region, a home ministry spokesperson said.

The highest number of bravery medals, 115, have been awarded to the Jammu and Kashmir Police, followed by 30 to the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), 10 to the Chhattisgarh Police, nine to the Odisha Police, seven to the Maharashtra Police, three each to the Indo-Ti-



betan Border Police (ITBP) and the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), and two to the Border Security Force (BSF), among others. Eighty-eight personnel have been awarded the distinguished service medal while 662 have been given the meritorious service medal.

Institute gross economic mismanagement index: Congress to Centre



The Congress on Monday hit out at the central government over its management of the economy in the wake of reports that the annual income of the poorest 20% of Indian households plunged 53% in 2020-21 from their levels in 2015-16, and demanded that a "gross economic mismanagement index" be instituted now.

The Congress said the Government must not live in denial and accept that inequality is growing and there is a huge income disparity problem that the country is facing. It said the Union Budget should only

focus on tackling the growing income disparity between the rich and the poor.

A survey conducted by a Mumbai-based think tank People's Research on India's Consumer Economy (PRICE) showed that the annual income of the poorest 20% of Indian households, constantly rising since 1995, plunged 53% in the pandemic year 2020-21 from their levels in 2015-16. And in the same five-year period, the richest 20% saw their annual household income grow 39% reflecting the sharp contrast Covid's economic impact has had on the bottom of the pyramid and the top. "The entire country bore the brunt of Covid pandemic but the poor and the middle class are victims of the Modi government's economic epidemic. The credit for widening the chasm between the rich and the poor goes to the central government," senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi tweeted. Addressing a press conference, Congress spokesperson Supriya Srinate said the Oxfam report and PRICE's ICE360 Survey 2021 show that the deep fissures between the rich and the poor in the country are rapidly widening. "Broadly speaking, 60 percent of India today is earning less than what it was earning five years ago. And survey after another is showing this. So, there must be some truth in how the income divide is widening," she said.

INDIA REPORTS LESS THAN 3 LAKH COVID CASES, 614 DEATHS IN LAST 24 HOURS; POSITIVITY RATE DIPS TO 15.52%

India on Tuesday reported 2,55,874 new COVID cases recorded in the last 24 hours, 50,190 less than yesterday, taking the daily positivity rate down to 15.52 per cent, the Union Health Ministry informed. With this, the active caseload stands at 22,36,842, while the weekly positivity rate is at 17.17 per cent. As many as 2,67,753 recoveries have also been reported in the last 24 hours. With the Covid recovery rate at 93.15 per cent, the cumulative recoveries from the virus across the country stand at 3,70,71,898.

The Ministry also reported 614 COVID deaths in the last 24 hours.

Notably, 16,49,108 tests were conducted in the last 24 hours; 1,74,355 more than on Monday.

Meanwhile, in the ongoing COVID-19 vaccination drive, 162.92 crore vaccine doses have been administered so far.

India's COVID-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 2020, 30 lakh on August 23, 40 lakh on September 5 and 50 lakh on September 16. It went past 60 lakh on September 28, 70 lakh on October 11, crossed 80 lakh on October 29, 90 lakh on November 20 and surpassed the one-crore mark on December 19. India crossed the grim milestone of two crore on May 4 and three crore on June 23. The 614 new fatalities include 13 from Kerala and 36 from Maharashtra. A total of 4,90,462 deaths have been reported so far in the country including 1,42,151 from Maharashtra, 51,987 from Kerala, 38,614 from Karnataka, 37,264 from Tamil Nadu, 25,650 from Delhi, 23,073 from Uttar Pradesh and 20,375 from West Bengal. The ministry stressed that more than 70 per cent of the deaths occurred due to comorbidities. "Our figures are being reconciled with the Indian Council of Medical Research," the ministry said on its website, adding that state-wise distribution of figures is subject to further verification and reconciliation.



PUNJAB SCHOOL SCORECARD: AAP, CONGRESS FIGHT OVER 'BEST' MODEL



In a recent interview, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convener and Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal claimed that a Dalit voter in Punjab had come to him and said he would vote for AAP. "I asked him, why not [Punjab CM] Charanjit Singh Channi who is claiming to be the messiah of Dalits. He said AAP has transformed government schools in Delhi and it is only education that can change the lives of people," he said, making an appeal to vote for AAP if voters "want state-of-art government schools in Punjab like in Delhi." In a state where panth and religion have long dictated electoral politics, education has emerged as one of the core issues with the AAP and Congress, the two main contenders in the fray, indulging in politicking, discussions and debates. There has even been a Twitter war between the education ministers of Punjab and Delhi — led by Congress and AAP governments, respectively — eventually forcing other parties to specify their roadmap for school and higher education. The political one-upmanship began early last year when, in the run-up to the elections, the state was declared the top performer in the Performance Grading Index (PGI) 2019-20, released by the Union Ministry of Education. While the Punjab government then led by Captain Amarinder Singh went all out to take credit for the ranking, Delhi Education Minister Manish Sisodia suggested that it was rigged, saying Punjab's top rank was the result of "the blessings Modiji has showered on Captain Amarinder Singh". He added, "Strangely enough, this report has been released at a time when people have been raising questions regarding the performance and inadequacies of the Punjab government in education."

'PM HAS RIGHT TO GIVE A MESSAGE': KERALA HC REJECTS APPEAL CHALLENGING MODI'S PHOTO ON VACCINE CERTIFICATE

A division bench of Kerala High Court on Tuesday rejected an appeal against the single bench dismissal of a plea challenging the use of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's photograph on Covid-19 vaccination certificates. The single bench had last month slapped a fine of Rs 1 lakh on the petitioner, Peter Myaliparambil, an RTI activist.

Rejecting the appeal, the division bench of Chief Justice S. Manikumar and Justice Shaji P. Chaly said the photograph of the PM is not an advertisement. The court observed that "the Prime Minister has a right to give a message. Right to vote cannot be linked to it."

Earlier, the single bench of PV Kunhikrishnan had observed that "it is the duty of the citizens to respect the Prime Minister of India, and of course, they can differ on the policies of the Government and even the political stand of the Prime Minister. They can address the citizens saying that what the Government under the leadership of the Prime Minister is doing is not for the welfare of the citizens. But the citizens need not be ashamed to carry a vaccination certificate with the photograph of the Prime Minister with a morale-boosting message, especially in this pandemic situation. There is no infringement of a fundamental right or any other right like compelled viewing, etc in such a situation as alleged by the petitioner," said the court.

FRESH SPELL OF SNOWFALL LASHES SHIMLA; TEMPERATURE DROPS TO BELOW FREEZING POINT



Several roads, including four national highways in Himachal Pradesh's Shimla have been closed, while power and water supply has been disrupted after heavy snowfall lashed the town.

Giving out information regarding disruptions, the State Disaster Management Authority in its press note informed, "Due to heavy snowfall, 731 roads including four National Highways closed, 1365 power supply schemes disrupted, 102 water supply schemes disrupted and 3220 electricity supply schemes were disrupted, out of which 1,955 have been restored."

The India Meteorological Department today informed that very dense fog was reported at isolated places including the Kalpa area of Himachal Pradesh where the visibility dipped down to 50 metres.

The Regional Meteorological Centre in Shimla said the temperature in the city dropped down to minus one degrees Celsius.

SC CONCERNED OVER DETERIORATING QUALITY OF LAW EDUCATION IN COUNTRY

NEW DELHI, (IANS) The Supreme Court on Tuesday expressed concern over deteriorating quality of law education in the country and emphasised quality checks are must to restrict entry of people in the profession. The top court was hearing a plea by Bar Council of India (BCI) challenging the Gujarat High Court judgment, which allowed persons with other employment, either full-time or part-time, to enrol as advocates without leaving their jobs. A bench comprising Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul and M.M. Sundresh observed that the system can be improved at the entry level and it is the responsibility of the BCI to hold proper exams. It emphasised stringent checks on law schools and that at the entry level, more serious criteria is important. Counsel, appearing as amicus curiae in the matter, suggested working out a mechanism, where people coming from employment are not enrolled and given the certificate at the outset, but rather put on a register qualifying them to write the examination and based on the result, the enrolment would follow. Counsel added that the person might be permitted to enrol with the Bar, after they qualify the written examination followed by a rigorous viva. The bench noted that it might not be proper to permit enrolment while a person still holds on to their existing employment. It further pointed out that when a professional enrolled with the Bar leaves the legal profession, they do not surrender their enrolment certificate, which is something the BCI should also regulate.



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DO NOT ASSUME COVID PANDEMIC REACHING 'END GAME', WARNS WHO



The World Health Organization's director-general on Monday warned that conditions remain ideal for more coronavirus variants to emerge and it's dangerous to assume omicron is the last one or that "we are in the endgame." But Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said the acute phase of the pandemic could still end this year if some key targets are met. Tedros laid out an array of achievements and concerns in global health over issues like reducing tobacco use, fighting resistance to anti-microbial treatments, and risks of climate change on human health. But he said "ending the acute phase of the pandemic must remain our collective priority." "There are different scenarios for how the pandemic could play out and how the acute phase could end. But it's dangerous to assume that omicron will be the last variant or that we are in the endgame," Tedros told the start of a WHO executive board meeting this week. "On the contrary, globally, the conditions are ideal for more variants to emerge." But he insisted that "we can end COVID-19 as a global health emergency, and we can do it this year," by reaching goals like WHO's target to vaccinate 70 percent of the population of each country by the middle of this year, with a focus on people who are at the highest risk of COVID-19, and improving testing and sequencing rates to track the virus and its emerging variants more closely. Omicron is less likely to cause severe illness than the previous delta variant, according to studies. Omicron spreads even more easily than other coronavirus strains, and has already become dominant in many countries. It also more easily infects those who have been vaccinated or had previously been infected by prior versions of the virus.

NADELLA RANKED NO 1 AMONG CEOS IN BRAND FINANCE LIST, WOMEN CEOS LOSE, TECH, TIKTOK AND CHINA SURGE

CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

The top 10 of the Brand Finance ranking is dominated by CEOs (referred to repeatedly as brand guardians) from the tech and media sectors.

Tech boasts six of the top ten - Tim Cook is in second place, having overseen Apple become the first to hit a \$3 trillion market valuation. Cook is followed by CEOs of household tech names: Tencent's Huateng Ma at 4, Pichai at 5, and Netflix's Reed Hastings at 7.

AMD CEO Lisa Su is a new entrant at 10. This makes her the highest-ranked female. She newly qualifies for the ranking as AMD has propelled into the Brand Finance Global 500 2022 after a 122 per cent brand value growth over the past year.

Su steered AMD through a global chip shortage during the pandemic and came out the other side boasting record revenues. Her leadership of a tech company is unfortunately a rarity, with most being run by males. This is reflected in the ranking, as the rise in the number of tech brands has come hand in hand with a decrease in the number of female CEOs in the top 100 - from eight in 2021 to five this year.

At a country level, the index mirrors the Brand Finance Global 500 2022 ranking, with the US and China leading the way. There are 101 CEOs from the US, which represents 40 per cent of the index, and 47 from China, which represents 19 per cent. Brand guardians from these two countries head up a number of key sectors: Jianjun Wei of Great Wall in Automobiles at 3, Patricia Griffith of Progressive Insurance at 11, Xiongjun Ding of Moutai Spirits at 12, and Baoan Xin of State Grid Utilities at 13.

Among the Americans, Brian Moynihan of Bank of America is at 16, Ramon Laguarta of Pepsi at 17, Andy Jassy of Amazon is at 23. The highest-ranked CEO outside of the US and China monopoly is ADNOC brand guardian Sultan Al Jaber at 15. He is also the top-scoring leader in the oil and gas sector. Aside from ADNOC, Sultan holds senior positions in the UAE government, and in promoting the diversification and growth of the UAE economy. CEOs of the three UAE brands from the Brand Finance Global 500 2022 ranking all feature and record higher scores than last year, with Sheikh Ahmed Bin Saeed Al Maktoum of Emirates at 34th and Etisalat's Hatem Dowidar at 79.



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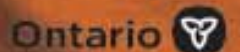
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MARKHAM LOCATION

*All Sale Items For Markham Store Only

SUNNY FOODMART 陽光超級市場

FLYER PRICES EFFECTIVE: Jan.28 (Fri.) - Feb.03 (Thur.) 2022

PRODUCE

Fresh Chinese Broccoli 新鮮芥蘭 Reg: \$1.99 Save: \$0.72 \$1.27 lb	Fresh Watercress 新鮮西洋菜 Reg: \$1.59/bunch 2 FOR \$1.97	Fresh Green Leaf Lettuce 新鮮時菜 Reg: \$1.99/bunch 2 FOR \$2.50
Fresh Turkey Pomegranate 新鮮土耳其石榴 Reg: \$2.99 Save: \$1.02 \$1.97 ea	Fresh Thai Young Coconut 新鮮泰國椰子 Reg: \$3.99 Save: \$1.02 \$2.97 ea	Fresh Honey Pomelo (White) 新鮮蜜柚 (白肉) Reg: \$5.99 Save: \$1.02 \$4.97 ea

MEAT

Fresh Whole Chicken (No Cut, No Clean) 新鮮雞 Reg: \$2.99 Save: \$0.72 \$1.77 lb	Fresh Beef Hind Shank 新鮮牛腩 Reg: \$3.99 Save: \$0.50 \$3.49 lb	Fresh Boneless Chicken Breast 新鮮無骨雞胸肉 Reg: \$4.99 Save: \$1.00 \$3.99 lb
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KITCHEN

Stir Fried Mixed Vegetable 炒什菜 Reg: \$9.99 Save: \$3.01 \$6.98 order	Sesame Chicken 芝麻雞 Reg: \$10.99 Save: \$3.01 \$7.98 order	Teriyaki Chicken 日式照燒雞 Reg: \$10.99 Save: \$3.01 \$7.98 order	Deep Fried Shrimp With Salt & Pepper 椒鹽蝦 Reg: \$13.99 Save: \$5.01 \$8.98 order	Bourbon Chicken 紅燒雞 Reg: \$15.99 Save: \$5.01 \$10.98 order
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SUPER DEAL

Seven Baskets Frozen Pompano Reg: \$5.99 Save: \$2.02 \$3.97 lb	Al Saha Halal Uncooked Chicken Burgers Reg: \$11.99 Save: \$6.02 \$5.97 ea	Sunthal Seafood Easy Peel Raw White Shrimp 26/30 Net 400g Reg: \$9.99 Save: \$3.02 \$6.97 ea
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GROCERY

Maggi Authentic Masala Spicy Indian Noodles 70g Reg: \$0.49/ea Save: \$0.96 4 FOR \$1.00	Sunati Snacks Series 300-34g Reg: \$2.99 Save: \$0.72 \$2.27 ea	Deli Be Baked Delight Milk Rusk 600g Reg: \$3.99 Save: \$1.02 \$2.97 ea	Punjabi King Sanson Ka Saag 850g Reg: \$3.99 Save: \$1.02 \$2.97 ea	Haldiram Indian Sweets Agra (1) Petha 600g Reg: \$3.99 Save: \$1.02 \$2.97 ea
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Seafood Season Tilapia Fish (Gutted & Scaled) 1-14kg Reg: \$8.99 Save: \$2.02 \$6.97 ea	Deep Family Value Tandoori Naan 16pcs Reg: \$14.99 Save: \$6.02 \$8.97 ea	Dairy Pure Best Cheese 16kg Reg: \$29.99 Save: \$10.02 \$19.97 ea
Truitti Dry Roasted Peanuts Salted 1lb Reg: \$4.99 Save: \$1.02 \$3.97 ea	Eagle Chickpeas 4Lb Reg: \$6.99 Save: \$2.02 \$4.97 ea	Meharban Pitted Deglet Nour Dates 680g Reg: \$7.99 Save: \$2.02 \$5.97 ea

FROZEN

Halal Veal With Bone Reg: \$4.99 Save: \$1.02 \$3.97 lb	Halal Boneless Chicken Breast Reg: \$5.99 Save: \$1.02 \$4.97 lb	Halal Frozen Baby Goat Shoulder Reg: \$7.99 Save: \$1.00 \$6.99 lb	Halal Frozen Baby Goat Leg Reg: \$9.99 Save: \$1.00 \$8.99 lb
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BAKERY

Crispy Roti 15pcs Reg: \$3.49	Taza Cake Rusk 750g Reg: \$3.99 Save: \$0.72 \$2.77 pk	Save: \$1.02 \$2.97 pk
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Breyers Family Classic Ice Cream 1.6L Reg: \$3.99 Save: \$1.02 \$2.97 ea	Desi's Choice Kulfi Ice Cream 6 Sticks Reg: \$5.99 Save: \$2.02 \$3.97 ea	Cavendish Potato Patties (Hashbrown) 600g Reg: \$3.99 Save: \$1.02 \$2.97 ea	Golden Harvest Aloo / Dahi Puri 10pcs Reg: \$3.99 Save: \$1.02 \$2.97 ea	Apna Taste Samosa Chicken 10pcs Reg: \$5.99 Save: \$2.02 \$3.97 ea	Oneworld Halal Beef Patties 1.7kg 8pcs Reg: \$12.99 Save: \$5.02 \$7.97 ea
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DAIRY

Mohana Dahi Yogurt 750g Reg: \$3.99 Save: \$1.02 \$2.97 ea	Fontaine Sante Hummus 170g Reg: \$4.99 Save: \$2.02 \$2.97 ea	Oasis 100% Premium Orange Juice 1L Reg: \$3.99 Save: \$1.02 \$2.97 ea	Gold Egg Omega-3 Large White Eggs 30pcs Reg: \$5.99 Save: \$2.02 \$3.97 ea	Harvest Creek Hard Chicken Sausages 650g Reg: \$5.99 Save: \$3.02 \$2.97 ea	Logo Yogurt Drink 6*90ml Reg: \$3.99 Save: \$2.02 \$1.97 ea
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ETOBICOKE LOCATION

*All Sale Items For Etobicoke Store Only

SUNNY FOODMART 陽光超級市場

FLYER PRICES EFFECTIVE: Jan. 28 (Fri.) - Feb. 03 (Thur.) 2022

Fresh Atlantic Salmon (Whole) 4.16 Reg: \$12.99 Save: \$3.02 \$9.97 lb	Al Saha Halal Uncooked Chicken Burgers 500-1000g Reg: \$11.99 Save: \$6.02 \$5.97 ea	Old Jamaica Onnet Beer 155ml Reg: \$1.99 Save: \$1.02 \$0.97 ea	Grainy Peanut Punch 240ml Reg: \$1.99 Save: \$1.02 \$0.97 ea
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FROZEN

Chopped Chicken 300g Reg: \$4.99 Save: \$1.02 \$3.97 ea	Krisco Filet Steaks 650g Reg: \$4.99 Save: \$1.02 \$3.97 ea	Cedar Waterfowl Shredded Dough 450g Reg: \$2.99 Save: \$1.02 \$1.97 ea	841 Bread 800g Reg: \$2.99 Save: \$1.02 \$1.97 ea
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PRODUCE

Fresh Cavendish Reg: \$1.29 Save: \$0.52 77¢ lb	Fresh Thai Young Coconut Reg: \$3.99 Save: \$1.02 \$2.97 ea	Fresh Honey Pomelo (White) Reg: \$5.99 Save: \$1.02 \$4.97 ea
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MEAT

Fresh Whole Chicken (No Cut, No Clean) Reg: \$2.99 Save: \$0.72 \$1.77 lb	Fresh Beef Hind Shank Reg: \$3.99 Save: \$0.50 \$3.49 lb	Fresh Boneless Chicken Breast Reg: \$4.99 Save: \$1.00 \$3.99 lb
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GROCERY

King of Fruit Hibiscus Beverage 500ml Reg: \$1.59 Save: \$0.62 97¢ ea	Hereford Vienna Sausages 320g Reg: \$1.59 Save: \$0.62 97¢ ea	Parle-G Original Gluco-Biscuits 150g Reg: \$1.59 Save: \$0.62 97¢ ea	Pearl Coconut Milk 1L Reg: \$1.99 Save: \$0.72 \$1.27 ea	Cedar Chick Peas 500g Reg: \$1.99 Save: \$0.72 \$1.27 ea
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DAIRY

Harvest Milkshake 330ml Reg: \$2.99 Save: \$1.02 \$1.97 ea	Seven Baskets Delectable White Shrimp 100g Reg: \$4.99 Save: \$1.02 \$3.97 ea	Dairy Sweetened Condensed Milk 400g Reg: \$2.99 Save: \$1.02 \$1.97 ea	400% Protein Milk 400g Reg: \$2.99 Save: \$1.02 \$1.97 ea	Imperial Margarine 250g Reg: \$2.99 Save: \$1.02 \$1.97 ea
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