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Y MEDIA POLITICAL SENSEX: INDIAN ELECTIONS, 2022

BJP'S ADITI SINGH DEFEATS SP'S RAM PRATAP YADAV FROM RAE BARELI

AAP'S ANMOL GAGAN MAAN WINS BY HUGE MARGIN IN KHARAR

AAP'S KUNWAR VIJAY PRATAP SINGH WINS IN AMRITSAR NORTH

AAP'S JEEVAN JYOT KAUR DEFEATS NAVJOT SIDHU, BIKRAM MAJITHIA IN AMRITSAR EAST

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Y MEDIA EXCLUSIVE

'PIERRE POILIEVRE DEFENDED BARBARIC CULTURAL PRACTICES & NIQAB BAN AT CITIZENSHIP CEREMONIES': MAYOR BROWN

POOJA LUTHRA

In an exclusive interview with Yudhvir Jaswal, Y Media Group Editor and CEO, Brampton mayor Patrick Brown openly discusses his new journey towards Federal Conservative leadership, attacks his contender, Pierre Poilievre, over the 2015 niqab ban bill, criticizes PM Trudeau and Canada's immigration system. Read on.

Yudhvir Jaswal: What prompted you to jump at the Federal Conservative leadership race?

Mayor Patrick Brown: I'm not happy with the same old broken approach by the Federal Conservative Party. I don't believe that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is doing an excellent job for Canada as life is becoming more unaffordable. Canada's falling further behind. Moreover, the Conservative Party has lost their way. I have always taken issues up that I'm passionate about, like stopping Bill 21 in Quebec and fighting for religious freedom. I'm tired of seeing Canada's opposition sit silently in the face of discrimination. As mayor of Brampton, I have gone across the country soliciting support from other Canadian cities to fight against this discriminatory bill. Now that there's an opening on the federal level, I can't just sit on the sidelines.

I want to make sure that Canada values inclusion. .

I CONTD. ON PAGE 11

Y MEDIA EXCLUSIVE

'PATRICK BROWN IS LYING IN HIS ATTACKS ON NIQAB BAN': PIERRE POILIEVRE

POOJA LUTHRA

Pierre Poilievre, Federal Conservative leadership candidate, in an exclusive interview with Yudhvir Jaswal, Y Media Group Editor and CEO, calls Brampton mayor Patrick Brown 'a liar', explains his plans for immigration and integration and comments on foreign policy. Read on.

Yudhvir Jaswal: Brampton mayor and Federal Conservative leadership candidate, Patrick Brown, alleged you'd been complicit with the 2015 niqab ban bill. What's your take on that?

Pierre Poilievre: Patrick Brown has published several lies. First of all, he claimed there was a niqab ban, which is a lie. There was no niqab ban. I would never support that, nor did Mr. Harper. Mr. Harper proposed that a person's face be visible while giving oaths at citizenship ceremonies. I always stand for equality and am in favour of immigration. I have even announced a policy to help immigrants gain jobs in the professions and trades they were trained for. This plan incentivizes provinces to require occupational licensing bodies to decide on an immigrant's application within 60 days of receiving their paperwork, rather than forcing them to wait for months. Throughout the campaign, I'll be coming up with other proposals that will help us go from the credit card economy that we have today to a paycheck economy in the future.

I CONTD. ON PAGE 11

AAP SWEEPS PUNJAB WITH THREE-FOURTHS MAJORITY; BJP WINS MAJORITY IN UTTAR PRADESH, MANIPUR, UTTARAKHAND.

I DETAILED ELECTION COVERAGE ON PAGES 3 & 4

Y MEDIA EXCLUSIVE: MINISTER NG COMMITS 'TO FURTHER STRENGTHENING CANADA-INDIA BILATERAL COMMERCIAL RELATIONS'

India and Canada have agreed to formally re-launch the negotiations for a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA). Both the countries might also consider entering into an 'Early Progress Trade Agreement.' The development comes after India and Canada held the fifth Ministerial Dialogue on Trade & Investment (MDTI) here on Friday.

I CONTD. ON PAGE 5

5 INDIAN STUDENTS KILLED IN ONTARIO'S HIGHWAY 401 CRASH

Five Indian students in Canada have been killed in a highway collision in Canada's Ontario province. The five were killed when their van collided with a tractor-trailer on Canada's Highway 401 between Belleville and Trenton early Saturday morning. Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) have identified them as Jaspinder Singh, 21, Karanpal Singh, 22, Mohit Chouhan, 23, Pawan Kumar, 23, and Harpreet Singh, 24.

I CONTD. ON PAGE 11

PFIZER CEO SAYS FOURTH COVID-19 SHOT IS 'NECESSARY'

Pfizer plans to submit data to the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on a fourth Covid shot soon, CEO Albert Bourla has said. The US drugmaker is also working on a vaccine that protects against all coronavirus variants, Bourla told CNBC. "I think we're going to submit to FDA a significant progress of data about the need for a fourth dose, and they need to make their own conclusions, of course, and then CDC also.

I CONTD. ON PAGE 9

THE BIRTH OF A NEW MONETARY WORLD ORDER AS RUSSIA REELS UNDER SANCTIONS

As US President Joe Biden unveiled new sanctions on Friday against Russia, he made it clear that the totality of the sanctions and export controls is "crushing the Russian economy". "The ruble has lost more than half its value.

I CONTD. ON PAGE 14

ONTARIO GOVERNMENT CONFIRMS RYERSON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE IN BRAMPTON

Province invests in major expansion to medical school education and enrolment. Today the Ontario government announced it will be moving forward with Ryerson University's school of medicine in Brampton. The province also announced a commitment to expand the number of medical school seats available to students. Ryerson will receive 80 undergraduate seats and 95 postgraduate seats.

I CONTD. ON PAGE10

INTERNATIONAL KABADDI PLAYER, SANDEEP SINGH, SHOT DEAD IN PUNJAB

International kabaddi player Sandeep Singh from Nangal Ambiyan village was shot dead by assailants during a match at Malian village in Jalandhar district on Monday. At least 20 bullets were pumped into his head and chest. The disturbing video of the crime went viral.

I CONTD. ON PAGE 13

IS SIDHU, ONCE A CM ASPIRANT, BOWLED OUT FROM POLITICS?

Congress state unit President Navjot Singh Sidhu, once a Chief Minister aspirant in Punjab, was bowled out from the politics, for the time being, with his humiliating defeat from his stronghold Amritsar (East) seat in Punjab. He was locked in a high-profile contest with Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) leader Bikram Singh Majithia but faced defeat from the hands of AAP greenhorn candidate Jeevanjyot Kaur, who defeated him by a margin of 6,750 votes.

I CONTD. ON PAGE 13

CIRCULATED THROUGH : TORONTO, MARKHAM, SCARBOROUGH, RICHMOND HILL, VAUGHAN, WOODBRIDGE, ETOBICOKE, NORTH YORK, MALTON, REXDALE, BRAMPTON, MISSISSAUGA, OAKVILLE, HAMILTON, MILTON, STONEY CREEK, BURLINGTON

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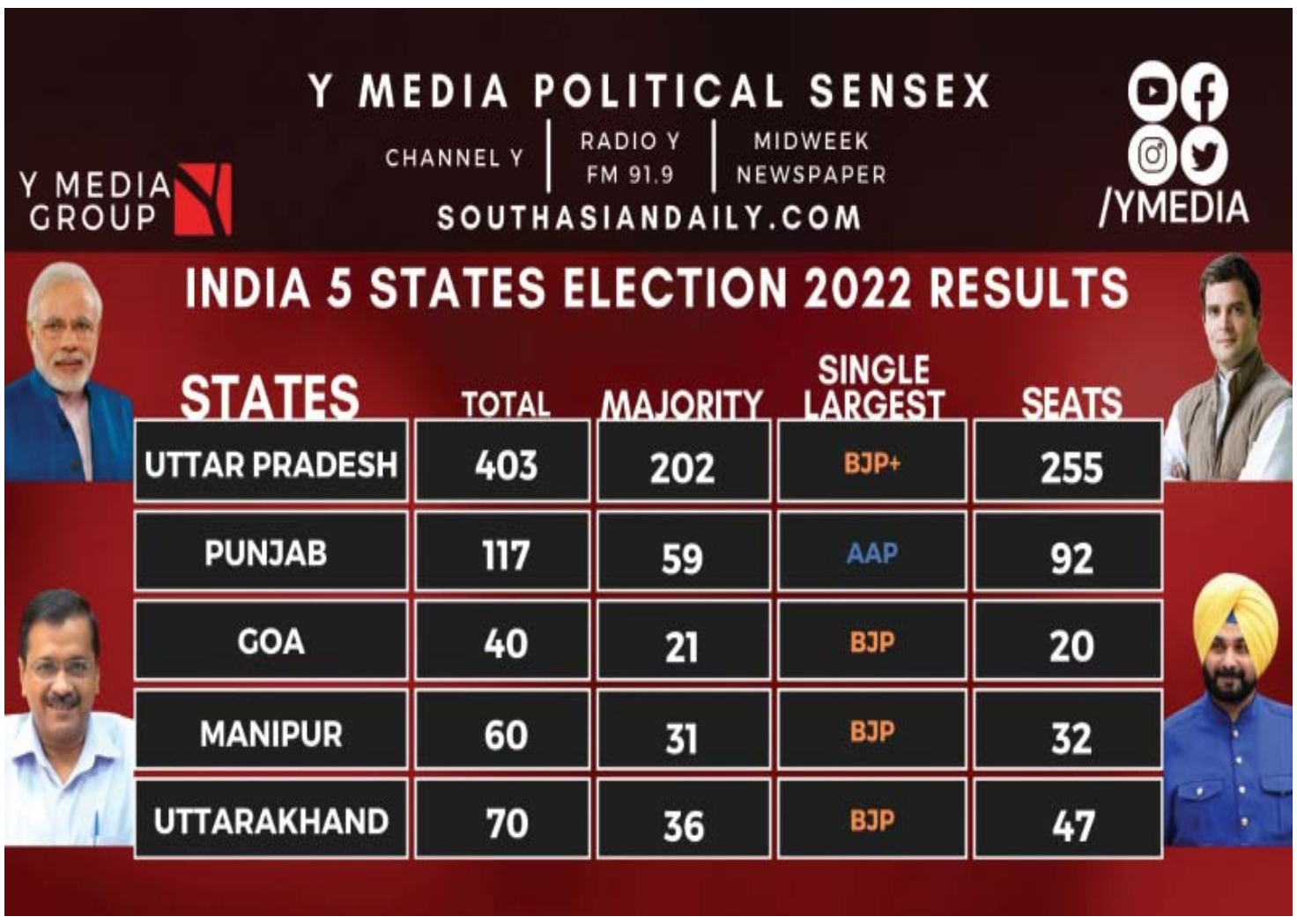
Y MEDIA POLITICAL SENSEX: 5 STATES ELECTION RESULTS, 2022



STATES	TOTAL	MAJORITY	SINGLE LARGEST	SEATS
UTTAR PRADESH	403	202	BJP+	255
PUNJAB	117	59	AAP	92
GOA	40	21	BJP	20
MANIPUR	60	31	BJP	32
UTTARAKHAND	70	36	BJP	47

BJP SET TO RETAIN POWER IN UP, UTTARAKHAND, GOA &MANIPUR; AAP SWEEPS PUNJAB

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is all set to retain power in Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Goa and Manipur while the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) secured a landslide victory in Punjab. The AAP is the first regional party which will form a government in another state apart from New Delhi. According to the Election Commission's counting update at 8 p.m., the ruling party BJP has won 171 seats in Uttar Pradesh and is leading in 82 Assembly constituencies, while the Samajwadi Party (SP) has won 63 seats and is leading in 50 constituencies. Rashtriya Lok Dal, which contested the Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections in alliance with the SP, has won seven seats so far and is leading in one constituency, whereas the BJP's ally Apana Dal (Sonelal) has won six seats and is leading in five constituencies.

The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) is limited to just one seat from where it is leading so far. The Congress has won only two seats while the Jansatta Dal (Loktantrik) has managed two seats in Uttar Pradesh. The state-level Nishad Party (Nirbal Indian ShoshitHamara Aam Dal) won two seats and is leading in five constituencies, whereas another local party, SuheldevBharatiya Samaj Party, won two seats and is leading in four constituencies. In Uttarakhand, the BJP has won 40 seats and is leading in seven others, while the Congress has managed only 16 seats and is leading in three constituencies. The BSP won a single seat in the state and leads in one constituency, whereas one Independent candidate has won and another is leading in Uttarakhand till 8 p.m. The final election tally of Punjab has come and the AAP has secured a landslide victory with a thumping majority of 92 seats. The BJP has won just two seats, Congress 18, BSP one, Shiromani Akali Dal three while one seat went to an Independent candidate. In Goa, the ruling BJP is short of the majority mark by just one seat as it bagged 20 seats in the 40-member Assembly. The Congress has been confined to 11 seats, AAP won two seats, Goa Forward Party one, MaharashtrawadiGomantak Party two, Revolutionary Goans Party won one, while three seats were won by Independent candidates. In the 60-member Manipur Assembly, the ruling BJP retained power by winning 32 seats, while the Congress could bag only five seats. Surprisingly, the Janata Dal(United) won six seats in Manipur, whereas the Kuki People's Alliance won two, Naga People's Front five, National People's Party six and three seats went to Independent candidates.

THE 'RISE AND RISE' OF AAP IN PUNJAB

Two former Chief Ministers Parkash Singh Badal and CaptAmarinder Singh along with incumbent CM Charanjit Singh Channi and several other heavyweights of the Punjab politics, unbudgeable for decades, were trampled under the winning chariot of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). It was not just a simple victory. In fact, the AAP trounced the 2022 Assembly polls this time by winning over 90 seats in the 117-seat Punjab Assembly. It is the first time that the party has expanded its political footprint beyond Delhi.

But how was a 9-year-old party able to achieve this momentous feat?

After the AAP formed a government in the national capital for just 49-days in December 2013, it immediately caught the national attention. The party's image was carried by the image of its national convener Arvind Kejriwal, an anti corruption crusader at that time.

Not even one month had passed, the AAP, portraying a clean image, started reaching out to the people out of Delhi.

It was then in January, 2014, a senior advocate of Delhi High Court, known for spearheading the legal battle to gain justice for the victims of 1984 anti-Sikh riots -- HS Phoolka -- joined the Aam Aadmi Party. However, in 2019, he quit the party. Two months later, in March 2014, comedian-turned-politician Bhagwant Mann also joined the party factions. It was Mann who completely turned the tables for the party.

AFTER THE FALL: IS IT THE END OF THE ROAD FOR CONGRESS, OR THE TIME TO RESURRECT?

The Assembly elections in the five states had one stunning outcome: the irretrievable downslide of the Congress. Sonia Gandhi and her two babies -- Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra -- need to comprehend the people's verdict and the moral of the story: It is the end of the road for them if they don't accept reality.

Out of the 690 seats whose fate was decided in the five states, the Congress could manage to win only 55. State-wise, of the 403 seats in Uttar Pradesh, Congress got two; in Punjab, where it was in the power, it won 18 out of 117; in Goa's 40-seater Assembly, Congress managed 11; out of Manipur's 60 seats, it had to be content with just five; and in Uttarakhand, it could manage only 19 out of 70.

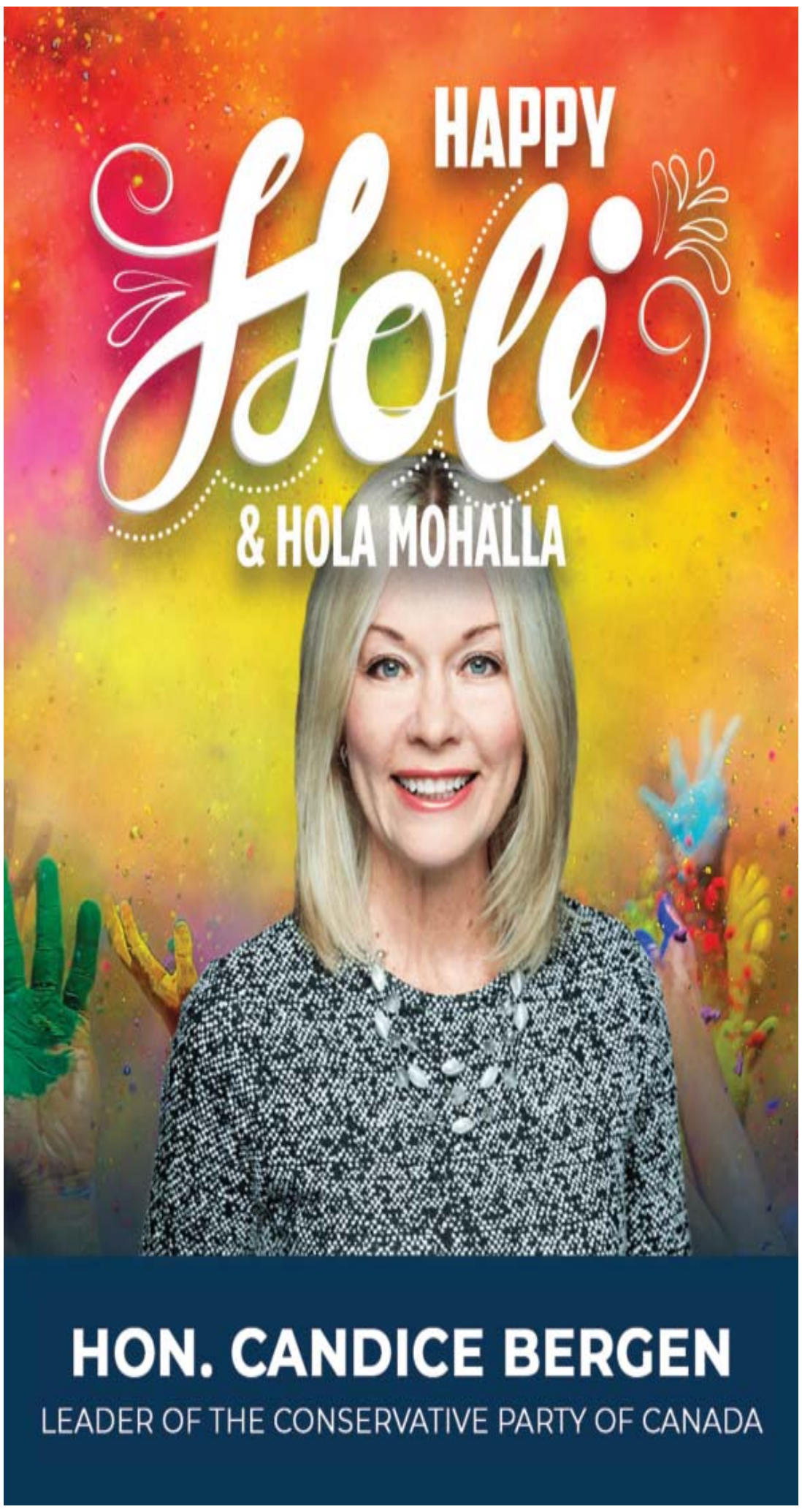
On the vote share front, too, the share of the Congress is drastically down. In Uttar Pradesh, the Congress vote percentage is a dismal 2.33 against the BJP's 41.29; Manipur has given only 16.83 per cent to the Congress and 37.83 per cent to the BJP; in Goa, the Congress got 23.46 per cent and the BJP 33.31 per cent; in Punjab the Congress managed 22.98 per cent and the BJP 6.60 per cent. The only saving grace for the Congress is Uttarakhand, where it notched up a decent share of 37.91 per cent, against the BJP's 44.33 per cent.

These figures clearly show the state the Congress is in today and exposes the distrust and displeasure of the masses with the three. Talk to any random person on the road, Rahul Gandhi's name evokes dismissive laughter; worse, his actions and statements are perceived to be not serious. For many, he is a joker who is helping the BJP to create perceptions. His younger sister, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, who was projected as the harbinger of a change in the difficult political terrain of Uttar Pradesh, has been rejected by the people of the state. The people valued Akhilesh Yadav more than her and gave him more seats and votes. The statistics clearly show that the people in Uttar Pradesh have more faith in Akhilesh than Priyanka.

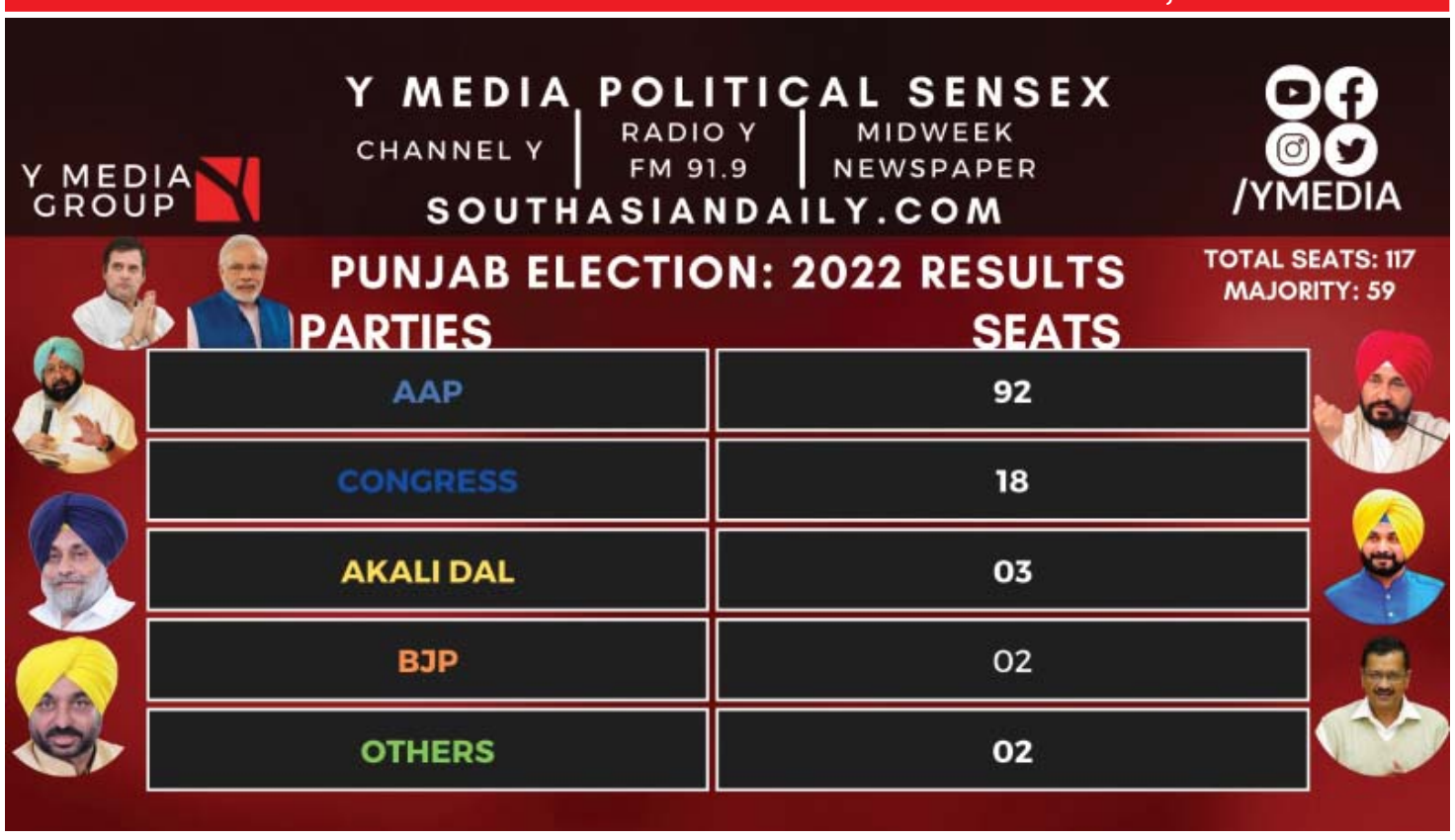
PARTIES	SEATS
BJP+	47
CONGRESS	19
BSP	02
OTHERS	02

PARTIES	SEATS
BJP	255
SP	111
CONGRESS	02
BSP	01
OTHERS	34

PARTIES	SEATS
BJP	20
CONGRESS	11
TMC	02
AAP	02
OTHERS	05



Y MEDIA POLITICAL SENSEX: 5 STATES ELECTION RESULTS, 2022



Uphill task for AAP to fulfill whopping promises in Punjab

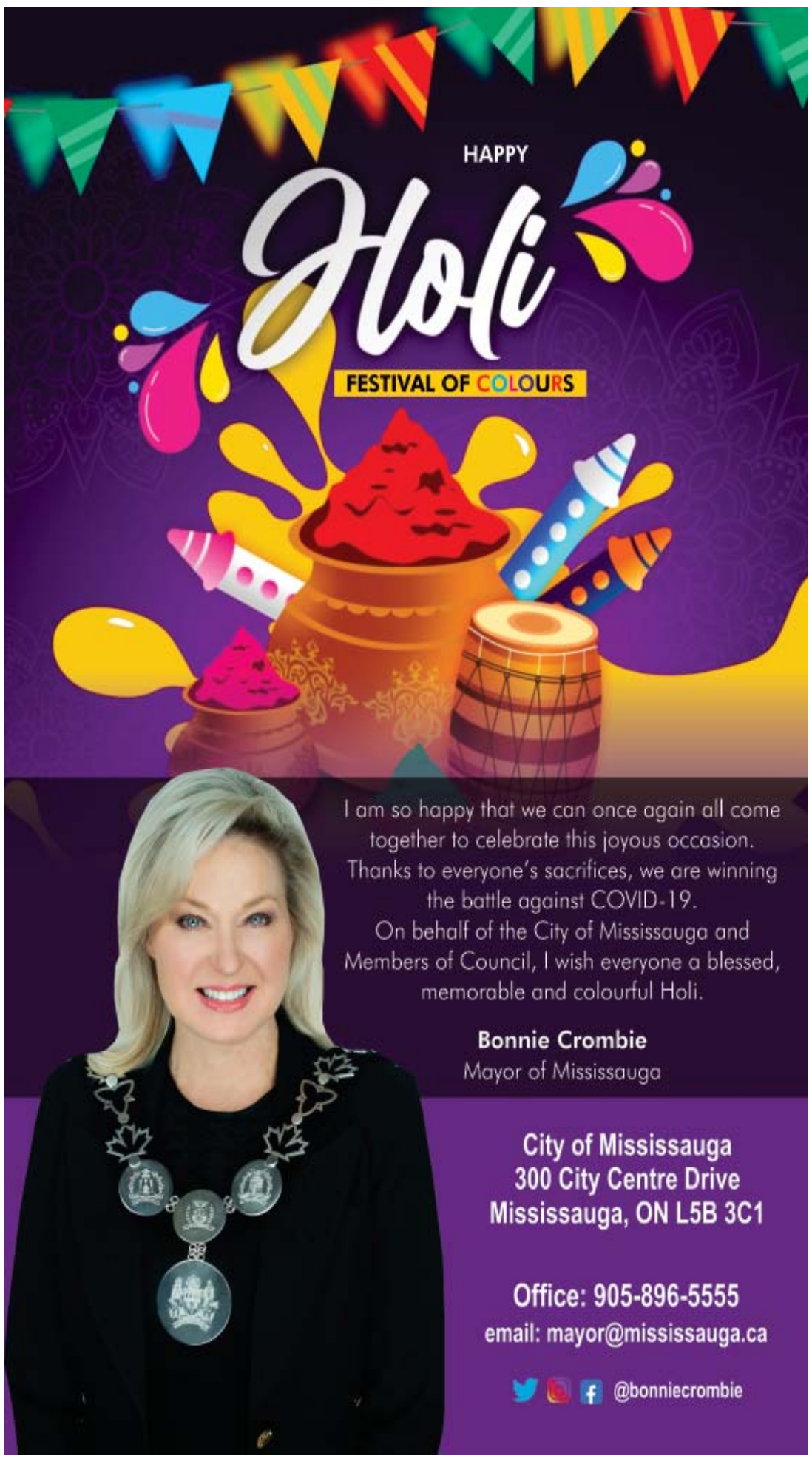
With Punjab's financial crisis set to worsen with the debt likely to reach Rs 252,880 crore by this fiscal, the incoming Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government led by Chief Minister-designate Bhagwant Mann is likely to face uphill task to fulfill its whopping poll promises of investment in health and education and besides free and regular power to 35 lakh households.

Banking largely on freebies to woo the electorate, the party has promised Rs 1,000 for all adult women and suitably compensating financially Anganwadi and ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activists) workers. After staking claim to form the government, Mann on Saturday promised AAP would provide a good Cabinet and make historic decisions. However, the ever increasing salary and pension burden and rising debt and interest leave little scope for development, admit officials. As per official figures, the total outstanding debt of Punjab as on March 31 is projected at Rs 252,880 crore, which is 42 per cent of the GSDP for 2020-21 and the outstanding debt is likely to be Rs 273,703 crore in 2021-22, which is 45 per cent of the GSDP.

Twenty per cent of the annual budget is spent only to pay interest on loans. As per the latest findings of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India, the state's financial crisis is set to worsen with the debt likely to reach Rs 3.73 lakh crore by 2024-25.

Government officials told IANS that the state's debt has increased by Rs 1 lakh crore in the past five years under the outgoing Congress government, largely owing to populist schemes.

When the Congress government took over the reins in 2017, it got the legacy of a Rs 2.08 lakh crore debt left by the decade-long rule of the Shiromani Akali Dal-BJP in the state. An official familiar with the matter told IANS that political compulsions and populist announcements have been taking a huge toll on the state's finances and this may surge the debt beyond the projected Rs 2.52 lakh crore. Outgoing Finance Minister Manpreet Badal in his last budget speech for this fiscal projected the total revenue receipts at Rs 95,257 crore. However, the state has never managed to achieve more than 80 per cent of its revenue target. Also approximately 40 per cent of the state's total estimated revenue receipts of Rs 95,257 crore for the current fiscal would go into debt servicing. As per the budget estimates of an outlay of Rs 168,015 crore for 2021-22, the outstanding debt is likely to be Rs 273,703 crore in 2021-22, which is 45 per cent of the GSDP. Besides, a major component of earnings and market borrowings go into debt servicing, the revenue goes into unproductive expenditure like disbursement of salaries, pensions and power subsidies for the farmers. Also, say officials, the Covid-19 pandemic has caused a significant deterioration in public finances, adding to pre-existing strains. Also businesses in the state are reeling because of a sluggish economy and poor liquidity. As per the recent memorandum by the state to the Centre for extending the Goods and Services Tax (GST) compensation, Punjab says being an agrarian economy it was deriving a significant portion of its revenue from the agriculture sector in the pre-GST era by imposition of tax on agricultural produce (mainly foodgrains). This was realized in the form of the levy of Purchase Tax on agricultural produce at the rate of five per cent of the minimum support price (MSP) of produce collected from the purchaser of such produce. In addition, an Infrastructure Development Fee at the rate of three per cent was also levied on purchase of foodgrains. The state collected Rs 3,094 crore in 2015-16 from the Purchase Tax and Infrastructure Development Fee alone, i.e. 16.55 per cent of its total tax revenue of Rs 18,692.89 crore during that year. With the implementation of GST, both the Purchase Tax and Infrastructure Development Fee on foodgrains have been subsumed in the GST. Since the GST is a destination-based tax and agricultural produce is largely exempted under it, Punjab has experienced a permanent loss of a significant portion of the state revenue. However, the saving grace for the government is the first half of this fiscal with a hefty increase in revenue from the pre-Covid levels. The GST revenue comprising state goods and services tax (SGST) and integrated goods and services tax from April to September of 2021 was Rs 7,851 crore, which is 67.55 per cent more than in the corresponding period of 2020, and 54 per cent more than in the pre-pandemic year of 2019-20. But the area of concern for authorities now is ending GST compensation from the Centre on June 30, unless it is extended by the GST Council, leaving the state to fend for itself thereafter. A report by the Group of Experts (GOE) led by noted economist Montek Singh Ahluwalia, set up by previous Chief Minister Amarinder Singh to revive Punjab's economy, had recommended measures like reducing average cost of government debt, banning recruitment in police and bringing pay scales of government employees on par, among others. The experts suggested rationalisation of power subsidies given to farmers that is 1.9 per cent of its GDP and grew from Rs 5,670 crore in 2019-20 to Rs 7,180 in 2020-21. Ahead of the polling for the Assembly elections, the opposition AAP had accused the previous Akali-BJP and current Congress government of plunging Punjab into debt. "With the population of 3 crore, today every individual in Punjab has a debt of Rs 1 lakh. Every child who is born in Punjab already has a debt of Rs 1 lakh on them right after their birth," AAP leader Raghav Chadha had told the media.



SMALLER LOCAL PARTIES RISE AND SHINE IN UP POLLS, BOLSTER BJP & SP

Smaller local parties have emerged strong in the Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls this time, bolstering the BJP and the SP, and leaving behind the Congress and the BSP. The BJP's ally Apna Dal (Sonelal) has won 12 of the 17 seats it had contested and emerged as the third largest party after the BJP and the SP. In Mauranipur, Apna Dal (Sonelal) candidate Rashmi Arya won by 58,595 votes. The Nishad Party, which had entered into an alliance with the BJP for the polls, has also fared well. Ten candidates of the Nishad party contested on the party symbol while six from the party contested on BJP tickets. Of the total 16 candidates, six emerged victorious. The son of Nishad Party chief Sanjay Nishad reached the Assembly after securing a win on a BJP ticket. The Nishad Party had fought the 2017 Assembly polls in alliance with local parties and fielded candidates on 72 seats, but due to the BJP wave, only one candidate Vijay Mishra could make it to the Assembly. Seventy of the party candidates lost their security deposit. The SP may not have emerged successful but smaller parties supported it a lot. The RLD played a major role in campaigning for the SP in western Uttar Pradesh to improve its poll prospects. It has secured eight seats. The SP-RLD alliance grabbed three seats in Shamli and four each in Meerut and Muzaffarnagar. In the 2017 polls, the SP had won only one seat in these places.

The SuheldevBharatiya Samaj Party (SBSP) also boosted the SP's prospects as their alliance won three seats in Mau and seven in Ghazipur. The SBSP has won six seats in Purvanchal.

The SBSP had fought the 2017 polls in alliance with the BJP and won four of the eight seats it contested. The Apna Dal (Kamerawadi) fought in alliance with the SP and lost all the three seats on which it contested but the party's working president fought on the SP's symbol and won, defeating Keshav Prasad Maurya. Political analyst Amodkant Mishra said that local parties have emerged stronger in the assembly polls and the general elections. The RLD and Apna Dal had an impact on the politics of the state. The BJP and the SP had formed alliances with the parties of the heavyweights of the regions.

HINDUTVA CONSOLIDATION BEHIND MODI IN BJP'S FOURTH STRAIGHT WIN IN UP?

As BJP storms to power in Uttar Pradesh for the second time in a row, breaking a three decade old taboo, it may be due to the fundamental shift in the state politics -- the consolidation of Hindutva votes behind Prime Minister Narendra Modi since 2014.

The state voters have been solidly behind the BJP -- first in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, then in the 2017 Assembly elections, the 2019 parliamentary elections and now again in the 2022 Assembly polls. Despite all the votes the BJP has been able to get, it may be due to the Hindutva factor, however laced with social schemes of ration distribution during pandemic and the direct cash transfers to the farmers.

The March 10 results have proved again the new political culture in the state as the BJP has won 254 seats with more than 41 per cent popular votes, 10 per cent more than the nearest rival, the Samajwadi Party.

The Hindutva tone was set by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath when he said the BJP does not need the 20 per cent votes, in what was seen as a reference to the minority community votes and that the party is happy with 80 per cent, triggering political reactions. The BJP's tone for elections was set about 80 vs 20 and the speakers in the public meetings repeatedly talked and targeted the 20 per cent.

The Hindutva tone was backed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'SabkaSaath, Sabka Vikas' and free ration during the pandemic which overshadowed the Covid fiasco. Another contentious issue was cow protection which overshadowed the issue of stray cattle.

But it was the Prime Minister who held the Hindutva fort starting from 2014. Riding on the Hindutva wave after Muzaffarnagar riots, BJP stormed to power winning 71 Lok Sabha seats in Uttar Pradesh garnering a staggering 42.6 per cent votes, while in the previous election, the party could manage to win only 10. In 2017, when there was only Modi leading the election campaign, the BJP swept the polls and won 312 seats and got around 34,403,299 votes and approximately more than 39.67 per cent votes, an increase of 265 seats from 2012.

Y MEDIA EXCLUSIVE: MINISTER NG COMMITS 'TO FURTHER STRENGTHENING CANADA-INDIA BILATERAL COMMERCIAL RELATIONS'

PIYUSH GOYAL, MINISTER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY, CONSUMER AFFAIRS & FOOD & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION AND TEXTILES, INDIA WITH MARY NG, CANADA'S SMALL BUSINESS, EXPORT PROMOTION AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE MINISTER (TWITTER/ MARY NG).

CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

In an exclusive interview with Y Media's Group Editor and CEO, YudhvirJaswal, Minister Mary Ng emphasized diversifying and deepening Canada's relationship with India as it is 'one of the fastest-growing economies' worldwide.

She told Y Media that Canada expressed a desire to deepen cooperation with India in biotechnology, renewal energy, and climate change through applied research mode.

"The Ministers agreed to formally re-launch the negotiations for India-Canada Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement and also consider an 'Interim Agreement' or Early Progress Trade Agreement that could bring early commercial gains to both the countries," a ministry statement said.

"The Ministers highlighted the existing trade complementarities between India and Canada and emphasized that the trade agreement would help expand bilateral trade in goods and services through unlocking the potential across sectors."

According to the ministry, the interim agreement would include high-level commitments in goods, services, rules of origin, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, technical barriers to trade, and dispute settlement. It may also cover any other areas mutually agreed upon.

"A range of other bilateral trade and investment issues were discussed during the meeting. Both countries agreed to undertake intensified work concerning recognizing Canada's systems approach to pest risk management in pulses and market access for Indian agriculture goods such as sweet corn, baby corn, banana, etc.

"Canada also agreed to examine expeditiously the request for Conformity Verification Body (CVB) status to APEDA (Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority) for facilitating Indian organic export products," the statement said.

After establishing a few bilateral centres with countries such as the US, Germany, France, etc, a new India-Canada Bilateral Centre will be set up for dedicated S&T activities, it was announced on Friday.

Minister Mary Ng also called on and reviewed the progress of the bilateral cooperation in several key areas with Indian Science and Technology Minister Jitendra Singh, a release from the Ministry of Science & Technology said.

Both sides identified the proposed areas of collaboration in areas such as green technologies, advanced engineering and manufacturing, agriculture and food technologies, digital transformation, energy conservation and healthcare.

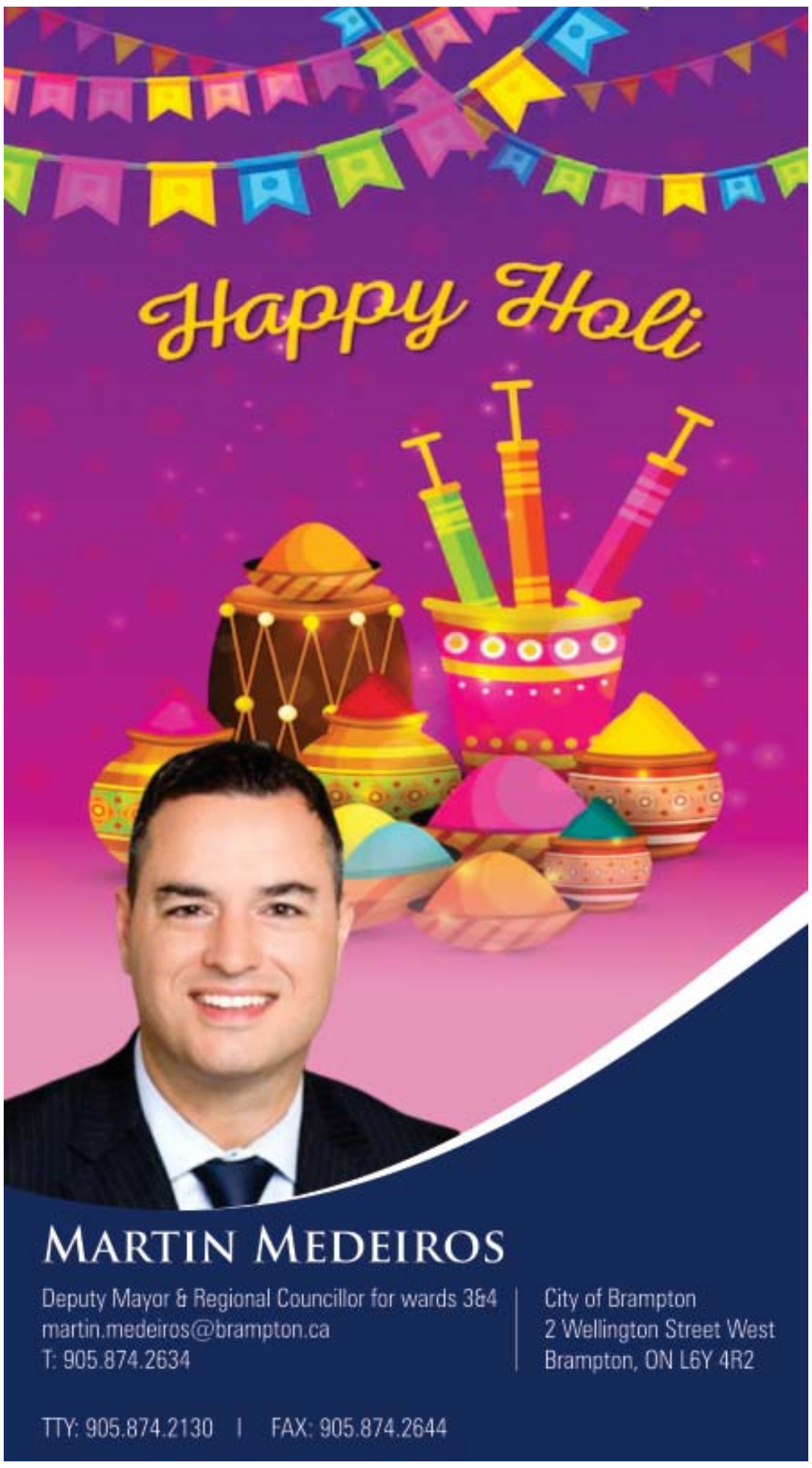
Singh said the renewal of two MoUs between India and Canada is due and is proposed to be signed in the upcoming joint committee meeting in May 2022. The first MoU relates to National Science Engineering Research Centre (NSERC), Canada, which is a project based scientific exchange programme along with the development of human resources in basic and applied sciences. The second agreement relates to the National Research Council (NRC), Canada, which is an industrial R&D project based on scientific collaboration in which industries from both sides jointly develop prototypes and commercialise them. The Department of Science & Technology (DST) has been also supporting Industrial R&D projects with Canada, which have potential for application. Total ten projects have been supported for Industrial R&D till date. From DBT, three joint Calls for Proposals in the areas of 'Water for Health', 'Portable Diagnostics & Analysers', and 'Creating Wealth from Waste' have been launched in collaboration with the India-Canada Centre for Innovative Multidisciplinary Partnership to Accelerate Community Transformation and Sustainability (IC-IMPACTS).

INDIA TO ALLOW SCHEDULED INTERNATIONAL FLIGHT OPS FROM MARCH 27

India will allow resumption of scheduled commercial international passenger services from March 27. "After having recognised the increased vaccination coverage across the globe and in consultation with the stakeholders, the Government of India has decided to resume scheduled commercial international passenger services to or from India from March 27, 2022," an official communique said on Tuesday. "The suspension of scheduled commercial international passenger services to or from India, thus, stands extended only upto 2359 hrs IST on March 26, 2022 and air bubble arrangements shall accordingly be extended to this extent only." Last month, India's civil aviation regulator had extended the ban on scheduled international commercial flights till "further orders". In late 2021, India had announced plans to allow resumption of scheduled commercial international passenger services from December 15, 2021 with certain conditions. However, the plan was postponed due to the emergence of the third Covid wave globally. India had banned the operation of international flights on March 23, 2020 to contain and control the spread of Covid-19. Flight restrictions, however, were later eased under air bubble arrangement with certain countries.

TEAM RAHUL & PRIYANKA FAIL TO MAKE THE MARK

As trends show that the BJP is set to regain all the four states it was ruling and the Congress is on the verge of losing Punjab, the spotlight now shifts to leadership and the team which was operating behind the scenes, whether for Rahul Gandhi or Priyanka Gandhi Vadra. Fingers will be pointed at the teams and leadership of Rahul and Priyanka. Rahul Gandhi's team of K.C. Venugopal, Randeep Surjewala and the state in-charges could not deliver the states which went for polls. In Uttarakhand, which had the convention of changing government every five years, the Congress failed to make a repeat. In the beginning state in-charge Devendra Yadav could not manage the factions and later sent senior leaders but precious time was lost in all this. The party appeared to be divided into two sub-parties, who were unwilling to work in tandem. In Goa the trio of State in-charges -- Dinesh Gundu Rao, Girish Chodankar (the state President) and Digambar Kamat (the former Chief Minister) ignored the state leaders like LuizinhoFalerio, who left to join Trinamool and leaders like Francisco Sardinha were sidelined and even P. Chidambaram, who was senior observer could not choose the right candidates.



Will sanctions really cripple the Russian economy?

To what extent would the economic sanctions against Russia cripple its economy? While most researchers and analysts have said that the stringent sanctions against Russia would deal a "death" blow to its economy, many citizens opine that these measures will have a limited impact on their lives especially since Moscow's economic engagements with China have only deepened. Last week, even India and Russia held talks on potential joint projects in the energy sector. The two sides have also been looking at alternative mechanisms for payment and other transactions.

Several countries including Belarus, Myanmar Ivory Coast, Cuba, Venezuela, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iran, Iraq, Liberia, North Korea, Syria, and Zimbabwe are among those on the sanctioned list. But Russia with its size and natural resource deposits cannot be clubbed with other countries.

With 11 per cent of global oil reserves, sanctions against Russia have become a cause for worry for the West. Russia also accounts for 21 per cent of gas production in the world and is one of the largest exporters of wheat.

Russian President Vladimir Putin during a televised discussion last week said that Moscow's exports of oil and gas are continuing as usual, including the supplies through Ukraine. Russia supplies more than 40 per cent of Europe's total energy requirements. While there are talks of reducing dependence on Russia, it will take time. "Can the European countries, which are already reeling under economic pressure, after the Covid pandemic take such chances, the pains of the sanctions will hit Europe," an analyst told India Narrative. "We are respecting all of our obligations in terms of energy supplies," Putin said. Russia' energy exports to Europe have continued.

"Russia despite the expulsion of some of its banks from the SWIFT inter-bank system. It means that the world cannot completely do without Russia's resources," Gulf News said in a report. "Russia has alternatives not available to many countries that were previously boycotted. This is why many other nations have not made any move on sanctions," the report said.

Anna Koroleva, a senior Russian journalist at Expert, a local business weekly, told India Narrative that there has been no significant impact yet of the sanctions on the lives of the citizens.

STARTING MARCH 21, MASKS WILL NO LONGER BE REQUIRED IN SCHOOLS, RESTAURANTS, BARS, GYMS & MOVIE THEATRES ACROSS ONTARIO

Covid-19 public health restrictions, including mask mandates, will continue being lifted across Canada in the coming weeks as Ontario's chief medical officer of health has confirmed that the province will drop its mask mandate on March 21. Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health of Ontario, the province with the largest population in Canada, said in a statement that the government will remove the mandatory masking requirement for most settings on that day, with the exception of select settings such as public transit, health care settings, long-term care homes and congregate care settings, Xinhua news agency reported.

"With the peak of Omicron behind us, Ontario has been able to cautiously and gradually move through its reopening milestones," he said. "While this does not signal that Covid-19 has disappeared or that the pandemic is over, it does mean that we have come to a place where we know what we need to do to manage this virus and to keep each other safe." Canada's Chief Public Health Officer Theresa Tam said Friday that federal agencies overseeing masking mandates in Canada for things like domestic travel were evaluating the situation and could make policy adjustments as needed in the coming days and weeks. Covid-19 public health restrictions are also being lifted in other provinces. Alberta lifted almost all Covid-19 restrictions on March 1. Saskatchewan lifted mask mandate on March 1. Manitoba and Quebec will follow suit soon.

CANADA'S UNEMPLOYMENT RATE FALLSTO 5.5% IN FEBRUARY, LOWEST SINCE 2020

Canada's unemployment rate fell to 5.5 per cent in February 2022, lower than 5.7 per cent in February 2020 and similar to the record low of 5.4 per cent observed in May 2019 before the Covid-19 pandemic, officials said. The unemployment rate fell in all major demographic groups in February and for the first time since the beginning of the pandemic, men and women in all major age groups had an unemployment rate at, or below, what it was before the pandemic in February 2020, Xinhua news agency quoted Statistics Canada as saying. Statistics Canada said employment climbed 337,000, or 1.8 per cent, in February, more than offsetting losses that coincided with stricter public health measures in January. February employment growth was driven by strong gains in the number of private sector employees, which rebounded after dropping in January, it added. "Even though the central bank gets to see another jobs report before its next meeting, there is more than enough justification from today's data for another hike in April," CIBC economist Andrew Grantham said in a statement. He expected a series of four straight interest rate hikes, including the one already delivered, before a pause as the central bank assesses the impact of those on the economy. The Bank of Canada raised its benchmark interest rate by a quarter of a percentage point to 0.5 per cent on March 2.

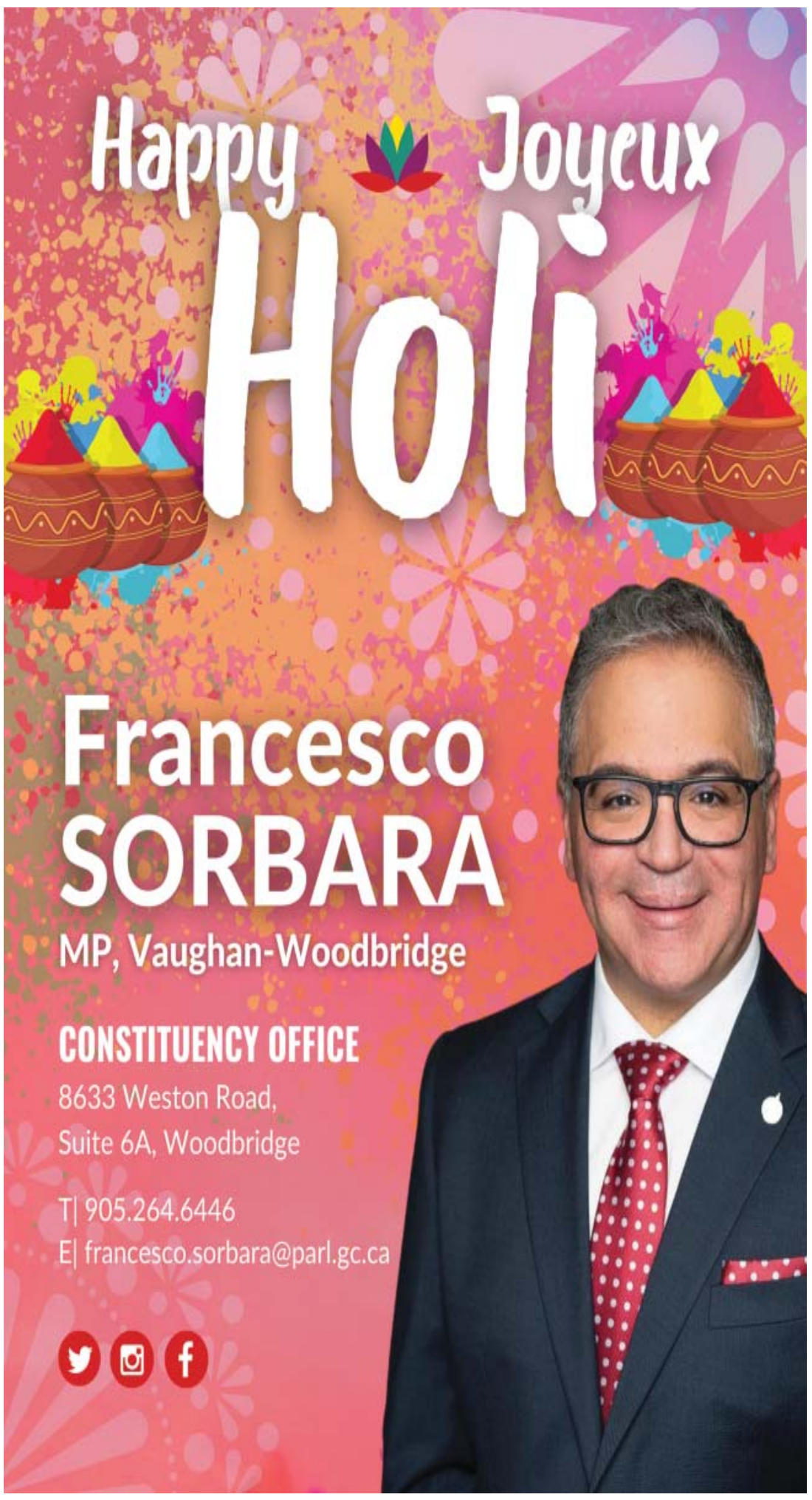
RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR TO AFFECT INDIA'S MILITARY SUSTENANCE, EXPANSION

The war between Russia and Ukraine will cost India's military capabilities, but to what effect is what the government is looking upon. It will all depend on how long the war continues and what would be the outcome of the conflict. The war will set a new world order for arms procurement and bilateral military relationship. And repercussions of it will be felt in New Delhi.

India gets more than 50 per cent of its arms and ammunition and military platforms requirements from Russia. Since Russia is at war, India's military capabilities will be affected dearly. Be it delivery of platforms like nuclear powered submarines, Grigorovich class frigates, fighter jets, Triumf S-400, AK 203 assault rifle and others or sustenance of tanks, aircraft and other platforms procured from Russia. There are three critical aspects where India will face challenges due to war.

Explaining those critical aspects, Major General Ashok Kumar (Retd) told IANS, "There are three critical aspects where India will face challenges -- the hard core military hardware including its support infrastructure; non direct military support and the equipment coming from Russia and the overall economic condition which will leave less funds with the military affecting modernization and upgradation."

The military preparedness depends on a number of issues - one is military hardware itself wherein more than 50 per cent of Indian equipment are of Russian origin.



US-PAK TIES 'BRITTLE' AND 'TRANSACTIONAL', WORSENED BY 'CHINA FACTOR': FORMER PAKISTANI DIPLOMATS

Two former Pakistani diplomats, Sajjad Ashraf and Tauqir Hussain, underscore the 'challenge' in US-Pak relations, calling them 'brittle' and 'transactional'. Ashraf, writing for East Asia Forum, says: "The nature of and the confusion emanating from the American withdrawal from Afghanistan has further exposed the brittleness of this relationship. The Taliban victory is seriously testing Pakistan's long fraught bilateral relationship with America."

"As far back as in the 1950s, the interests of the US-Pakistan relationship were only partially served when each side used the other to advance its own agenda that impacted negatively on other's interests," writes Tauqir Hussain.

Now, Ashraf says, "the Biden administration has noticeably turned away from Pakistan again. Washington has chosen to remain barely on talking terms with Islamabad since withdrawing from Afghanistan last summer. "The United States continues to blame Pakistan's military for supporting non-state actors, including the Taliban. And yet every American dignitary visiting Pakistan makes a beeline to pay a courtesy call on the chief of army staff and only meets the civilian leadership as a formality." The US, he says, has often downplayed the role of Pakistan's civilian leadership vis a vis the "military's domineering presence in Pakistan." With that in mind, Ashraf writes: "A sizeable number of US policy makers are revisiting the United States' relations with Pakistan. Both Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Mark Milley assured Congress that the administration is looking at the role Pakistan played during the past years and what role the United States would want it to play in the future.

Twenty-two Republican lawmakers have proposed a bill in Congress that includes an assessment of support by the government of Pakistan for the Taliban between 2001 and 2020.

Wendy Sherman, the deputy secretary of state and the highest placed US official to visit Pakistan since Biden took over, made it all plain in October 2021. Departing from Mumbai for Pakistan, in an answer to a journalist's question, she said, "we don't see ourselves building our broad relationship with Pakistan and we have no interest in returning to the days of a hyphenated India, Pakistan". She added that her trip to Pakistan was aimed at accomplishing a "specific and narrow purpose" - referring to Afghanistan.

Ashraf and Hussain underscore the point that the US is sore with Pakistan for the latter's role in Afghanistan.

"There is a near unanimous view in Pakistan that instead of owning up to its own flawed policy and botched execution of the Afghan campaign, the United States finds it convenient to scapegoat Pakistan. US policy still looks at Pakistan through an Afghan prism and wants Pakistan for a specific purpose of over the horizon of counter-terrorism operations in Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, Pakistan seeks broad based relations focusing on geo-economics. The United States also seems annoyed that Prime Minister Imran Khan has applauded the Taliban victory and, in his typical candidness, described Pakistan's service provider relationship to the US as 'lopsided'. On the near-future of US-Pak ties, Ashraf says: "Now that the foreign policy priorities of Biden administration are clear, there is little likelihood of a significant shift in its stance towards Pakistan. Similarly, it is now wrong for the United States to expect that Pakistan would remain a service provider state and sacrifice its vital security interests."

Pakistan moving close to China, Ashraf says casts a shadow over US policy towards Pakistan. The United States has not made its annoyance with Pakistan signing up to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) a secret. As the United States courted India, Pakistan, by necessity, got closer to China. In the face of US embargoes, Ashraf notes, Pakistan is now "almost entirely dependent upon China for military supplies."

CANADIANS & AMERICANS ARE UNCERTAIN ABOUT THE OUTCOME OF THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT: LEGER

– Overall, Canadians and Americans are concerned that the Russia-Ukraine conflict will escalate.

– 74% of Canadians and 66% of Americans think the conflict has the potential to develop into a world war.

– 64% of Canadians and 57% of Americans think the conflict could last for many years.

– 47% of Canadians and 41% of Americans think Putin and Russia will use nuclear weapons if the conflict does not go the way Russia wants.

– Canadians and Americans are divided on imposing a no-fly zone over Ukraine: 47% and 44% respectively agree that one should be established, even if it risks escalating the conflict.

METHODOLOGY

This web survey was conducted from March 11 to March 13, 2022, with 1,515 Canadians and 1,002 Americans, 18 years of age or older, randomly recruited from LEO's online panel.

A margin of error cannot be associated with a non-probability sample in a panel survey. For comparison, a probability sample of 1,515 respondents would have a margin of error of ±2.5%, 19 times out of 20, while a probability sample of 1,014 would have a margin of error of ±3.096%, 19 times out of 20.

IN MAIDEN EMPHATIC WIN, AAP CRUSHES TRADITIONAL PARTIES

Rising from the ashes like the phoenix, the Arvind Kejriwal-led Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Thursday, in a maiden emphatic win, crushed the traditional players that ruled the border state of Punjab for over seven decades with a stunning victory largely by its greenhorns on 92 of the 117 seats of the legislative assembly.

Bhagwant Mann, the party's pick for the top post, is all set to become the next Chief Minister.

The ruling Congress, which won 77 seats in 2017, managed to win only 18 seats with most of its stalwart faces like Chief Minister CharanjitChanni and state party chief Navjot Singh Sidhu faced humiliating defeat from their respective strongholds.

Interestingly, the BJP, which largely banked on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's charisma, and its previous alliance partner the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) failed in securing even a double-digit tally.

The BJP, which had won three seats in the 2017 when it had contested in alliance with the SAD, secured only two seats, while SAD won four seats. The other won one seat. Accepting the verdict with all humility, Congress rebel and two-time chief minister CaptAmarinder Singh, whose newly floated Punjab Lok Congress (PLC) fought the elections in alliance with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), lost his Patiala Urban stronghold to AAP's Ajit Pal Singh Kohli. He said that people of Punjab had also rejected communal and divisive politics of the Congress by first rejecting one leader as the chief minister for being a Hindu and then trying to play the caste factor.

CaptAmarinder Singh was purportedly referring to the appointment of CharanjitChanni, state's first Dalit Chief Minister, overlooking former Punjab Congress chief Sunil Jakhar, after his own unceremonious exit from the party. The halfway mark in the assembly is 59 and AAP firmly achieved this target after dealing a big blow to all the political parties.

All the Badals, led by five-time Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal, the eldest candidate at 94 in the fray, as well as their kin lost to AAP's greenhorns. The eldest Badal, who won the seat five times in a row since 1997, lost to Gurmeet Khuddian from Lambi by 11,357 votes, while his son and SAD chief and Member of Parliament Sukhbir Badal faced humiliating defeat from Jalalabad, and his son-in-law AdeshPartap Singh Kairon faced defeat from Patti in Tarn Taran district from AAP's Laljit Singh Bhullar. Sukhbir Badal's brother-in-law Bikram Majithia and his estranged cousin Manpreet Badal, who was in the fray on a Congress ticket, also lost the poll from their respective seats.

As per the Election Commission, AAP's Khuddian, a Congress rebel, was polled 65,717 votes and the elderly Badal got 54,360.

SKM ANNOUNCES NEXT PHASE OF MOVEMENT TO DEMAND MSP GUARANTEE

The Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM), a coalition of over 40 farmers' unions, on Monday announced the next phase of its nationwide agitation. The SKM will observe April 11- April 17 as MSP Legal Guarantee Week. The SKM also planned a nationwide protest on March 21 regarding the role of the government in the Lakhimpur Kheri incident, wherein four farmers among others, were mowed down by a vehicle allegedly belonging to MoS Home Ajay Misra Teni.

In a meeting of all the organisations associated with the SKM at Gandhi Peace Foundation in Delhi, it was unanimously decided that during this week (April-11-17), all the constituent organisations associated with the Samyukta Kisan Morcha will organise dharnas, demonstrations, seminars, demanding legal guarantee of Minimum Support Price (C2+50 per cent) as recommended by the Swaminathan Commission, to all farmers on all their agricultural produce.

After reviewing the legal process in the Lakhimpur Kheri case, concerns were expressed that the police administration and the prosecutors together are trying to protect the criminals and implicate the innocent farmers. "It is a matter of surprise that in such a serious case, the son of the Union Minister got bail so soon while the farmers implicated in the same case are still in jail," the Samyukt Kisan Morcha said and expressed serious concern at the news that a key witness in the case has been attacked after Monu Mishra's release. The SKM decided that there would be no relaxation in the legal battle in this matter, and full legal help would be given by the Morcha to the families of the farmers, a statement after the meeting said.

The Morcha reviewed the written assurances given by the Central Government to the Samyukt Kisan Morcha on December 9 and found that even after three months, the government had not acted upon its key assurances. There is no trace of the assurance of forming a committee on MSP. Except Haryana, the police cases registered against the farmers during the agitation in other states have not been withdrawn. Delhi Police has spoken of partial withdrawal of some cases but there is no concrete information about that as well.

"Nothing has happened about the cases registered during Rail Rokos across the country," the SKM claimed.

The Samyukt Kisan Morcha has decided to organise a nationwide protest on March 21, regarding the role of the government in the Lakhimpur Kheri incident, and the betrayal of the assurances given to the farmers' movement.

The Morcha reiterated that the SKM supports the call for Bharat Bandh by trade unions on March 28 and 29, and that farmers across the country will actively participate in it. Representatives of farmers' organisations from Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Bihar, Jharkhand, Assam, Tripura, Odisha, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh participated in this meeting convened by the coordination committee of the SKM, statement said.

SONIA ASKS STATE PARTY CHIEFS TO RESIGN AFTER POLL DEBACLE

Heads have started to roll after the poll Debacle in five states as Congress interim president Sonia Gandhi has asked state party presidents to put in their papers. The party suffered massive defeats in five states which went to polls in February and March. Randeep Surjewala, General Secretary of the party said, "Congress President, Sonia Gandhi has asked the PCC Presidents of Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Goa & Manipur to put in their resignations in order to facilitate reorganisation of PCCs." Those who have been asked to resign include Navjot Sidhu (Punjab), Ganesh Godiyal (Uttarakhand), Nameirakpam Loken Singh (Manipur), Ajay Kumar Lallu (UP) and Girish Chodankar (Goa). The decision comes two days after the Congress Working Committee (CWC) meet, which authorised Sonia Gandhi to undertake "necessary and comprehensive" organisational changes. "The CWC unanimously reaffirms its faith in the leadership of Sonia Gandhi and requests the Congress President to lead from the front, address the organisational weaknesses, effect necessary and comprehensive organisational changes in order to take on the political challenges," the CWC resolution had said.

JD(U), NPF TO SUPPORT BJP GOVERNMENT IN MANIPUR

The Janata Dal (United) and the Naga People's Front (NPF) on Saturday announced to support the BJP-led government in Manipur, party sources said. The JD(U), which fielded 38 candidates in the recent Assembly elections, won six seats, while the NPF, which put up 10 nominees won five seats against four seats it won in the 2017 Assembly polls. National office secretary of the JD(U), Mohammad Nisar, said in a statement that in the interest of the people of Manipur, the party has decided to support the BJP in the formation of the government. The JD(U) would like to appeal to the BJP to honour the mandate reposed on the party and fulfil the hopes and aspirations of the people of Manipur, the statement said. It said that the party legislators have unanimously elected KhumukchamJoykisan Singh as the leader of the legislature party of JD(U) in the presence of Afaque Ahmad Khan, national General Secretary, in-charge of northeast region. NPF Secretary General AchumbemoKikon said the party supports the BJP government keeping in mind its association with the saffron camp since 2017. NPF sources said the party is likely to seek a few Cabinet berths in the new ministry.

What India can learn from the Russia-Ukraine crisis

DEEPIKA BHAN

As the US-EU combine came out with a slew of sanctions against Russia and big tech companies followed suit enthusiastically, the stark reality hit home. The West can use financial and social media platforms as weapons against any country that falls foul of it.

The steps taken by most big-tech platforms, such as Meta, Twitter, Google and Microsoft, and the financial institutions against Russia in the wake of its invasion of Ukraine exposes the vulnerability of non-western countries.

The question that looms over us is: What if the West feels that something is not going as per its calculations, and then, can it simply switch off the platforms and create mayhem? This can be as devastating as a physical war.

The fact is that financial and social media platforms can be used as weapons by the West, which has created them and made, all except for a few nations, completely dependent on them.

Third World countries such as India have seen an explosive growth in the reach and business of these big-tech blocs. The dependency on these of a majority of individuals living in these countries, whether for information, entertainment, financial transactions, or for other reasons, has reached a level where even a minor glitch in the services can lead to chaos.

The owners and managers of these companies, which are entirely private entities, know this fully. But when it comes to taking sides, they do not hesitate to follow the lead of the western nations, as has been evident in the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

Several global tech companies have decided to stop the sales of their products and services in Russia. These include Intel, Apple, Microsoft, Google (though users in Russia can still use its search engine, the company has suspended its advertising business in that country). Snapchat and Samsung too have stopped services for Russia.

Visa and Mastercard have also announced to suspend all operations and so has other payment company PayPal.

Big entertainment companies such as Disney, Sony, Warner Bros, Paramount and Universal have decided to suspend releases in Russia. Netflix too has paused its services in Vladimir Putin's country. Providers of gaming software such as Nintendo and Electronic Arts have also stopped their services for Russia.

Several automakers -- BMW, Ford, GM and Honda -- have scaled back their operations in Russia. Even Airbnb has suspended its activities in Russia and Belarus.

The Russian media has not been spared either. The EU last week declared a ban on several Russian-funded media outlets, including Russia Today and Sputnik. "They will no longer be able to spread their lies to justify Putin's war and sow divisions in our Union," European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said after announcing the ban.

Online discussion forum Reddit has also banned its users globally from posting links to Russian state-sponsored media outlets, including RT and Sputnik, as well as Russian advertisements on its platform. Apple, Google, Meta, Microsoft, Twitter, YouTube and several other tech platforms have also banned RT and Sputnik.

In retaliation, Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday (March 4) blocked access to Facebook and restricted that to Twitter. Russia passed a law that criminalises the dissemination of what Moscow deems to be "fake" news.

As the big tech and financial private companies take political sides in the ongoing Russia-Ukraine War, some lessons need to be learnt. And central to the learning is the mantra of self-sufficiency and self-reliance or Atmanirbhar Bharat / Make in India.

India has been entirely dependent on foreign nations for its arms supplies. The chief supplier has been Russia, followed by the US, France and Israel. Though in line with the philosophy of Atmanirbhar Bharat, the Narendra Modi government has placed emphasis on improving the country's self-reliance and defence preparedness.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has made it clear that India cannot be dependent on any country for defence supplies. India has to augment its own arsenal, whether tanks, missiles, fighter jets and now drones, with its own resources and talent.

Along with military needs, India has to have very active and vibrant indigenous social media platforms with in-country headquarters.

In comparison to West-owned social media platforms, the Indian ones are few and not as popular as their other counterparts.

Homegrown micro-blogging platform Koo is in direct competition with Twitter. Founded in 2019, Koo's user base is growing steadily. Other local platforms include shareChat, Chingari and Josh.

After the Galwan Valley incident India banned several Chinese apps and thus created room for indigenous apps. There is a need, though, to make these local apps and platforms more popular, especially among young people, most of whom are not aware of homegrown apps and still prefer WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and so on.

In 2021, the Government shared the statistics about the usage of social media in the country. The number of WhatsApp users in India is around 53 crore and it is followed by YouTube (44.8 crore) and Facebook (41 crore). Instagram has 21 crore users and Twitter, around 1.5 crore. In comparison to these numbers, the local platforms are lagging and need to be given a leg up.

The 21st century wars are being fought as much with missiles and drones, as with mechanisms of information dissemination. We may perceive China as an enemy country but a lot needs to be learnt from them. China has been able to create its own pillars, whether in defence or general business or social media. Its indigenisation of these pillars has made it a world power today.

It is time for us to learn lessons from the Russia-Ukraine conflict and redesign strategies, at the core of which should be the mantra of 'self-help'. Being 'aatmanirbhar' is the only way forward for India and our best weapon to fight off any potential Western adventure.

Disclaimer: 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.

SEVERAL GLOBAL TECH COMPANIES HAVE DECIDED TO STOP THE SALES OF THEIR PRODUCTS AND SERVICES IN RUSSIA. THESE INCLUDE INTEL, APPLE, MICROSOFT, GOOGLE (THOUGH USERS IN RUSSIA CAN STILL USE ITS SEARCH ENGINE, THE COMPANY HAS SUSPENDED ITS ADVERTISING BUSINESS IN THAT COUNTRY). SNAPCHAT AND SAMSUNG TOO HAVE STOPPED SERVICES FOR RUSSIA.
VISA AND MASTERCARD HAVE ALSO ANNOUNCED TO SUSPEND ALL OPERATIONS AND SO HAS OTHER PAYMENT COMPANY PAYPAL. BIG ENTERTAINMENT COMPANIES SUCH AS DISNEY, SONY, WARNER BROS, PARAMOUNT AND UNIVERSAL HAVE DECIDED TO SUSPEND RELEASES IN RUSSIA. NETFLIX TOO HAS PAUSED ITS SERVICES IN VLADIMIR PUTIN'S COUNTRY. PROVIDERS OF GAMING SOFTWARE SUCH AS NINTENDO AND ELECTRONIC ARTS HAVE ALSO STOPPED THEIR SERVICES FOR RUSSIA. SEVERAL AUTOMAKERS -- BMW, FORD, GM AND HONDA -- HAVE SCALED BACK THEIR OPERATIONS IN RUSSIA. EVEN AIRBNB HAS SUSPENDED ITS ACTIVITIES IN RUSSIA AND BELARUS. THE RUSSIAN MEDIA HAS NOT BEEN SPARED EITHER.

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CANADA'S GOVERNOR GENERAL MET IN-PERSON WITH QUEEN, MEMBERS OF THE ROYAL FAMILY

Her Excellency the Right Honourable Mary Simon, Governor-General of Canada, met today with Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II at Windsor Castle. During this historic in-person meeting, the Governor-General of Canada, the first Indigenous person to hold this position, had the opportunity to share Canadians' best wishes in this year of Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee. The Governor-General and Mr. Whit Fraser also had the great pleasure of meeting today with Their Royal Highnesses The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall.

While in London, Their Excellencies also met with the team at the High Commission for Canada in the United Kingdom of Great Britain, including High Commissioner Ralph Goodale, thanking them and all Canadians who work abroad, especially during these unprecedented times.

"It was a great honour to meet with Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II earlier today. Our Queen is such an inspiration in these difficult times, and it was a privilege to share with her the Inuit concept of ajuinnata, which means to never give up, that is guiding my work as governor-general."

"Meeting the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall was a lovely opportunity to get to know them," Her Excellency the Right Honourable Mary Simon, Governor-General of Canada said.

Quick Facts

This is the second official meeting of the Governor General with Her Majesty. Her Excellency's first official audience occurred virtually on July 22, 2021, leading up to her Installation as Canada's first Indigenous governor general.

This is the first official meeting of the Governor General with The Prince of Wales since her installation.

Ajuinnata is an Inuktitut word which means never giving up or perseverance in the face of adversity. This concept is an important theme for the Governor General's mandate.

While in London, Their Excellencies will take part in a ceremonial tree planting to mark the Jubilee at which time the Governor General will share some remarks. A moment of silence for the people of Ukraine will follow.

The Governor General will be leaving London on March 17th to undertake a working visit to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar and Kuwait.

INDIA, CANADA HOLD FOREIGN OFFICE CONSULTATIONS

India and Canada held Foreign Office Consultations in Delhi on Monday to discuss progress in a wide range of bilateral matters.

The Indian delegation was led by Ministry of External Affairs's Secretary, East, Saurabh Kumar, while the Canadian delegation was led by Deputy Minister of Foreign and Global Affairs Marta Morgan. The last FOCs were held in March 2021 in a virtual mode.

"The discussions were cordial and friendly. Both sides reviewed the progress of bilateral cooperation in domains such as political, security, trade and investment, education, science and technology, consular and mobility. They agreed that the two countries should continue work to renew the momentum in relations and convene meetings of bilateral dialogues and working groups," the MEA said in a statement.

The FOCs also provided a timely opportunity to exchange assessment on regional, multilateral and global issues of mutual interest.

Both sides agreed to continue their productive consultations, and the next round will be held in Ottawa at convenient dates.

54% Canadians have close friend or family member infected with Covid: Poll

A new poll has revealed that more than half of Canadians, or 54 per cent, said they had a close friend or family member who was infected with Covid-19 in the past two years.

The online poll, carried out by the Angus Reid Institute and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, surveyed a representative randomised sample of 2,550 Canadians aged 18 and over between March 1 to 4 of this year on the occasion of the two-year anniversary of the World Health Organization declaring the global Covid-19 outbreaks as a pandemic, reports Xinhua news agency.

The poll, published on Thursday, revealed that an overwhelming majority (82 per cent) believed the pandemic had pulled people apart as opposed to bringing them together (18 per cent).

About the same number (79 per cent) said this period had brought out the worst, not the best (21 per cent) in people.

Nearly two-thirds (61 percent) said Canadians' level of compassion for one another had weakened.

Despite the developments and lessons in the last 24 months, Canadians were jaded about how well this country was equipped to handle a future pandemic, said the poll.

Most (70 per cent) believed Canada would "struggle just as much" in the next pandemic, while fewer than half that number (30 per cent) said the nation was in "good shape" to handle something similar happening again.

Seven-in-ten Canadians (72 per cent) postponed travel at some point during the past two years, while 48 per cent delayed medical appointments, and 26 per cent others post-poned a more serious medical procedure or surgery, according to the key findings of the survey.

PFIZER CEO SAYS FOURTH COVID-19 SHOT IS 'NECESSARY'

CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

It's clear that there is a need in an environment of Omicron to boost the immune response," Bourla was quoted as saying in an interview.

"We are making a vaccine that covers Omicron and all the other variants. There are so many trials that are going on right now, and a lot of them we'll start reading by the end of the month," he added.

Although Covid cases are on the decline and there is some semblance of normal returning, Bourla said: "I think the biggest question of all of us is how to stay ahead of the virus."

He said Pfizer is working on developing a vaccine that prevents infection in addition to preventing hospitalizations and severe cases of the virus, adding that making long-lasting vaccines is also a priority.

"We can't have vaccines every five, six months," Bourla said, adding: "We need to be able to move as soon as possible."

MISSISSAUGA MAN CHARGED WITH ATTEMPTED MURDER

Members of the Peel Regional Police Intimate Partner Violence Unit have charged a 47-year-old man with numerous charges concerning a violent incident in the City of Mississauga.

On Monday, March 7, 2022, at approximately 10:00 a.m., Peel Regional Police received a 9-1-1 call for a disturbance in a residential neighbourhood in the area of Southampton Drive and Eglinton Avenue West in the City of Mississauga.

Upon arrival, police located a woman outside a residence with apparent signs of trauma. She was transported to a trauma centre, where she remains in life-threatening condition.

Two children, both under the age of 12, were also assessed by Peel Paramedics. Both were transported to a local hospital then transported the older child to a trauma centre in serious, stable, non-life-threatening condition. The younger child had no physical injuries.

At the residence, police had an interaction with a male suspect, and an officer discharged their firearm.

A 47-year-old man from Mississauga was taken into custody and transported to a trauma centre with serious, non-life-threatening injuries.

He has been charged with:

Attempted Murder x 3
Aggravated Assault x 3
Possession of a Weapon for a Dangerous Purpose x 3
Utter Threats x 3

He was held for a bail hearing and appeared remotely before the Ontario Court of Justice in Brampton. He was remanded into custody.

"This incident has had a devastating impact on the survivors of yesterday's events as well as those who witnessed the incident, community members and first responders. Peel Regional Police is committed to working alongside our community partners and organizations to provide awareness, resources and support to survivors of Intimate Partner Violence, whether they have been identified or not. We can all work together to amplify helpful, available resources and accessible, safe spaces to report incidents of domestic violence. " said Nick Milinovich, Deputy Chief of Investigative and Emergency Services.

"Our Intimate Partner Violence Unit investigators have been involved with this case since the onset of it occurring. Our team has worked collaboratively with our community partners to ensure wrap-around supports and services are in place for the female survivor and her children. We will continue to engage with her and her children as they continue to heal." said Inspector Lisa Hewison, Officer in Charge of Crimes Against Persons.

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Y MEDIA EXCLUSIVE

'PIERRE POILIEVRE DEFENDED BARBARIC CULTURAL PRACTICES & NIQAB BAN AT CITIZENSHIP CEREMONIES': MAYOR BROWN

CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

Every month we hear about Canadians who flee Quebec because of their faith. I'm tired of hearing those stories because Canada's foundational value is religious freedom. And if we allow religious freedom to be diminished in Quebec, who knows where it goes next. Because of the lack of courage by PM Trudeau and by the Conservative establishment, like Pierre Poilievre, who are supporting this discriminatory bill, I felt it incumbent to stand up, be counted and speak out to defend religious freedom.

Yudhvir Jaswal: How are you different from other leaders aspiring to become Federal Conservative leader?

Mayor Patrick Brown: I think there's a stark difference. Pierre Poilievre represents the old establishment of the Conservative Party and a very narrow view of Canada. I believe that we're all in this together. Poilievre had no credibility in announcing a policy that primarily impacts minority communities. He even defended the barbaric cultural practices and the niqab ban at citizenship ceremonies. He's complicit with the support for Bill 21, which is an attack on religious freedom. I do not accept the Conservatives' silence on discrimination issues, and I will change the path for the party to welcome everyone here in Canada.

Yudhvir Jaswal: How would you be doing anything different than PM Trudeau? What will be your priorities?

Mayor Patrick Brown: PM Trudeau has created roadblocks at every stage in Canadians using natural resources, which needs to end. It is unfathomable that we have to buy natural resources from foreign governments. Apart from this, I believe we have a revolving door justice system that needs fixing. Trudeau has allowed a justice system that favours criminals over victims. I've been on your show before talking about bail reform and why we need it. We can't have a justice system where the police work incredibly hard, engage in extensive investigations, arrest the criminal, and only see that criminal is released on bail. These are just two examples of how I would take a different approach. Also, Trudeau did not do anything about Bill 21 and said the federal government would not intervene to defend our Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, while I oppose this action.

Yudhvir Jaswal: What would you have done differently on the ongoing Russia-Ukraine crisis if you were the PM?

Mayor Patrick Brown: I find it incredibly egregious of Russia's barbaric invasion of Ukraine. I think on the issue of Ukraine, all parties are together. We all stand in solidarity with the Ukrainian people. We are allies and should provide them with the necessary tools to defend themselves. I would say the federal government was slow off regarding what resources we could provide to the people of Ukraine and the refugee crisis. I would have ensured that we have the capacity to welcome those Ukrainian refugees who want to come to Canada. I think Canada needs to start working in a much more significant way.

Yudhvir Jaswal: What would you like to say about the healthcare system in Canada?

Mayor Patrick Brown: Justin Trudeau has spent more than any prime minister in history for the last few years. He has spent more like a drunken sailor and has nothing to show for it. The pandemic highlighted how fragile our healthcare system is. He's done nothing to work with the provinces to build more health care capacity.

Yudhvir Jaswal: Is Canada doing an adequate job of integrating the immigrants we're bringing here?

Mayor Patrick Brown: I think, during COVID, there have been real frustrations with the bureaucracy of our immigration system. My goal as prime minister would have been to support people as much as possible to help them integrate. Canada's a land of opportunities. I think everyone knows that part of Canada's success has been immigration. But there are barriers when you get here, such as foreign credential recognition. Many talented individuals can't thrive because of roadblocks and bureaucratic red tape. So it's one thing to be a welcoming country, but we are doing nothing to make sure individuals that come to Canada can use their skills and talent. This was realized during the pandemic when foreign-trained nurses and doctors could not fulfill staff shortages due to our immigration system. I think Canada can do better. To my very core, I believe that this is something that Canada needs to jump all over to allow talented individuals to prosper.

Y MEDIA EXCLUSIVE

'PATRICK BROWN IS LYING IN HIS ATTACKS ON NIQAB BAN': PIERRE POILIEVRE

CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

Yudhvir Jaswal: How would you tackle the issue of international trade professionals?

Pierre Poilievre: My government would implement:

1. The 60 Day Guarantee: Incentivize provinces and territories to require occupational licensing bodies to decide whether to grant an immigrant a license to work in their trade or profession within 60 days of getting the application.
2. Merit-Based Licenses: Approve people to work in their field by testing their skills and competence, not judging them by where they studied.
3. Empower professionals and tradespeople waiting to immigrate to Canada to work on getting their credentials before they arrive.
4. Additional study loans for new Canadians who need to upskill to get licensed in their fields.

Yudhvir Jaswal: How are you different from other leaders aspiring to become Federal Conservative leader?

Pierre Poilievre: Well, in many ways. First of all, Patrick Brown supports a carbon tax. He believes in increasing gas prices, home heating prices and inflation. I oppose the carbon tax. Patrick Brown has twice been found guilty of violating the Integrity Act. I've been fighting against government scandals during my entire political career. I brought in Accountability Act that cleans up scandals in politics. I want to work hard to make Canada the most accessible place on earth for everyone, irrespective of their backgrounds, so that they can take control of their lives.

Yudhvir Jaswal: How would you be doing anything different than PM Trudeau in terms of freedom?

Pierre Poilievre: Canadians would have more economic freedom if I were the PM. Many people feel like they're losing control of their lives. They don't have financial independence as Patrick Brown and Justin Trudeau support carbon tax. Trudeau is driving up the cost of living by printing all this money that inflates the cost. He's also increasing taxes on consumers. I would reverse those policies. We need an affordable government, and I would stop printing money to pay our bills. I would remove the gatekeepers to produce more affordable energy, generate more affordable food and build more affordable houses.

Yudhvir Jaswal: What are you going to do anything different regarding infrastructure?

Pierre Poilievre: We need to remove the red tape in this country, as you can't get anything built, whether it's a house, pipeline, or highway. Many regulatory and red tape obstacles block construction from going ahead. So I'm pledging to remove the regulatory rate gatekeepers to get major projects approved in this country.

Yudhvir Jaswal: The Conservatives have been regularly shut out in Toronto ridings during the federal election. Patrick Brown claims Conservatives cannot form the government at the federal level without the suburban ridings. He's claiming to have all the networks to win all these suburban ridings. What do you have to say about this?

Pierre Poilievre: Well, I hold a suburban riding in Ottawa, the second biggest city in Ontario, and I've won seven times. Unlike him, I'm undefeated in all seven of my elections. I don't have the kind of baggage that Patrick Brown brings. He's been caught lying so many times, and it will hurt his ability to convince people in the future. He lied about his position on the carbon tax. He was twice found guilty of violating the Integrity Act in Ontario. So that is the background he brings, and it will drive away many votes, divide our party and cause us to lose the next election. I plan to unite the party around the principle of freedom of speech, enterprise, and faith. These freedoms will concatenate our country and our party. This will help us win the election and put Canadians back into control of their lives.

Yudhvir Jaswal: Is Canada doing an adequate job of integrating the immigrants?

Pierre Poilievre: I agree wholeheartedly that we need integration, which comes from allowing people to work in their field. We constantly need doctors, engineers, teachers, and other highly skilled people who cannot work in their professions and occupations because of these heavily regulated labour markets. So, what I want to do with my plan is to remove the gatekeepers to incentivize provinces to quickly recognize the credentials of our immigrants so that they can work in the fields for which they were trained. And the most crucial part is to get people a paycheck to fulfill their dreams and put their energies into working for the entire country.

Yudhvir Jaswal: What are your comments with regards to Canada's foreign policy with U.S., China, Russia, and India?

Pierre Poilievre: We need to ban Huawei from our 5G network and protect Canada's technological infrastructure from espionage. With regards to Russia, I support strong sanctions against Putin. We should provide more lethal weapons to the Ukrainian people to defend themselves against Russian aggression. We also need to help Europe become independent. We should allow Europeans to power their economy without being dependent on the Russian dictatorship. A robust international energy export plan would enable us to not only put paychecks in the pockets of our workers at home but power our democratic allies abroad. We need stronger ties with India. I have supported free trade with India over the years. I believe we should rekindle the conversation with India to achieve free trade. India is the second-most populous country in the world and the biggest democracy. The commerce between Canada and India brings great prosperity to both countries, and I strongly favour that.

REGIONAL COUNCIL INTRODUCES INCENTIVES TO INCREASE LONG TERM CARE AND HOSPICE SUPPLY IN PEEL

Regional Council approved an Interim Financial Incentive Program that will provide extended Development Charges (DC) deferrals and grants-in-lieu of DCs to help support eligible new Long-Term Care Homes (LTC) and Hospice developments in Peel.

Health care facilities such as long-term care homes and hospice play critical roles in our community. These services have struggled to keep up with the population growth and aging community in Peel. While the long-term care home waitlist remains considerable in Peel Region, the COVID-19 pandemic has further highlighted the need for safe, enhanced and innovative accommodations for Peel senior residents. Council has approved an interim financial incentive pilot program to provide financial support for eligible new not-for-profit long-term care homes and hospice facility developments in Peel.

How the interim financial incentive program will work

The health care system is primarily a provincial responsibility to be funded through income taxes. Municipalities, however, have been confronted with various requests for financial support. One of the most effective ways to strengthen long-term care and palliative services is to support development of new care units. This interim financial incentive program may help bolster LTC and Hospice developments in Peel by offering financial support that can potentially fill gaps when provincial funding is insufficient.

The general terms and conditions of the recommended framework are summarized below:

* Applications for grants will only be available to a not-for-profit organization
* A DC deferral agreement shall be entered between the Region and the landowner with terms and conditions satisfactory to the Chief Financial Officer and Commissioner of Corporate Services
* The deferral interest rate is recommended to be zero per cent as set out in the Region's existing Development Charge Interest Rate Policy .

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Shan Foods has made its mark on the global food map with a 40-year-old legacy with no compromise on the real authentic taste. The brand is a go-to for millions of consumers across the globe. Being one of the leaders in spices and spice mixes, it is trusted for delivering quality and taste. Shan has now launched its world-famous recipe mixes in a new format; bottled cooking sauces. These cooking or simmer sauces are available in 12 different variants like ButterChicken, Tikka, Tandoori to name a few and are suitable for both veg and non-veg uses. These readymade sauces help save up on preparation and cooking time without compromising taste. No need to add any extra ingredients as the bottle contains pretty much everything. Just add rice or protein of your choice and you are done! If you're looking for a faster way to get dinner on the table, just pour, cook and serve with Shain Cooking Sauces!

5 INDIAN STUDENTS KILLED IN ONTARIO'S HIGHWAY 401 CRASH

CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

They were pronounced dead on the scene.

Two injured students were rushed to hospital with serious injuries.

The victims were students in colleges in Montreal and the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). OPP Constable Maggie Pickettsaid: "It's a tragedy. Nobody wants to respond to that call for service, but we're there, we're working." There are over 200,000 Indian students currently studying in colleges in Canada.

CANADA IMPOSES ADDITIONAL SANCTIONS ON ENABLERS OF PRESIDENT PUTIN'S ILLEGAL INVASION OF UKRAINE

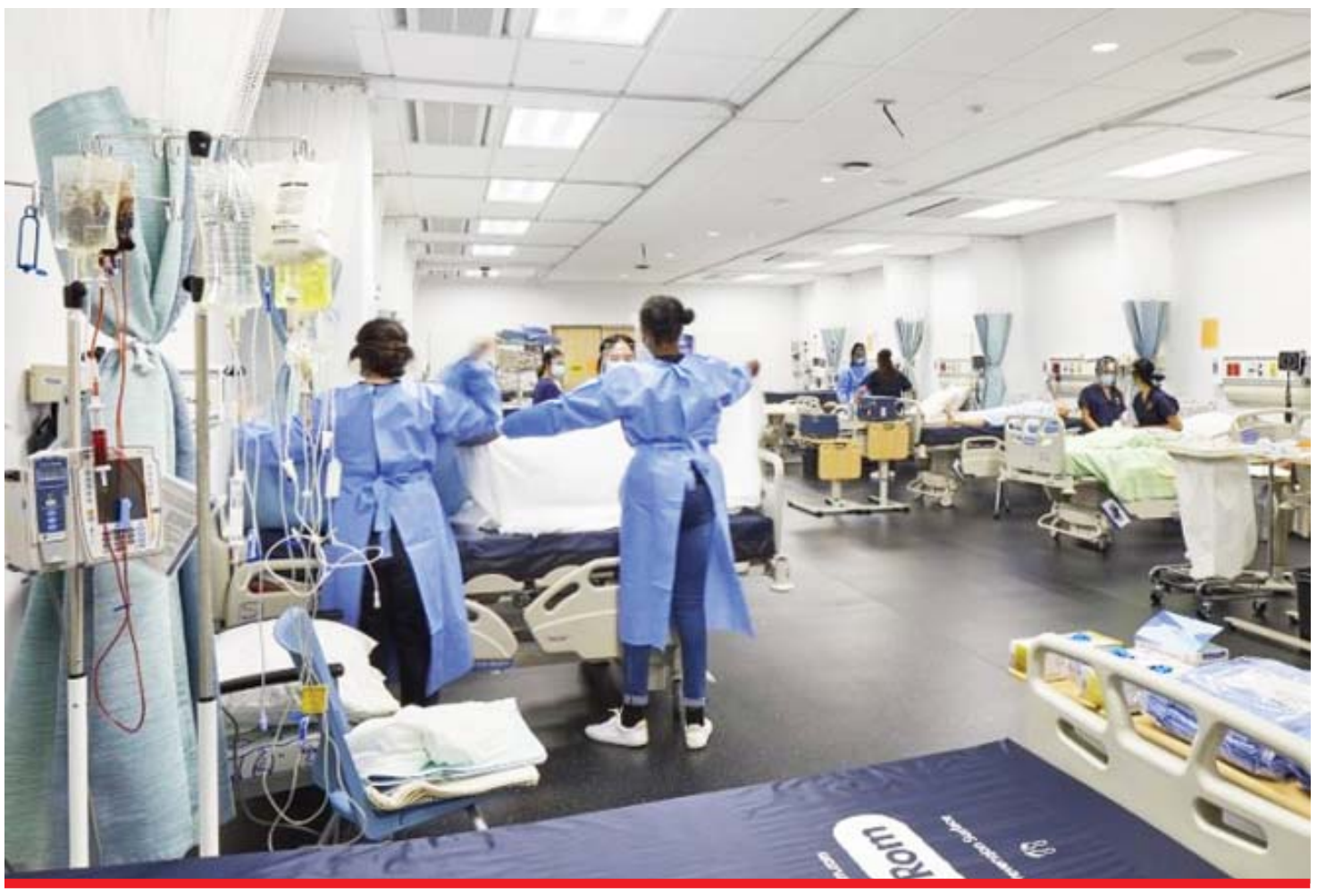
The Honourable Mélanie Joly, Minister of Foreign Affairs, today announced that Canada is imposing new sanctions under the Special Economic Measures (Russia) Regulations in response to the Russian regime's illegal and unjustifiable invasion of Ukraine.

These new measures impose restrictions on 15 Russian officials who enabled and supported President Putin's choice to invade a peaceful and sovereign country.

As part of Canada's growing list of sanctions on Russian leadership, these new measures will apply additional pressure on President Putin to reverse course. His choice to further invade violates Ukraine's sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence.

Aligning with measures taken by our partners in the international community, the actions taken today demonstrate a global commitment to impose sweeping economic measures on the Russian leadership to weaken its ability to wage war.

"Canada will not relent in its support of Ukraine and its people. President Putin made the choice to furher his illegal and unjustifiable invasion, and he can also make the choice to end it by immediately ending the senseless violence and withdrawing his forces. Canada will not hesitate to take further action should the Russian leadership fail to change course," Mélanie Joly, Minister of Foreign Affairs said.



ONTARIO GOVERNMENT CONFIRMS RYERSON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE IN BRAMPTON

CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

This is part of a larger provincial initiative to ensure there are enough doctors to meet future needs, especially in underserved communities.

"Ryerson University will offer a new approach to medical education in Ontario — one that draws on the university's commitment to community, diversity and inclusion, and innovation to address the changing needs for healthcare delivery and practice," said President and Vice-Chancellor Mohamed Lachemi. "We are encouraged and grateful for this announcement of long-term investment by the government of Ontario and we look forward to shaping the future of healthcare with our partners in Brampton and Peel region."

"As a growing city with pressing healthcare needs, I'm proud of the fact that the first new medical school in Ontario in over 30 years is being built right here in Brampton," said Prabmeet Sarkaria, President of the Treasury Board and MPP for Brampton South. "After years of chronic staffing shortages, budget cuts, and neglect from previous governments, our community is finally getting our fair share. Brampton's new medical school will give the eager students of today the opportunity to become the skilled doctors serving our community tomorrow– improving access and quality of care for all Bramptonians."

Ryerson University's future school of medicine is rooted in five major pillars, including:

Focusing on community centric primary care and the social determinants of health

Providing more culturally respectful care to communities

Leveraging innovation and technology in practices to improve quality of care and patient outcomes

Providing future physicians with the skills to develop interdisciplinary networks of healthcare to achieve better outcomes for patients in the communities

Focusing on the aging and supporting seniors as a growing portion of our society gets older

After extensive community input, the university completed an official Letter of Intent for the school of medicine in March, 2022. The university's school of medicine planning committee has been working with, and informing, the province regularly on its proposal and will move onto the next phase of development in the multi-year planning process. Ryerson is working with the City of Brampton to determine a future location for the school of medicine, which aims to accept students in the fall of 2025.

In total, Ontario will add 160 undergraduate seats and 295 postgraduate positions over the next five years at several Ontario-based institutions, including Ryerson. It is the largest expansion of undergraduate and postgraduate education in over 10 years.

About Ryerson University*:

Ryerson University is Canada's leader in innovative, career-oriented education. Urban, culturally diverse and inclusive, the University is home to more than 46,000 students, including 2,900 Master's and PhD students, 4,000 faculty and staff, and 225,000 alumni worldwide. For more information, visit ryerson.ca.

*Renaming in process.

OSLER FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES THE IN-PERSON RETURN OF HOLI GALA—FESTIVAL OF COLOURS

Holi Gala is back! William Osler Health System Foundation (Osler Foundation) is thrilled to welcome friends and supporters in person to the 9th annual Holi Gala – Festival of Colours, presented by BVD Group. The popular event will take place on Saturday, April 9, 2022, at 6 p.m.

This year, Osler Foundation's goal is to raise $450,000 to help Osler's three hospitals and the entire community build back from the pandemic—better, stronger, together.

"We are delighted to invite our supporters to our incredible Holi Gala," said Dr. Vandana Ahluwalia and Dr. Gurjit Bajwa, co-chairs of the Holi Gala Committee. "This year's Holi Gala will be an event that our community can look forward to after a two-year hiatus—colour, fun, dancing and great entertainment. As physicians working through this pandemic, we know how important health care has been and continues to be for our community. This highly-anticipated event will help us build back even stronger than we were before."

The excitement and grandeur of the Holi Gala will remain, but COVID-19 safety protocols and local public health guidelines will be in place to ensure everyone can celebrate together safely.

"BVD Group is honoured to be joining the Holi Gala as presenting sponsor," said Bikram Dhillon, President, BVD Group. "For over 24 months, Osler's health care heroes have been putting their lives at risk to look after our community. It is our duty to contribute what we can to help ease the pain of the pandemic and ensure that our community has the health care that it needs for years to come."

Entertainment this year will include a live performance by Jazzy B, the crowned prince of Bhangra. Born in Punjab and raised in Canada, Jazzy B is a transatlantic superstar who has introduced a fresh new image to the world of Bhangra music. Since his debut album Gugian da Jorra in 1993, Jazzy B has become one of the most important names in modern Punjabi music.

"We are already feeling the excitement from the community for our first in-person Holi Gala in two years," said Pal Ghumman, community chair, Holi Gala Committee. "Holi Gala is the perfect opportunity to show our gratitude to Osler's Health Care Heroes for the exemplary care that has been provided since the pandemic began."

"We're thrilled to welcome our friends back to Holi Gala! Now, more than ever, community support is crucial for helping our hospitals build back from the pandemic," said Ken Mayhew, President and CEO, William Osler Health System Foundation. "Not everyone knows that the community must fund 100% of equipment within a hospital. Funds raised during this year's Holi Gala will help purchase essential surgical equipment like surgical tables and anesthetic gas machines. Your support, whether through a donation or sponsorship, directly enables Osler to continue providing exemplary health care when it is needed most." Auction prizes will include courtside tickets to see the Toronto Raptors, one-year tuition from Mentor College, a one-year lease on a 2022 Mercedes-Benz and much more. In addition to presenting sponsor, BVD Group, the event has already attracted generous support from Diamond Sponsor Specialty Rx Solutions; Emerald Sponsors In 'N Out Car Wash and Detailing Centre, and Ryerson University; Ruby Sponsors Armour Insurance Brokers, Bell, CIBC, Mentor College, and Nanda and Associate Lawyers.

Corporate and community sponsorships are still available. To learn more about sponsorship opportunities, visit www.holigala.ca or by calling Osler Foundation at (905) 494-6556.

ABOUT WILLIAM OSLER HEALTH SYSTEM and FOUNDATION: William Osler Health System is a hospital system, which includes Brampton Civic Hospital, Peel Memorial Centre for Integrated Health and Wellness, and Etobicoke General Hospital, and serves 1.3 million residents of Brampton, Etobicoke, and surrounding communities within the Central West region.

Osler's emergency departments are among the busiest in Canada, and its Mental Health and Addictions program is one of the largest in Ontario. William Osler Health System Foundation seeks to create a healthier community through giving by inspiring its communities to invest in exceptional health care close to home.

ABOUT OSLER FOUNDATION'S HOLI GALA – FESTIVAL OF COLOURS: Holi Gala has raised more than $2.3 million for William Osler Health System Foundation since its inception in 2014. This year, we aim to raise $450,000 to help Osler hospitals and the entire community build back from the pandemic—better, stronger, and together. The gala celebrates the tradition of Holi and festivities that date back to 7th century India and is returning this year to an in-person event after a two-year hiatus. The 2022 Holi Gala is in support of Osler's Build Back, Together campaign and funds raised will go to support the surgical equipment needs at William Osler Health System's hospitals: Brampton Civic Hospital Etobicoke General Hospital, and Peel Memorial Centre for Integrated Health and Wellness. Details are online at www.holigala.ca and www.oslerfoundation.org.

CANADIANS STILL HESITANT TO WITHDRAW PROOF OF VACCINATION MEASURES, MASKING IN INDOOR SPACES: ANGUS REID

The winding down of COVID-19 restrictions has begun in most of the country, and it's being met with both confidence, and concern. A new study from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute, in partnership with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, finds Canadians divided about the swiftness of public health measure reduction, and open to keep key restrictions in place for longer if necessary. Indeed, large numbers say that removal is happening too quickly (36%), at the right pace (38%), or too slowly (22%). Significant regional differences define the overall findings, as people in various parts of the country react to the situation where they live and gauge the changes through the lenses of their own realities. Nationally, 73 per cent say they would support continuing masking requirements in public spaces while 64 per cent support proof of vaccination at places like restaurants and theatres in their community. These data help to underline an emerging trend as governments shift responsibility to Canadians to decide which health measures to continue to follow. While official requirements may soon no longer be in place, many are ready to continue with the habits they have formed over the past two years. Two-thirds (64%) will continue sanitizing their hands in addition to washing, three-in-five will maintain the practice of social distancing, and fully half say – at least for the time being – they will avoid large crowds (53%) and continue to wear a mask in public (50%).

As premiers and public health officials make announcements about the plan for spring, they do so with varied public opinion profiles. In Atlantic Canada, B.C., and Quebec, premiers are perceived as having handled the previous two years well. A majority also say that Canada's chief public health officer Dr. Theresa Tam has done a good job (56%). On the other end of the spectrum, residents in Manitoba and Alberta are overwhelmingly critical of what they have seen from their premiers since the pandemic began.

More Key Findings:

Canadians are equally likely to say that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has done a good job (48%) and a bad job (48%) of handling the pandemic over the past two years.

Past Liberal voters are near unanimous in their praise (88%), while two-thirds of past NDP voters agree that Trudeau has acquitted himself well (67%). Conversely, 84 per cent of past CPC voters, and three-in-five past Bloc voters (62%) say he has done a bad job.

Majorities in every region of the country say sanitizing will be part of their routine for the foreseeable future and at least half say so of keeping extra space between themselves and others.

Awkward moments have been common in Canadian households over the past two years.

PFIZER-BIONTECH VAX GREATLY REDUCES OMICRON INFECTION RISK AMONG KIDS: CDC

Two doses of Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine greatly reduced the risk of Omicron infection among children aged five to 15, according to a study published by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Children and adolescents aged five to 15 were tested for SARS-CoV-2 weekly, irrespective of symptoms, during July 2021 to February 2022, Xinhua news agency quoted the CDC as saying.

Approximately one half of Omicron infections in unvaccinated children and adolescents were asymptomatic, according to the CDC.

Two doses of Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine reduced the risk of Omicron infection by 31 per cent among children aged five to 11, and by 59 per cent among adolescents aged 12 to 15, according to the CDC study.

The Pfizer-BioNTech mRNA Covid-19 vaccine was recommended by CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices for adolescents aged 12 to 15 on May 12 last year, and for children aged five to 11 years on November 2, 2021.

GLOBAL RISE IN COVID, INDIA SHOULDN'T BE COMPLACENT: EXPERTS

Even as India on Monday reported the lowest single-day Covid tally in 680 days, with only 2,503 new cases in the last 24 hours, doctors caution against being complacent as the virus is seeing a resurgence in many countries in Europe and Asia.

Although many countries across the globe have relaxed Covid-related norms, including the use of masks and Covid surveillance, scientists, including the World Health Organisation (WHO) have been warning of the possibility of another global surge.

India has also relaxed several norms including opening up of schools, workplaces, airports, etc. Government guidelines on the use of masks continue, but it is hardly followed on the ground.

"It is prudent to not pursue a zero Covid policy, and therefore accept that there will be surges periodically, especially with the onset of newer variants," Dr. Lancelot Pinto, Consultant Pulmonologist, P.D Hinduja Hospital & MRC, Mahim, Mumbai, told IANS.

Data from Johns Hopkins University has shown that the UK, the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy have seen an upswing in cases this past week, USA Today reported. China is also facing its severest domestic Covid-19 outbreaks in two years, the Global Times reported. There has been a sharp rise in the number of asymptomatic patients, forcing several major cities to go into lockdowns.

Further, South Korea, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand are also seeing a record surge in Covid cases.

IS SIDHU, ONCE A CM ASPIRANT, BOWLED OUT FROM POLITICS?

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Low-profile menstrual hygiene activist Kaur, who believed in door-to-door connect with electorate, emerged as the 'giant slayer' by showing the door to two political heavyweights -- Sidhu and Majithia, who were busy in mudslinging against each other.

In 2017, the cricketer-turned-politician not only defeated his BJP rival Rajesh Honey with a big margin of over 42,000 votes but also played a role of a game-changer for the party by winning 10 out of 11 seats in Amritsar district, once the citadel of the SAD-BJP combine.

Kaur got total votes of 39,679, while Sidhu polled 32,929 votes. Sidhu's archrival Bikram Singh Majithia, one of the most powerful Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) leaders, who left his stronghold Majitha seat to throw down the gauntlet to Sidhu, finished at the third spot with 25,188 votes.

The former Akali minister's wife Ganieve Kaur contested from Majithia assembly segment in his place and won it.

SAD President Sukhbir Badal in an exclusive interview ahead of the poling told IANS that "Sidhu's arrogance will be his undoing".

"We were determined to break Navjot Sidhu's arrogance and teach him to love and respect his constituents. We believed it was our duty to engage him and give the people an option for development of their constituency. The Sidhu couple has ignored Amritsar East for the last 18 years. It is one of the most undeveloped constituencies in the state," Badal had said.

After losing polls, Sidhu, who is facing criticism even from within the party, said, "People who dug holes for me, are now buried 10 feet under...everyone can see that."

"Let bygones be bygones...People have voted for AAP for a change, I congratulate them... New seeds have to be sown... not 'chinta' (worries) but 'chintan' (introspection) should be done," he told the media in Amritsar.

Considered a Congress stronghold, Amritsar (East), the seat that came into being after 2012 delimitation, had backed Sidhu and his namesake wife -- Navjot Kaur.

Sidhu is a three-time Amritsar MP from the BJP. In 2014 he "sacrificed" this seat for his 'guru' Arun Jaitley. Later he was adjusted in the Rajya Sabha by the BJP but not finding a bigger role in Punjab, he quit the party and resigned from Parliament.

Conceding his defeat, Sidhu in a tweet said, "The voice of the people is the voice of God. Humbly accept the mandate of the people of Punjab. Congratulations to AAP."

After his political fall, Sidhu will now find it tough to say his catchphrase 'thokotali' (clap your hands).

Ahead of Congress clearing the name of Charanjit Singh Channi as the chief ministerial candidate, Sidhu had been toeing his 'self-proclaimed' Punjab Model agenda with the promise of creating corporations in the state to stop pilferage of revenue from liquor and mining.

On his Punjab Model, not part of the party's manifesto as rivals within the party were gunning for him for being unrealistic, Sidhu had been saying that he would answer them when he would deem fit.

Sidhu, who was not averse to even sharp criticism of his own party and its policies and leaders in the run-up to the polls, was firm on his stand that it was the people who will elect the MLAs and choose their chief minister, not the party's central leadership.

Seeking freedom to take decisions, Sidhu, who is seen by his party leaders neither a Congress veteran nor enjoys a mass base, had categorically told the Gandhi scion at a virtual rally in Jalandhar that give him the power to make a decision as he did not want to be kept as a 'showcase horse'.

Indulging into the blame game, Lok Sabha Congress MP Jasbir Singh Gill said infighting, indiscipline, workers disenchantment, inflated ego, and arrogance of leaders have mauled the party in the state.

INTERNATIONAL KABADDI PLAYER, SANDEEP SINGH, SHOT DEAD IN PUNJAB

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Hailing from Nangal Ambian village in Shahkot, Sandeep was a professional circle kabaddi player and played in the stopper position. He had ruled the sport for more than a decade and played in Canada, the US and the UK, other than Punjab.

He is survived by his wife and two sons, who are currently in England, where he was settled.

As per initial reports, Sandeep was one of the biggest organisers of circle kabaddi tournaments in the region. Settled in England, Sandeep had come to India to attend some weddings and host kabaddi tournaments.

The former Indian kabaddi player hailed from Nangal Ambian village in Shahkot. He had started his career playing state-level matches and was known as 'Gladiator' by his fans.

CONGRESS' G-23 TOOK DEFENSIVE STANCE AT CWC MEET

The group of dissenters within the Congress, also known as G-23, took a defensive stance during the Congress Working Committee (CWC) meeting on Sunday, as their representatives raised only 'technical points' and did not press for a change in the leadership as they had demanded in 2020.

Sources said that at the meeting, Ghulam Nabi Azad and Anand Sharma repeatedly reiterated that "they are in the party and are not rebels, but want the party to perform electorally".

Azad said that many decisions were taken late by the party which led to the recent Assembly poll debacle.

The Congress' interim chief Sonia Gandhi offered to "step back" from her role during the over five-hour long meeting on the fall-out of the recent Assembly polls. However, the CWC refused to accept it and reposed faith in the interim chief. The CWC also authorised her to make "necessary and comprehensive" organisational changes.

After the CWC meet, some of the G-23 leaders privately admitted that it's the end of the road for them in the party "till Rahul Gandhi is at the helm". However, many believe that they will be in the party and not as a "tenant as they have dedicated years for the party".

The brainstorming session next month will pave way for the party to rejuvenate and reinvent itself.

With two crucial states -- Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh -- going to the polls later this year, and given that the party's strength in the Rajya Sabha is set to get reduced after the Punjab election results, it would be interesting to see if the dissenters find place in the new team.

"The recent Assembly election results in five states are a cause of serious concern for the Congress. The party accepts that due to shortcomings in our strategy, we could not effectively expose the misrule of BJP governments in four states and overcome the anti-incumbency in Punjab in the short time after effecting a change in leadership," read the CWC resolution. "The Congress will be fully prepared to face the electoral challenges in the upcoming elections in 2022 and 2023 as well as in the Lok Sabha elections in 2024. "The CWC unanimously reaffirms its faith in the leadership of Sonia Gandhi and requests the Congress President to lead from the front, address the organisational weaknesses, and effect necessary and comprehensive organisational changes in order to take on the political challenges," concluded the resolution.

The humanitarian needs driven by the conflict in Ukraine are alarming.

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THE BUMPY ROAD AHEAD FOR AKHILESH YADAV

For Samajwadi Party (SP) President Akhilesh Yadav, one journey has ended and another has just begun.

In the recently-held Assembly elections, he may have more than doubled the number of seats his party had won in 2017 and the vote percentage also spiked one and a half times, but the challenges that lie ahead for the 48-year-old leader have also increased manifold.

The biggest challenge for Akhilesh in the coming months would be to keep his party together.

Five years is a long time and not many of the newly elected legislators would be in the mood to struggle against the establishment for this period.

Besides keeping the legislature party intact, Akhilesh will also have to work overtime to prevent an exodus from his party -- the kind that he had encouraged from other parties before the elections.

The SP is almost brimming over with turncoats and there is no guarantee that such elements will not turn away again. These turncoats, interestingly, are a major reason for the SP's below expectation performance.

Akhilesh chose the 'outsiders' over his loyal partymen when it came to ticket distribution and this led to his cadres retiring into their shells.

The defeat of Swami Prasad Maurya and Dharam Singh Saini, both of whom came from the BJP, is an example.

Akhilesh will now have to constantly boost the morale of his party workers and reassure them that the party has a future in state politics. While keeping his OBC vote bank intact, the SP chief also needs to expand his vote base.

BJP APPOINTS OBSERVERS FOR ELECTION OF LEGISLATIVE PARTY LEADER IN UP, U'KHAND, GOA & MANIPUR

The BJP on Monday appointed central observers and co-observers to elect the leader of legislative party (chief minister) in Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Goa and Manipur.

The party has appointed Union Home Minister Amit Shah and former Jharkhand Chief Minister Raghuvar Das as central observers for Uttar Pradesh. In a statement, the BJP national general secretary Arun Singh said, "Parliamentary Board of the Bharatiya Janata Party has appointed central observers and co-observers for the election of the leader of the legislative party in Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Manipur and Goa Assembly." For Uttarakhand, the BJP has appointed Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Minister of State for External Affairs Meenakshi Lekhi as observers for election of leader of legislative party.

Similalry, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Union Law and Justice Minister Kiren Rijiju have been appointed central observers for Manipur. For election of legislative party leader in Goa, the BJP has appointed Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar and Union Minister of State for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry L. Murugan as central observers.

The party has created history by winning Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand for the second consecutive term. It has also won the majority in Manipur for the first time on its own. Also, the party is set to form the government in Goa for third term by winning 20 out of the 40 Assembly constituencies.

A senior party functionary said that after appointment of central observers and co-observers, the process of election of new chief ministers in these four states has been started. "Now, the central observers will call a meeting of the legislative party to elect a new leader. After the election of the leader of the legislative party, the BJP will stake claim to form the government and a new government will be sworn in at the earliest," he added.

BJP ANALYSES WHY 11 YOGI MINISTERS LOST DESPITE PARTY'S HISTORIC WIN

Despite the BJP's historic victory in Uttar Pradesh, the drubbing faced by 11 ministers of the Yogi Adityanath government, including Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Maurya, who was credited with the party's win in 2017, and Sugarcane Minister Suresh Rana, has raised many questions within the party. The defeat of Rana from Shamli district, Rajendra Pratap Singh alias Moti Singh from Pratapgarh, Chandrika Prasad Upadhyay from Chitrakoot, Anand Swarup Shukla from Ballia, Upendra Tiwari, Satish Dwivedi from Siddharthnagar district, Lakhan Singh Rajput from Auraiya, Chhatrapal Singh Gangwar from Bareilly, Ranvendra Singh from Fatehpur, Sangeeta Balwant from Ghazipur and the controversial MLA Sangeet Som, has raised several questions about the party's prospects in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. While the BJP broke the trend in Uttarakhand by returning to power for the second time, Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami lost the election from Khatima, which has made it difficult for the party to elect a new Chief Minister. Uttar Pradesh polls have proved that the Modi-Yogi bond is stronger than the combined popularity of Samajwadi party's Akhilesh Yadav, and the Congress's Rahul-Priyanka pair. For the first time in 37 years, Uttar Pradesh has returned a party to power, that too, with a thumping majority of 273 seats. In a state where the government is usually formed with 30 per cent votes, the BJP is set to form the government for the second time in a row, by securing over 40 per cent votes. While Priayanka Gandhi's failure in resurrecting the Congress in Uttar Pradesh called for revamp in the party, Modi held a massive roadshow in Gujarat, the very next day after poll results, to kickstart his party's campaign for the Assembly elections in the state scheduled this year.

THE BIRTH OF A NEW MONETARY WORLD ORDER AS RUSSIA REELS UNDER SANCTIONS

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They tell me it takes about 200 rubles to equal 1 dollar these days. The Moscow stock exchange has been closed fully for two weeks because they know the moment it opens, it will probably collapse," Biden said.

Credit rating agencies have downgraded Russia to 'junk' status.

The list of businesses and international corporations leaving Russia is growing by the day, Biden said while listing the stark consequences for Russia and its economy that have unfolded since the Ukraine war.

"We will not fight a war against Russia in Ukraine. Direct confrontation between NATO and Russia is World War III, something we must strive to prevent," Biden said on not sending troops to Ukraine.

"And we're going to continue to squeeze (Vladimir) Putin. The G7 will seek to deny Russia the ability to borrow from leading multinational institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Putin is an aggressor… And Putin must pay the price," Biden said.

Zoltan Pozsar of Credit Suisse said in a report, "We are witnessing the birth of Bretton Woods III – a new world (monetary) order centred around commodity-based currencies in the East that will likely weaken the Eurodollar system and also contribute to inflationary forces in the West."

A crisis is unfolding. A crisis of commodities. Commodities are collateral, and collateral is money, and this crisis is about the rising allure of outside money over inside money. Bretton Woods II was built on inside money, and its foundations crumbled a week ago when the G7 seized Russia's FX reserves," Credit Suisse said.

Pozsar said it is a perfect storm but that's precisely what happens when the West sanctions the single-largest commodity producer of the world, which sells virtually everything.

"What we are seeing at the 50-year anniversary of the 1973 OPEC supply shock is something similar but substantially worse — the 2022 Russia supply shock, which isn't driven by the supplier but the consumer.

"The aggressor in the geopolitical arena is being punished by sanctions, and sanctions-driven commodity price moves threaten financial stability in the West. The commodities market is much more financialised and leveraged today than it was during the 1973 OPEC supply crisis, and today's Russian supply crisis is much bigger, much more broad-based, and much more correlated. It's scarier," Pozsar said.

There are Russian commodities that are collapsing in price and there are non-Russian commodities that are rallying — this rally is due to the 2022 Russia supply shock.

"It's a buyers' strike. Not a seller's strike, to make things all the more absurd… Russian commodities today are like subprime CDOs were in 2008. Conversely, non-Russian commodities are like what US Treasury securities were back in 2008. One collapsing in price, and the other surging in price, with margin calls on both regardless of which side you are on," he added.

The ban on technology exports to Russia, in response to the war in Ukraine, could backfire on global manufacturers of computer processors and semiconductors, as many crucial components for their production are made exclusively in Russia, an industry expert warned.

"The ban on finished products for Russia will result in a retaliatory ban on the supply of production components and will cause an acute shortage of

microprocessors for the whole world. By comparison, the end-of-2021 supply disruption situation will appear relatively light," Oleg Izumrudov, head of the Consortium of Russian Developers of Data Storage Systems (RosSHD), said, RT reported.

Following the sanctions, Russia may default on sovereign bonds for the first time since the Bolshevik revolution in 1917.

A leading ratings agency has warned that Russia is soon likely to default on its debts, as it downgraded the country's bonds further into 'junk' territory, BBC reported.

Fitch Ratings slashed its assessment of Russia to almost the bottom of its scale, just days after downgrading it from investment status.

If Russia does fail to make payments on its debt, it raises the possibility of the first major default on the country's sovereign bonds since the wake of the 1917 Bolshevik revolution, BBC reported.

It is the latest blow to the country's creditworthiness in the wake of its invasion of Ukraine. This week, Moscow said its bond payments may be affected by sanctions.

"The further ratcheting up of sanctions, and proposals that could limit trade in energy, increase the probability of a policy response by Russia that includes at least selective non-payment of its sovereign debt obligations," Fitch said, BBC reported.

Removing Russian oil from the market would make energy prices skyrocket to over $300 per barrel of oil, Russia's Deputy PM Aleksandr Novak said, adding that Russia is not dependent on the West and can "reroute" its supplies elsewhere.

The European officials are "once again seeking to put all the blame for their own recent energy policy shortfalls on Russia", Novak told journalists, adding that "Russia has nothing to do with the current price hike on market volatility", RT reported.

There are grave implications for food prices also. Energy and commodity prices-including wheat and other grains-have surged due to the war in Ukraine, adding to inflationary pressures from supply chain disruptions and the rebound from the Covid-19 pandemic, the IMF said.

Price shocks will have an impact worldwide, especially on poor households for whom food and fuel are a higher proportion of expenses. Should the conflict escalate, the economic damage would be all the more devastating. The sanctions on Russia will also have a substantial impact on the global economy and financial markets, with significant spillovers to other countries, the IMF said.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR: ZELENSKY CITES 9/11 IN HIS APPEAL TO US CONGRESS, SAYS, 'WE NEED YOU RIGHT NOW'

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky cited Pearl Harbor and the Sept. 11 terror attacks on Wednesday as he appealed to the U.S. Congress to do more to help Ukraine's fight against Russia, but acknowledged the no-fly zone he has sought to "close the sky" over his country may not happen.

Livestreamed into the Capitol complex, Zelensky said the U.S. must sanction Russian lawmakers and block imports. He showed a packed auditorium of lawmakers a graphic video of the destruction and devastation his country has suffered in the war, along with heartbreaking scenes of civilian casualties.

"We need you right now," Zelensky said, adding, "I call on you to do more." In urging a steeper economic hit to the Russians, he said: "Peace is more important than income." Lawmakers gave him a standing ovation, before and after his short remarks, which Zelenskyy began in Ukrainian through an interpreter but then switched to English in a heartfelt appeal to help end the bloodshed. "I see no sense in life if it cannot stop the deaths," he told them. Wearing a short-sleeved army T-shirt, Zelinsky began his remarks by invoking the destruction the U.S. suffered in 1941 when Japan bombed the naval base at Pearl Harbor in Honolulu, Hawaii, and the 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon by militants who commandeered passenger airplanes to crash into the symbols of Western democracy and economy. "Remember Pearl Harbor? Remember September 11?" Zelenzky asked. "Our countries experience the same every day right now." Nearing the three-week mark in an ever-escalating war, Zelensky has been imploring allied leaders to stop the Russian airstrikes. President Joe Biden's administration has stopped short of providing a no-fly zone or the transfer of military jets from neighboring Poland as the U.S. seeks to avoid a direct confrontation with Russia.

UK PM BORIS JOHNSON CALLS ON WORLD TO WEAN OFF RUSSIAN OIL, GAS

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson declared a mission to build an international coalition against Russia and wean off dependence on its oil and gas exports in protest against the conflict with Ukraine, as he embarked on a visit to the Gulf region on Wednesday.

Johnson is scheduled to meet with leaders in Abu Dhabi and Riyadh for talks on energy, regional security and humanitarian relief as part of what Downing Street described as the UK's efforts to galvanise global action on the crisis in Ukraine.

The leaders are expected to discuss efforts to improve energy security and reduce volatility in global energy and food prices amid the ongoing Russia-Ukraine crisis.

"The brutal and unprovoked assault President Putin has unleashed on Ukraine will have far-reaching consequences for the world, well beyond Europe's borders," Johnson said ahead of his visit.

"The UK is building an international coalition to deal with the new reality we face. The world must wean itself off Russian hydrocarbons and starve Putin's addiction to oil and gas. Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are key international partners in that effort. We will work with them to ensure regional security, support the humanitarian relief effort and stabilise global energy markets for the longer term," he said. Johnson will hold talks with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) before travelling to Saudi Arabia to meet with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

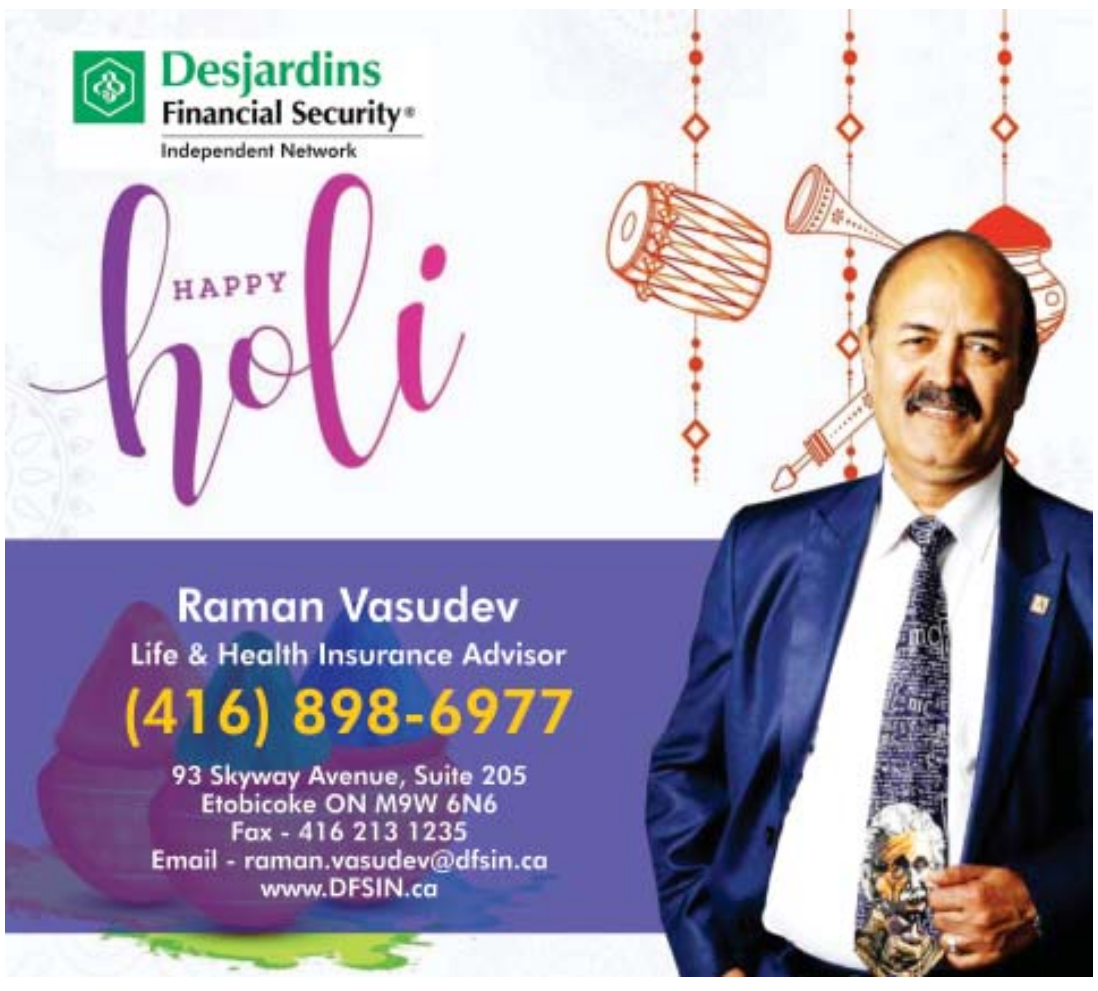
The focus of the visit is on highlighting the importance of working together to increase the diplomatic and economic pressure on President Vladimir Putin's regime and minimise the global fallout from the conflict. "Vladimir Putin over the last years has been like a pusher, feeding an addiction in Western countries to his hydrocarbons," Johnson told reporters before he set off from the UK.

"We need to get ourselves off that addiction," he added.

In addition to potential measures to increase oil production, the visit is a part of efforts on diversifying the UK's energy supply and working with international partners to ramp up renewables, Downing Street said. Saudi Arabia, the third largest supplier of diesel to the UK, committed to net zero emission targets by 2060 ahead of the COP26 climate summit hosted by the UK in November last year.

North Korean missile exploded in air in failed launch, says South Korea

A North Korean missile fired from its capital region exploded in mid-air in an apparent failed launch Wednesday, South Korea's military said, amid speculation that the North could soon launch its biggest long-range missile in its most significant provocation in years. Details of the missile explosion weren't immediately known. But the launch, the 10th of its kind this year, shows North Korea is determined to press ahead on its push to modernise its weapons arsenal and pressure its rivals into making concessions amid dormant denuclearisation talks. The North Korean missile blew up while it was flying at an altitude of about 20 km, a South Korean military official said requesting anonymity because he wasn't publicly authorised to speak to media on the issue. He said the cause of the explosion wasn't known.



NEW DISCOUNTS AND INITIATIVES TO HELP TRANSIT RIDERS GO FARTHER AND SAVE MORE.

Starting March14, Metrolinx is makingtransit around the Greater Golden Horseshoe more affordable with bigger discounts for transit riders. This means more savings and more reasons to choose transit.

Discounted Fare Rates for Youth and Post-Secondary Students

The GGH's young riders are going places; and Metrolinxwants to help them get there. For customersaged 13 to 19,Metrolinxhas increasedthe discountfrom 22.5 to 40 per centoff adult fares. As always, children 12 and under ride GO and UP Express free. This discount also applies to full-time post-secondary student riders, regardless of age, on GO Transit and UP Express.

This discount means students will have more money in their pocket to enjoy those daily cups of coffee or a weekend outing with friends. Parents can breathe a little easier with decreased costs for their students within the household.

How it works

GO and UP Express customers who are 13 to 19, regardless of whether or not they are enrolled as a student, or enrolled in post-secondary full-time can benefit from the discounted fare. Those with the youth fare option set up on their PRESTO card need to travel with their Canadian school-issued ID or government-issued ID as proof of age. To setup a post-secondary fare for GO Transit and UP Express, you must have a GO Student ID. Learn about how to get one here: https://gotransit.com/studentid

100% Co-Fare for GOTransfers

Metrolinxis making it easier to leave the car at home and get on GO Transit. With the GO Co-Fare program, riders transferring between most local transit systems and GO Transit enjoy100 per cent off on their local transit fare. This means rides between GO Transit and most local transitare completely free. This includes the Durham Region Transit, Milton Transit, Grand River Transit, Guelph Transit, Oakville Transit, MiWay, Brampton Transit, Hamilton Street Railway, Burlington Transit, Bradford West Gwillimbury Transit and York Region Transit, with continued participation with Barrie Transit.

How it works

For transit agencies that use PRESTO, the discount will be applied automatically when you tap between GO Transit and your local transit agency. For others,show your PRESTO card, valid single-ride paper ticket or day pass GO ticket as proof of GO fare payment.

GO Affordability Project

Metrolinx is making transit more affordable to residentsacross the region. Starting March 14, GO Transit will be offering 50 per centoff on fares for eligible participants in Peel's low-income pilot program. This program will be extended to more regions and transit agencies in the GTHAin the coming months.

This discount will open more doors and opportunities to riders who need it most, so they connect to jobs, education and leisure tripsin more places around the region without feeling the financial pinch.

How it works

Peel Region residents enrolled in **Peel Region's Affordable Transit Program** will receive the 50 per cent reimbursement on any GO Transit trip. It doesn't have to begin, end or include travel within Brampton or Mississauga. To receive the fare reimbursement, tap on a PRESTO device within 30 days of your GO Transit trip, and within a week,you'll see the reimbursed fare in your PRESTO account.

These changes are just some of the ways Metrolinx is making transit a more affordable and convenient option for people across the region. Other initiatives include:

* **Online Weekend Passes:** offering unlimited travel across the GO network all day or weekend long for a flat fare.
* **Kids GO Free:** kids 12 and under travel on GO trains and buses free.
* **Reduced fares for short distance GO trips.**

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Mid Week ENTERTAINMENT

PRIYANKA CHOPRA RESUMES WORK ALMOST 2 MONTHS AFTER WELCOMING BABY WITH NICK JONAS |22

March 15, 2022 www.southasiandaily.com Vol 22 Issue 11, Phone 647-272-8182, 905-670-3687

HELLO AWARDS: ANANYA WINS 'MOST PROMISING TALENT', REKHA IS 'CINEMATIC LEGEND'

IT WAS QUITE AN EVENTFUL NIGHT AT THE HELLO HALL OF FAME AWARDS IN MUMBAI ON SUNDAY. WHILE SIDHARTH MALHOTRA WAS SEEN BEING A GENTLEMAN BY HELPING KRITI SANON WITH HER GOWN, HIS RUMOURED GIRLFRIEND KIARA ADVANI ATTENDED THE EVENT IN A SHIMMERY YELLOW GOWN WITH A SMALL TRAIN. TAAPSEE PANNU, TOO, WORE A RUFFLED GOWN WITH A TRAIN AND WAS SEEN HAVING A CONVERSATION WITH SIDHARTH. SIDHARTH ATTENDED THE CEREMONY IN A BLACK SUIT WITH A HINT OF GLITTER. HE HELPED KRITI SANON AS SHE POSED ON THE RED CARPET IN HER LAVENDER RUFFLED GOWN WITH A LONG TRAIN. THE ACTOR, WHO IS CURRENTLY PROMOTING HER UPCOMING FILM BACHCHHAN PAANDEY, ARRIVED FOR THE EVENT WITH A BANDAGED TOE. SHE RECEIVED THE BEST ACTOR POPULAR CHOICE AWARD.

'EARNING BROWNIE POINTS FOR': DEEPIKA PADUKONE PULLS RANVEER SINGH'S LEG AS HE HEAPS PRAISE ON HER

Deepika Padukone sure knows how to get back at Ranveer Singh. The couple who's known for their witty social media exchanges recently engaged in a fun Instagram banter yet again. The actor hosted an AMA (Ask Me Anything) session on the photo-sharing app and was bombarded with questions related to his wife Deepika. During Ranveer's special Q&A session on Instagram, he answered several fans' questions about Deepika with loads of love. He was all praise for his wife while answering fan queries with absolute wit. When a netizen asked Ranveer whether he likes the food cooked by his wife, the 'Gully Boy' star could not stop heaping praises on Deepika. "Love it. She is an amazing cook. My multitalented baby," he replied. Sharing Ranveer's answer on her Instagram Story and wrote, "Trying to earn brownie points for?" and tagged her husband.

ALIA BHATT CELEBRATED HER 29TH BIRTHDAY ON A PRIVATE ISLAND WITH FAMILY

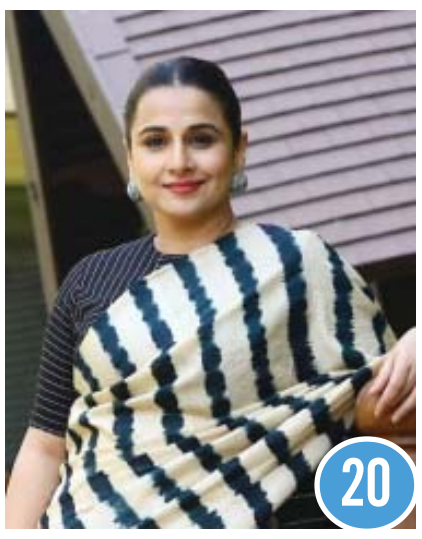
Bollywood actor Alia Bhatt is one happy 29-year-old woman who has recently garnered immense appreciation for her film 'Gangubai Kathiawadi'. The actor, who rang in her 29th birthday on Tuesday with her family in the Maldives, has posted a heartwarming video montage from the day, to thank all her followers for their love. The video, which she set to the song 'At My Worst' by Pink Sweat$, captured beautiful pictures of smiling Alia by the beach, glimpses of her dancing on a yacht, watching TV sitcom 'F.R.I.E.N.D.S', going to the pool and posing with her mom Soni Razdan and sister Shaheen Bhatt.

Meanwhile, on her birthday, Alia introduced fans to Isha, her character from the upcoming Ayan Mukherjee directorial 'Brahmastra', co-starring her beau Ranbir Kapoor. On the occasion of Alia's birthday, Ayan took to Instagram and shared her look along with a caption reading, "Happy Birthday, Little One. For all the Joy… the Pride… the Inspiration, and the Magic that you make me feel… Here's something to celebrate you on your special day Our Isha - the Shakti of Brahmastra - in the first visuals we are releasing from our movie ! Love. Light. Fire. Go ! #happybirthdayalia #brahmastra."

YAMI GAUTAM SUPPORTS 'THE KASHMIR FILES', SAYS 'BEING MARRIED TO A KASHMIRI PANDIT

ACTRESS YAMI HAS COME OUT IN SUPPORT OF VIVEK AGNIHOTRI'S LATEST FILM THE KASHMIR FILES. THE ACTRESS SAID THAT BY MARRYING ADITYA DHAR, WHO IS A KASHMIR PANDIT SHE UNDERSTANDS WHAT THE COMMUNITY WENT THROUGH IN 1990. SHE ALSO URGED ONE AND ALL TO WATCH THE FILM.

ON DIETING AND MORE: CHECK OUT VIDYA BALAN'S RECENT AMA WITH FANS



VIDYA BALAN TAKES PART IN A FUN AMA SESSION WITH FANS ON INSTAGRAM. FROM DIETING TO HER FAVOURITE CUISINE AND MORE, HERE IS WHAT IT LOOKED LIKE.

POOJA HEGDE SAYS ACQUIRING A PAN-INDIA FAN BASE WAS A COINCIDENCE

POOJA HEGDE MADE HER BOLLYWOOD DEBUT IN MOHENJO DARO IN 2016, OPPOSITE HRITIK ROSHAN.

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KATRINA KAIF, VICKY KAUSHAL FLAUNT INFECTIOUS SMILES IN RARE MUSHY SELFIE

Bollywood lovebirds Vicky Kaushal and Katrina Kaif are currently enjoying marital bliss. Every now and then they leave their fans in awe with their public appearances or their social media PDA. Yet again, a similar incident took place when the newlyweds shared a glimpse of their love-filled world on Instagram that ultimately turned into a treat for everyone. Taking to the photo-sharing application, Katrina shared two early morning selfies in which she was seen resting her face on her husband's shoulder. On one hand, where Vicky looked dapper in a white shirt, Katrina on the other wore a yellow outfit and sunglasses. Interestingly, in the first photo, the two of them seemed a little sleepy. Soon, the 'Sooryavanshi' actress shared yet another photo in which the two looked lovely as they smiled for the camera. In the caption, she posted a heart sticker. Needless to say but the two of them definitely took our heart away! Well, this isn't the first time that they've indulged in a social media PDA. Just recently, Vicky took to his Instagram Story and showed off Katrina's photography skills. In the candid picture, Vicky can be seen sporting a black suit paired with a white shirt.

IND VS SL, 2ND TEST: INDIA BEAT SRI LANKA TO SWEEP SERIES 2-0, REGISTER 15TH SUCCESSIVE TEST SERIES WIN AT HOME

FOR SRI LANKA, THEIR CAPTAIN KARUNARATNE SCORED HIS 14TH TEST TON BUT ONLY TO DELAY THE INEVITABLE AS ASHWIN & BUMRAH PICKED 7 WICKETS BETWEEN THEM TO SWEEP TEST SERIES 2-0

R ASHWIN BECOMES FIRST BOWLER TO COMPLETE 100 WICKETS IN ICC WORLD TEST CHAMPIONSHIP

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POOJA HEGDE SAYS ACQUIRING A PAN-INDIA FAN BASE WAS A COINCIDENCE

MUMBAI, (IANS) Actress Pooja Hegde, who is riding on the success of 'Radhe Shyam' that also stars 'Bahubaali' fame Prabhas, says finding her fan base across the country wasn't her career strategy but just a co-incidence because she is only going with the flow.

Pooja made her debut in Bollywood opposite Hritik Roshan in 'Mohenjo Daro' in 2016. However, she became a star in the south with a string of successful films like 'Oka Laila Kosam', 'Duvvada Jagannadham', 'Aravinda Sametha Veera Raghava', 'Maharshi' and 'Ala Vaikunthapurramuloo'.

Now that 'Radhe Shyam' is released in multiple languages and she is getting praised for her acting, Pooja told IANS that language never stopped her from connecting with her fans, rather it has empowered her. Pooja told IANS: "When I started working in south Indian films, I was just going with the flow without strategising much. It is a blessing that the audience has accepted me in every region. 'Radhe Shyam' is an important film for me because it's a multi-lingual movie.

"I worked hard on my character too. Earlier, people would say that I have a strong screen presence and that I am 'beautiful'. I think that was more of a compliment for my parents because I got my good looks and physic from them. My acting and my contribution to a successful film makes me happy and satisfie. It fuels my energy to do more," she said.

The actress now has an interesting line-up in Hindi, including Rohit Shetty's 'Cirkus' opposite Ranveer Singh and Salman Khan's 'Bhaijaan'. She will also be seen in the Telugu film 'Acharya' starring Chiranjeevi and Ram Charan, and Tamil film 'Beast' alongside Vijay.

Asked if her success in south Indian films empowered her to choose better projects in Bollywood, she said, "Yes, undoubtedly so. It actually made me secure in many ways. Look, in Bollywood, I am still a baby... I have a lot more to do. In the Telugu film industry, especially after the success of 'Most Eligible Bachelor', producers count me as a bankable star. So there I can demand female-oriented stories, big-budget films with superstars etc. I have worked hard to earn that space in the Telugu film industry. In Bollywood, things are different for me." She added, "I am not in a rush in Bollywood that I have to appear in films otherwise I will lose out on visibility. No, I can wait. I am also a fan of many filmmakers and superstars in Bollywood, so I will grab those opportunities. For instance, I am a fan of Rohit Shetty and the kind of commercial potboilers he makes. So when I got the offer of 'Cirkus', I just agreed to do the film because I am a fangirl!"

However, she mentioned that even in the south Indian film industry, connecting with the audience of every region is very interesting because the audience is very diverse there. Pooja explained, "When we say 'south Indian film', we must understand that every region is different. The audience of Telugu film is different from Tamil. I am lucky that I have got a connection with both the region."

'THE KASHMIR FILES' MADE TAX-FREE IN TRIPURA

AGARTALA, (IANS) Tripura Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb announced on Monday that the state government would make the screening of Bollywood film 'The Kashmir Files' directed by Vivek Agnihotri tax-free. Deb said in a tweet: "'The Kashmir Files' made by Vivek Agnihotri depicts the heart-wrenching struggle and trauma faced by Kashmiri Hindus. To support his movie and encourage the people of the state to watch it, Tripura govt has decided to make it tax-free in the state." 'The Kashmir Files' is based on Kashmiri Pandits' exodus from the Valley in 1990. Starring Anupam Kher, Darshan Kumaar, Mithun Chakraborty and Pallavi Joshi, among others, the film was released nation-wide on March 11.

AAMIR KHAN PRAISES EX-WIFE KIRAN RAO FOR BEING BRUTALLY HONEST

MUMBAI, (IANS) Aamir Khan recently praised his ex-wife Kiran Rao for being brutally honest and making him stay grounded, a trait that has helped the 'Lagaan actor make improvements in his social and creative conduct. Addressing the media on his birthday on Monday, the actor said, "If there is anyone who has given me the best gift in my life, it has to be Kiran Rao because she is the one, who has known me from close quarters and with her, it has been the most rewarding relation among all the relations that I share with my friends, family and the peers." Elaborating on the 'gift' that Kiran has given to him, he mentioned how she gives him precise suggestions that work wonders when he sits down to analyze and follow them, "I was talking to her the other day. I asked her what are some of the things that I need to work on to improve myself as a human being. She made me understand in a very nice way, it was very important for me to listen to her and to follow her advice." The actor doesn't shy away from exploring himself and look out for his weak areas. "I like the fact that I don't feel shy when I set out for myself as a human being, that's where the growth starts. I like to zero down on my shortcomings and work would improve in myself with each passing day", Aamir concluded.

ON DIETING AND MORE: CHECK OUT VIDYA BALAN'S RECENT AMA WITH FANS

The immensely talented Vidya Balan is back to entertain us with her wit and humour. The actor recently put up an Instagram story asking her fans and followers to 'ask away' and her replies were just too good to miss! After a mind-blowing performance in 'Sherni' last year, Vidya is yet again ready to blow us away with another strong character she plays in her upcoming release 'Jalsa'. While Vidya is busy promoting for the same, she took some time off to reply to her fans and followers in this super fun AMA.

Vidya posted a video of herself snacking on some Indian dishes. She holds a plate of what looks like white khatta dhokla and can be seen biting into it. Another plate in front of her has khandvi and chutney on it. Vidya writes, "Snacking. Have some time to chit chat".

Her fans started off the AMA by revealing how each one of them was excited about her role in the upcoming thriller series. One of the fans asked her about her favourite cuisine to which she said it was 'Italian'. Don't miss the adorable pizza and pasta emojis she used to convey her love for the cuisine.

After a couple of other questions, a fan asked one of the most burning questions that almost all of us want to know the answer to and that is if the fabulous diva believes in dieting. In the true Vidya style, the actress left a befitting reply to the question. She replied, "No...I eat healthy." Knowing that Vidya has been open about her struggles with weight gain and dieting, this was the best response we could have gotten from the actor. In one of her last Instagram Q&As, the actor had given us a peek into some more of her favourite foodie secrets. Like how her favourite dish in the world is her sasu ma's bread pudding and that she would choose coffee over tea on any given day. Read all about it here.

Vidya's next big release is all set to hit the screens on the 18th of March. The film has Vidya Balan and Shefali Shah in lead roles.

SHAH RUKH KHAN ANNOUNCES LAUNCH OF HIS OTT APP; SALMAN KHAN CONGRATULATES HIM SAYING 'AAJ KI PARTY TERI TARAF SE'

A year after teasing his OTT debut, Shah Rukh Khan, on Tuesday, gave fans a reason to cheer when he shared a new poster. Taking to his social media handles, the megastar shared a poster of himself giving the thumbs up and captioned it as, "Kuch kuch hone wala hai, OTT ki duniya mein."

SRK previously teased his OTT debut by sharing a couple of promotional videos. While fans guessed that the actor was filming a new project, it now been reported that he is launching his own OTT app.

As soon as he shared the poster, fans wasted no time in hitting the like button and sharing their excitement about the upcoming project. The 56-year-old actor, who has been away from the big screen since his last release 'Zero' in 2018, had congratulatory messages pouring in from his friends and film directors.

Salman Khan shared Shah Rukh's tweet and congratulated him on the big launch saying, "Aaj ki party teri taraf se @iamsrk. Congrats on your new OTT app, SRK+."Filmmaker Anurag Kashyap tweeted that he was collaborating with the superstar on the new OTT app saying, "Dream come true! Collaborating with @iamsrk on his new OTT app, SRK+." Shah Rukh's collaborator and friend Karan Johar also congratulated him on the new launch saying, "Biggest news of the year! @iamsrk, this is going to change the face of OTT. Super excited!!!"

This news comes amidst speculation that SRK's son, Aryan will also be making his debut as a script-writer with an upcoming film and web series. The series is reportedly set for a digital release, while he is

said to be developing a script for his dad's production house.

Shah Rukh is the first Bollywood star to start his own OTT platform. Actors like Ajay Devgn, Shahid Kapoor, Anil Kapoor, Madhuri Dixit, were among the big stars to teamed up with various OTT giants for their series.

Meanwhile, Shah Rukh is also awaiting the release of his film 'Pathaan', co-starring Deepika Padukone and John Abraham. The action flick will release on January 26, 2023.

'Heropanti 2' new poster presents Tiger Shroff in suave avatar

MUMBAI, (IANS) The makers of the Tiger Shroff-starrer 'Heropanti 2' released a new poster of the film on Wednesday.

The film is a sequel to the successful 2014 romantic action film which saw Tiger in his debut role opposite Kriti Sanon.

The poster showcases Tiger Shroff's character of Babloo in a suave avatar with guns pointing at him from all possible directions, yet his character seems calm and composed in such a tricky situation. The film has been directed by Ahmed Khan and produced by Sajid Nadiadwala, who have earlier delivered hits like 'Baaghi 2' and 'Baaghi 3' with Tiger. This time around the sequel of the blockbuster has been mounted on a huge budget and will witness Tiger pushing the boundaries with regards to action.

The film, written by Rajat Arora, has music by Grammy Award winning composer A. R. Rahman, and is scheduled to release in theaters on April 29 on the occasion of Eid.

NINE YEARS AFTER 'JOLLY LLB', BOMAN IRANI RECALLS HOW HE PREPPED FOR HIS ROLE

MUMBAI, (IANS) As the black comedy 'Jolly LLB' completes nine years on Tuesday, actor Boman Irani who essayed the role of advocate Tejinder Rajpal in the film, shared that he was invested in the movie right at the narration level. The actor also revealed that he consulted many of his lawyer friends to sketch a believable performance in the film. Looking back at this beautiful journey and the film completing nine years, Boman said, "Time indeed flies, it feels like it was just yesterday we all were on the sets shooting for the movie, and today we are celebrating its ninth anniversary. Subhash and I had been friends for a long time and when he narrated the story to me, it immediately arrested my attention (sic)." He was floored by the performances of his fellow actor Saurabh Shukla in the film, "I discussed my role with my lawyer friends and I drew inspiration from those discussions. Also I was absolutely blown away by Saurabh Shukla's performance and collaborating with him was a surreal feeling. I wish the entire team of 'Jolly LLB' a very happy anniversary." The film directed by Subhash Kapoor also starred Arshad Warsi as the protagonist, who seeks justice for wronged poor people and puts up a daunting fight on their behalf as their legal representative.

hollywood

SANDRA BULLOCK ON WHY SHE'S GIVING UP HER BAN ON MOVIE SEQUELS

LOS ANGELES, (IANS) Actress Sandra Bullock a decade ago had pledged that she would never again make a sequel to one of her many memorable movies. It was 2013, the year she and Melissa McCarthy released the buddy cop comedy 'The Heat' -- which grossed nearly $230 million at the worldwide box office.

While simultaneously making the awards rounds for 'Gravity' that year, press relentlessly asked if she would return for a second film with McCarthy. "I'm not doing a sequel to 'The Heat,'" she said at the time. "I've done two sequels. They were horrible. What Melissa and I had was beautiful. We might do another film together. I think we should do a silent film together." Film fans and social media users connected the dots, and guessed the two "horrible" sequels Bullock was referring to: the followup to her star-making film 'Speed', which grossed only a third of the original's domestic box office; and the widely-panned 'Miss Congeniality 2: Armed and Fabulous'. On the ground at the SXSW Film Festival with her new film 'The Lost City', however, Bullock told Variety that she is ready to reconsider her position, reports variety.com. "I had a 'no sequel' rule when I didn't have the benefit of fighting for what I really wanted. I feel like, in my old age, I'm learning to fight for the things that I think would be best on screen -- and I don't care who comes away from the meeting angry," Bullock said. She credits that evolution to her producing partner Liza Chasin, who helped mount 'The Lost City'.

TILDA COBHAM-HERVEY, STEPHEN GRAHAM JOIN 'YOUNG WOMAN AND THE SEA'

LOS ANGELES, (IANS) 'Hotel Mumbai' star Tilda Cobham-Hervey and actor Stephen Graham are set to co-star opposite Daisy Ridley in 'Young Woman and the Sea'.

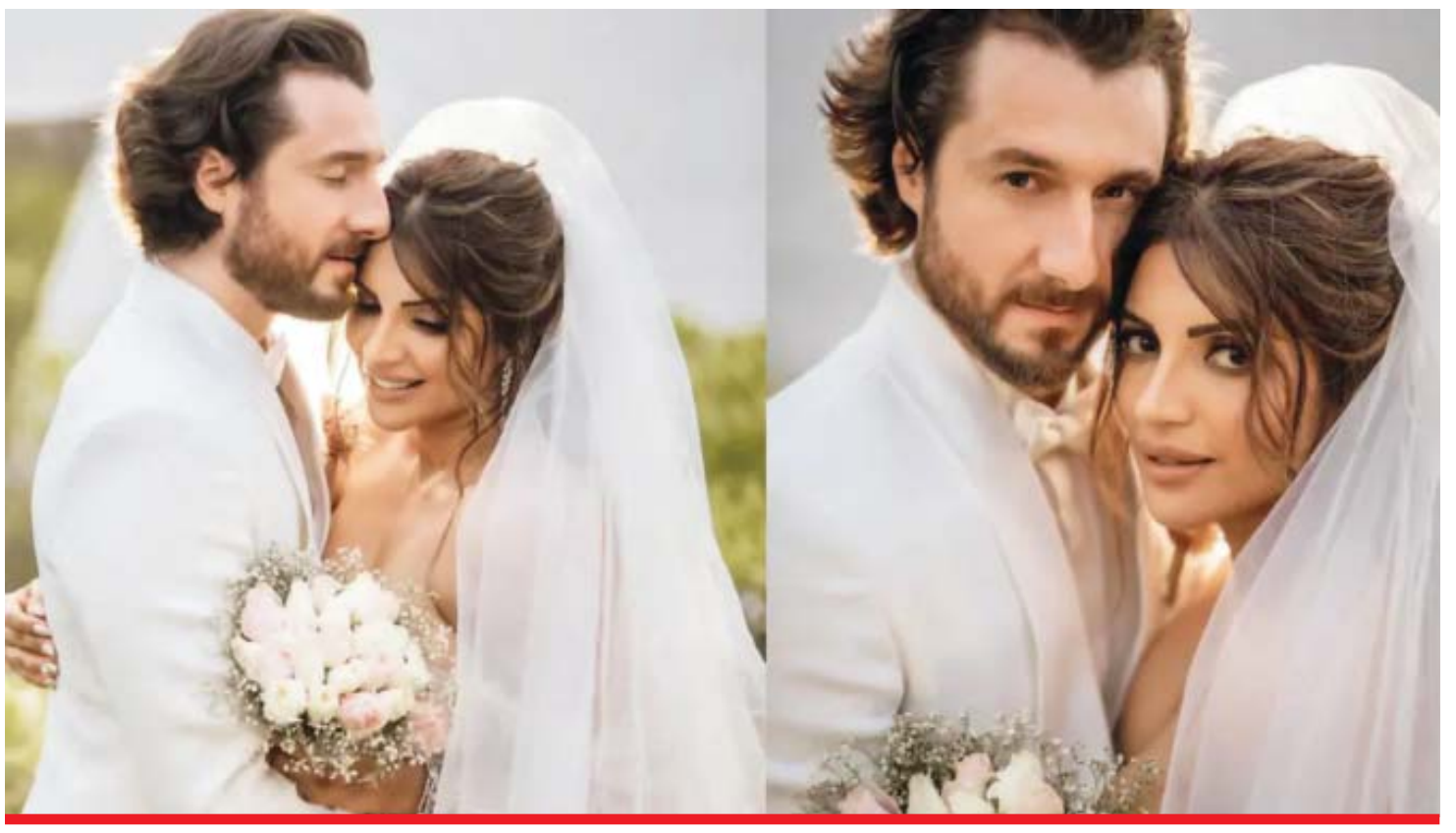
Joachim Ronning is on board to direct the Disney project with Jeff Nathanson writing the script and Jerry Bruckheimer and Chad Oman producing. The film will premiere on Disney+. It's based on the book by Glenn Stout that chronicles the daring journey of the first woman, Gertrude Ederle known as 'Trudy', to ever swim across the English Channel in 1926. The daughter of a German butcher from Manhattan, Ederle was a competitive swimmer who won gold in the 1924 Olympics when she decided to attempt crossing the channel. She undertook the feat after first swimming 22 miles from Battery Park in New York to Sandy Hook, NJ, setting a record that stood for 81 years. She contracted with two newspapers and sold her story, thereby financing her quest. There was actually a race among women who would be first to cross as only five men had done so before. Cobham-Hervey will play her sister.

Cobham-Hervey is coming off her critically-acclaimed role as musician and activist Helen Reddy in al Am Woman'.

Her other recent credits include 'Hotel Mumbai' and 'Burn'. Best known for roles in aBoardwalk Empire' and 'Peaky Blinders', Graham was most recently seen in 'Venom: Let There Be Carnage' and the Tom Hanks World War II film 'Greyhound'.

TOM CRUISE'S 'TOP GUN: MAVERICK' TO BE SCREENED AT CANNES FILM FESTIVAL

LOS ANGELES, (IANS) Hollywood star Tom Cruise's upcoming film 'Top Gun: Maverick' will be having a special screening at the Cannes Film Festival. As 'Variety' predicted earlier this month, the 'Top Gun' sequel will screen during the French fest, which celebrates its 75th anniversary this year. Described by Variety's Elsa Keslassy as the "planetary blockbuster Thierry Fremaux has been dreaming of since 2020," the Cannes director first aimed to get the movie secured for an out-of-competition slot before Covid-19 delays upended the film release calendar. Cruise's long-awaited return to the cockpit as hotshot pilot Lt. Pete 'Maverick' Mitchell was likewise delayed by the pandemic, which pushed the movie's planned release date several times. The film is now set to hit theaters on May 27, while the Cannes Film Festival runs from May 17 to May 28. The full lineup of selections will be revealed in the third week of April. Directed by Joseph Kosinski, the high-flying movie also stars Miles Teller, Jennifer Connelly, Jon Hamm, Glen Powell, Lewis Pullman, Danny Ramirez, Monica Barbaro, Ed Harris and Val Kilmer, returning as Iceman. 'Top Gun: Maverick' official world premiere is planned for San Diego and will reportedly take place ahead of the Cannes screening.



SHAMA SIKANDER MARRIES BEAU JAMES MILLIRON IN A DREAMY-WHITE WEDDING IN GOA

Panaji: Actress Shama Sikander tied the knot with her longtime boyfriend James Milliron in a dreamy-white wedding in Goa on Monday (March 14). The two got married as per Christian rituals in the presence of close friends and family members. Sharing the first photos from her D-Day on Instagram, the actress simply captioned her post. “Whole” along with a ring and a heart emoji.

Both Shama and James looked stunning at their wedding. Shama wore a white, figure-hugging gown with delicate work on it, along with a sheer veil. She had minimal makeup and had her hair tied in a messy bun. James was dressed in a a white tuxedo. He styled his hair in a swept-back look.

The first photo of the bride and groom is a close up of them standing close to each other and looking intently at the camera. In the second picture, we see Shama coyly looking away as James holds her by the waist with his eyes closed. Shama has her bridal bouquet in one hand while she hugs James from the other in the photo.

Earlier, Shama shared glamorous photos from her Sangeet night and captioned her post, “A night that shall always be remembered…. So much love so much gratitude”.

Before that, she shared photos from her pre-wedding shoot with James, looking absolutely breathtaking.Shama also had an epic bachelorette party before getting hitched. She shared oodles of photos from her celebration, giving us all a good insight into her fun night.

“Why should boys have all the Fun??”, she captioned one of her posts. In another she wrote, “My Pyjama Army….” Shama and James started dating after they met through a mutual friend in Mumbai in 2015. Since then the two have been going strong. The couple wanted to get married in 2020 but it got delayed due to COVID-19 pandemic.

AAMIR KHAN SAYS HE HAS QUIT ALCOHOL NOW: ‘I WOULD DOWN AN ENTIRE BOTTLE AT TIMES’

Aamir Khan turned 57 on March 14. The actor celebrated the day with the media on Monday followed by a conversation about his upcoming projects and more. In the latest conversation with a news channel, the actor opened up about his divorces with Reena Dutta and Kiran Rao, staying cordial with them, his kids, and much more. He also talked about his battle with drinking and how he has given up on alcohol now..

The Laal Singh Chaddha actor said in Hindi to News18, “I used to drink sometimes, but I don’t anymore. Some people take two pegs and they are sorted. But I was never one of those who drank regularly. I used to drink on occasions, but whenever I did sit down to drink, I would down the entire bottle. And I felt that that was not okay. And when you are intoxicated, you do or say certain things which you later regret. Not that anything major has happened like that until now, but the fact that a person is no longer under their own control, that didn’t sit well with me.”Meanwhile, Aamir Khan will next star in Laal Singh Chaddha. The film is the Indian adaptation of Tom Hanks' Forrest Gump. It stars Kareena Kapoor Khan, Mona Singh, Naga Chaitanya among others. The film is set for the August 2022 release.

Salman Khan unveils Ajay Devgn and Amitabh Bachchan’s Runway 34 teaser, says ‘Iss Eid hum sab celebrate karenge aur dekhenge’

This Eid, Ajay Devgn, Amitabh Bachchan are all set to take over the holiday weekend with their upcoming movie, Runway 34. The teaser of the much-anticipated film was unveiled on Tuesday.

Inspired by true events the film features Amitabh Bachchan, Ajay Devgn and Rakul Preet Singh in pivotal roles. The trailer of this edge-of-the-seat thriller will release on 21st March 2022. Salman Khan shared the teaser and wrote, "I don’t have any film ready toh maine apne bhai @ajaydevgn se request ki hai if he can come on Eid, Eidi dene ke liye. Chalo iss Eid hum sab celebrate karenge aur dekhenge #Runway34."

Produced by Ajay Devgn Ffilms, Runway 34 is being co-produced by Kumar Mangat Pathak, Vikrant Sharma, Sandeep Harish Kewlani, Tarlok Singh Jethi, Hasnain Husaini and Jay Kanujia. Watch out for Runway34 - Landing on Eid, April 29, 2022!

KAREENA KAPOOR CONFIRMS OTT DEBUT WITH NETFLIX ALONGSIDE VIJAY VARMA, JAIDEEP AHLAWAT

Bollywood star Kareena Kapoor Khan is finally making her web debut. The actress on Monday made the announcement of her first OTT project with Netflix’s screen adaptation of Japanese author Keigo Higashino’s acclaimed work, The Devotion of Suspect X, which is being helmed by Sujoy Ghosh.

The project will also star OTT stars Vijay Varma and Jaideep Ahlawat of Paatal Lok fame. Sharing the news, Kareena wrote, “And so it begins… 12th Street Entertainment and Northern Lights Films in association with Boundscript and Kross Pictures present a Netflix Original directed by Sujoy Ghosh. Produced by Jay Shewakramani and Akshai Puri. Produced by Sujoy Ghosh and Thomas Kim."

Talking about her debut, Kareena told Hindustan Times, “I’m very excited to be a part of this project for several reasons… This film will mark my streaming debut and it’s my return to acting after my second child with a stellar cast and crew." Kareena welcomed her second son, Jeh, in February 2021. The project is yet to go on floors.

In a 2019 interview, Kareena, whose actor-husband Saif Ali Khan was the first mainstream Bollywood actor to make the OTT switch with Netflix’s Sacred Games, had said that she was keen on exploring the platform but hadn’t found anything interesting yet. “Saif is a brave actor and I don’t think there will be another Saif. After working for 25 years he turned it around with Sacred Games. His choices are different, be it Laal Kaptaan, Tanhaji or web series. I have big shoes to fill in if I ever debut on a digital platform. But right now I have not got any OTT offers that are interesting," Kareena had said.

Meanwhile, Kareena will next be seen opposite Aamir Khan in Laal Singh Chaddha.

SPIELBERG'S 'HALO' HELPS SHABANA AZMI EXPLORE AI AND EVOLVE AS AN ACTRESS

MUMBAI, (IANS) Celebrated actress Shabana Azmi, who'll be soon seen in the upcoming sci-fi series, 'Halo', backed by Steven Spielberg, said that the show gave her the opportunity to explore a completely new genre and that it has been a learning curve for her as an actor.

The actress, who has moved out completely from her comfort zone, said: "Working on this project has been a dream come true. The show deals in Artificial Intelligence, which is a completely new genre for me, hence it gave me the opportunity to learn and evolve."

She also spoke about her experience of being a part of the show, which is set to release worldwide on March 24, "I thoroughly enjoyed working on the sets with stellar actors such as Natascha McElhone, Pablo Schreiber and Jen Taylor. The visuals are stunning and I cannot wait for the release to see how it will be received by audiences across the globe."

Back home, Shabana will also be seen in R. Balki's 'Ghoomer' and Karan Johar's 'Rocky Aur Rani Ki Prem Kahani', where she will be seen sharing the screen with Jaya Bachchan, Alia Bhatt, Ranveer Singh and Dharmendra.

I'M ENJOYING THE ROLES COMING MY WAY IN THE SOUTH: 'CLAP' ACTRESS AAKANKSHA SINGH

HYDERABAD, (IANS) Navigating an acting career between Hindi and South Indian films, Aakanksha Singh has chosen the path less travelled to make her mark in South Indian movies. Her decision to portray meaty characters rather than rely on glamorous roles also seems to be paying off.

Aakanksha has yet again garnered attention for her nuanced performance in the recently released movie 'Clap', a Tamil-Telugu bilingual sports drama. Speaking to IANS, the actress said that it is the role rather than screen time that matters to her.

"I don't want to be just there doing nothing on screen," Aakanksha said. "Even if it's a five minute or a 10-minute role, i don't mind doing it if i know that it has potential for me to portray it well and that people will remember that role. As an actor my job is done.

"So you give me a five-minute role, I will do it, and I'll make sure that you will remember it, if the story is nice, my character is nice. I don't want to go for any random thing. That's why I am going slow and steady."

In 'Clap', written and directed by Aditya Prithvi, Aakanksha plays the role of lead actor Adi Pinisetty's wife. The movie, which has released on Sonyliv, is about an athlete who ends up getting handicapped in a mishap.

Delving deeper into the film in the course of her conversation with IANS, Aakanksha said: "It is not a commercial film. If we talk about sports films, we think about 'Bhaag Milkha Bhaag', 'Sultan' or 'Dangal', which are big-budget films and have big actors. They're commercially very strong."

She added: "'Clap' is a subject-oriented film. A content-oriented film. It's not about dancing and singing. It has no songs, in fact. We have all the songs in the form of montages. We don't have lovey-dovey scenes. It's entirely a slice-of-life film. And it hits you hard because not just a sportsperson but anybody can relate to it."

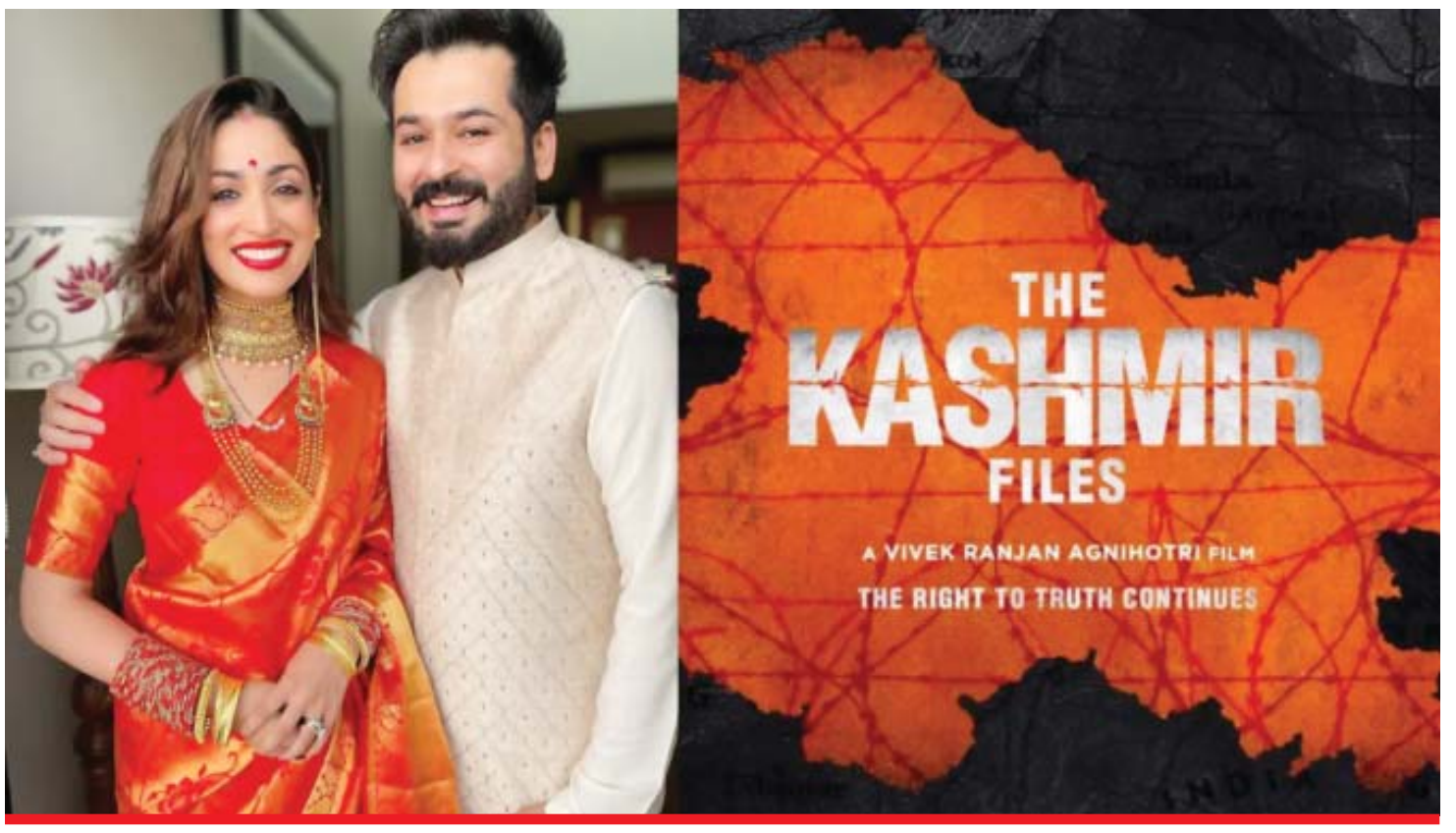
Aakanksha has acted in the 2017 Bollywood film 'Badrinath Ki Dulhania' and will next be seen in the Amitabh Bachchan-starrer 'Runway34'.

Her portfolio of South Indian films include the award-winning 2017 Telugu movie 'Malli Raava'. Her second project was the Telugu film 'Devadas' in which she was cast as the female lead opposite actor Nagarjuna. 'Pailwan' is her first Kannada project. As Akanksha put it, language is not a barrier for her.

"There is no language thing now," she told IANS. "People from Bollywood are coming to South and from the South they're coming to Bollywood. So there are no boundaries as such. I consider myself to be an actor first."

Signing off, Aakanksha said: "I love working with the South Indian industry because I am getting such good roles. Wherever I get good roles i will work. That is my agenda."

Aakanksha started her journey with TV and is known for her performance in the series 'Na Bole Tum Na Maine Kuch Kaha' and 'Gulmohar Grand'. Before venturing into TV and films, she did theatre and has acted in more than 10 plays.



YAMI GAUTAM SUPPORTS 'THE KASHMIR FILES', SAYS 'BEING MARRIED TO A KASHMIRI PANDIT, I KNOW THE ATROCITIES'

Mumbai: Actor Yami Gautam and her husband-filmmaker Aditya Dhar have extended their support to Vivek Agnihotri`s latest directorial 'The Kashmir Files', which revolves around the genocide of Kashmiri Pandits in 1990. Taking to Twitter, Yami and Aditya shared their reviews of the film and urged people to give it a watch.

"You might have seen numerous videos of Kashmiri Pandits breaking down in the theatres after watching #TheKashmirFiles. The emotion is real. It shows how long we kept our pain and tragedy repressed as a community. We didn't have any shoulder to cry on and no ear to hear our pleas," Aditya tweeted.

Sharing her husband's tweet, Yami said her marriage to Aditya, a Kashmiri Pandit, has made her more aware of their exodus from the valley.

"Being married to a Kashmiri Pandit, I know first hand of the atrocities that this peace-loving community has gone through. But majority of the nation is still unaware. It took us 32 years and a film to get to know the truth. Please watch and support #TheKashmirFiles," she emphasised.

'The Kashmir Files' stars Anupam Kher, Mithun Chakraborty, Pallavi Joshi, Darshan Kumaar, and others.

ANANYA PANDAY SHARES A GLIMPSE OF KHO GAYE HUM KAHAN PREPARATION, KATRINA KAIF CALLS HER 'CUTIE'

Ananya Panday will be next seen in Kho Gaye Hum Kahan along with Siddhant Chaturvedi and Adarsh Gourav. the actress has already started preparing for the same. On Monday, Ananya took to his official Instagram account and dropped a picture sharing a glimpse of her preparation. In the click, the youth icon can be seen laying on the floor with the script of the movie on the table. She is dressed in a casual outfit and her million-dollar smile adds charm to her look. Don't forget to miss a hair band kept on the actress' forehead. "What 'Kho Gaye Hum Kahan' prep looks like ?? clearing going cray waiting 4 u guyz @siddhantchaturvedi @gouravadarsh " the caption of Ananya's post reads.

Ananya's Kho Gaye Hum Kahan co-actors Siddhant Chaturvedi and Adarsh Gourav were quick to shower love in the comment section. While Siddhant dropped a smiling emoji, Adarsh wrote, "Hahah lezzgo". Zoya Akhtar also commented, 'Yay!!!' whereas Katrina Kaif called Ananya a 'cutie'.

For the unversed, Kho Gaye Hum Kahan will be released in 2023 and will feature Siddhant Chaturvedi, Ananya Panday, and Adarsh Gourav in key roles. The film is being produced by Farhan, Zoya Akhtar, and Reema Kagti, whereas Arjun Varain Singh will be directing it. In September last year, the first look of the movie was shared by Farhan on his official Instagram account. Back then, he wrote, "When you have to disconnect to connect.. #KhoGayeHumKahan."

On the work front, Ananya Panday was last seen in Gehraiyaan along with Deepika Padukone, Siddhant Chaturvedi and Dhairya Karwa. She will be next seen in Liger opposite Vijay Deverakonda. The film is directed by Puri Jagannadh is revolves around an underdog who rises from the Mumbai streets to become an MMA fighter. The movie will also feature the boxing legend Mike Tyson, Makrand Deshpande, Ronit Roy, and Ramya Krishna among others. It will hit theatres on August 25.

SHRADDHA ARYA RECREATES DEEPIKA PADUKONE'S 'OM SHANTI OM' LOOK FOR 'KUNDALI BHAGYA'

MUMBAI, (IANS) 'Kundali Bhagya' actress Shraddha Arya recreated Deepika Padukone's look as Shantipriya from the movie 'Om Shanti Om for the retro party theme in the show.

The actress shares how she loved the character of Shantipriya and Deepika Padukone's performance.

Talking about the sequence in the show, Shraddha says: "We are shooting a sequence where we are celebrating Mahesh Papa's (essayed by Naveen Sain) birthday and the theme of the party is retro. All family members dressed to impress, and the shoot left us wanting for more. I am recreating the look of Shantipriya from the movie 'Om Shanti Om'."

She further speaks about her retro look in the show: "I have tried multiple looks with a countless number of costumes, and I have shown my versatility on many occasions in the past for our viewers. Shantipriya's character is one of my favourite characters which Deepika Padukone essayed."

"I am always excited for new challenges, and this fresh avatar was a comfortable change. The look in the 70s and 80s was interesting and charming. The retro look is royal, and it excites me, always. The viewers will get to see me in this look in a few upcoming episodes, and I am sure it will be exciting for the viewers as well," adds the actress. 'Kundali Bhagya' airs on Zee TV.

PRIYANKA CHOPRA RESUMES WORK ALMOST 2 MONTHS AFTER WELCOMING BABY WITH NICK JONAS

Priyanka Chopra seems to have resumed work close to two months after she and her singer-husband Nick Jonas welcomed their baby. In the wee hours of Tuesday, Priyanka took to her Instagram Stories to reveal that she has landed in Rome for an event with the luxury brand BVLGARI. She shared a video of the empty streets to announce her arrival. On Tuesday afternoon, Priyanka shared another video in which she treated fans to the view of her stay. Priyanka seems to be staying in a property that gives her a gorgeous view of the sea. The video also featured a massive lawn with patio furniture spotted in the frame. The Citadel star and the Jonas Brothers singer surprised fans in January by announcing that they've embraced parenthood. The couple took to their respective Instagram handles and revealed that they've welcomed a baby via a surrogate. "We are overjoyed to confirm that we have welcomed a baby via a surrogate. We respectfully ask for privacy during this special time as we focus on our family. Thank you so much," read the couple's statement. The couple is yet to reveal the gender of their baby but TMZ reported that the couple has welcomed a baby girl. Daily Mail had reported that their baby arrived faster than the due date. Recently, Priyanka shared pictures of the toys she and Nick bought for their daughter. Madhu Chopra, Priyanka's mother, had also revealed that the couple is yet to decide on a name. The couple is also yet to share a glimpse of the baby. On the work front, Priyanka has a series of projects in the making. Last seen in The Matrix Resurrections, Priyanka will be seen Citadel with Richard Madden, a movie on Ma Aanand Sheela, Jee Le Zaraa, a movie with Mindy Kaling, a sangeet project for Amazon Prime Video with Nick Jonas, and Ending Things with Anthony Mackie.

FIRST LOOK OF ALIA BHATT'S CHARACTER FROM 'BRAHMASTRA' OUT

MUMBAI, (IANS) On the occasion of Alia Bhatt's birthday on Tuesday, the makers of the upcoming film 'Brahmastra' have presented the first look of the actress from the movie. Filmmaker Karan Johar, who launched Alia in 2012 with the film 'Student Of The Year', took to Instagram, where he shared a picture of Alia's character. Alongside the image, he wrote a long post. He wrote: "My darling Alia, There is so much love that I feel for you while I write this but also so much respect - respect for your immense talent, your incredible growth as an artist and your ability to be so real through all the beats of your life!

"10 years ago I didn't know that one day I could proudly call you my very own Brahmastra…my weapon of love and of abundant joy… Happy birthday my darling, shine bright always. Thank you for being YOU and for being the wind beneath the wings of this labour of love. I love you always and forever." After releasing Ranbir Kapoor's character Shiva's look in December 2021, director Ayan Mukerji and the team of 'Brahmastra' surprised fans and the audiences today with Isha's official poster and brand new exciting footage giving an exclusive glimpse into the film! Directed by Ayan Mukerji, produced by Fox Star Studios, Dharma Productions, Prime Focus and Starlight Pictures, the magnum opus will release theatrically on September 9 in 5 Indian languages - Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Kannada. It has a stellar ensemble cast of Amitabh Bachchan, Ranbir Kapoor, Alia Bhatt, Mouni Roy and Nagarjuna Akkineni.

THE KASHMIR FILES VS THE KAPIL SHARMA SHOW: ANUPAM KHER CLEARS THE AIR, SAYS KAPIL SHARMA HAS 'NO MALICE'

NEW DELHI: The past few days saw 'boycottkapilsharmashow' trend big time on social media after 'The Kashmir Files' filmmaker Vivek Agnihotri alleged that ace comedian and host Kapil Sharma refused to call the cast on his show. Despite Kapil denying the charges, netizens were irked with the allegations. Now, lead actor Anupam Kher in one of his TV news channel interviews, clarified that he was instead called on 'The Kapil Sharma Show' but he chose to not go since the film is on a serious issue. Anupam was accompanied on the show by The Kashmir Files' director Vivek Agnihotri and actor Pallavi Joshi on the show. Both Anupam and Vivek clarified that Kapil doesn't have any malice towards them or the film. Reacting to this, Kapil shared a tweet thanking Anupam for the clarification. Anupam Kher told Times Now, "To be very honest I must say it here I was called to be on the show. Maine Harman, jo mere manager hai, usko kaha tha ki 'Ye film bari serious hai, main isme nahi jasakta hun. So I want to put my point over here. It happened around two months ago that I was told 'Aap aajayye'. I have been on the show a few times and it's a funny show. It's very difficult to do a funny show and he does it very well. I don't think Kapil has any malice towards us or towards the film."

BAILABLE WARRANT ISSUED AGAINST SHILPA SHETTY'S MOTHER IN LOAN REPAYMENT CASE

NEW DELHI: A Mumbai court on Tuesday issued a bailable warrant against Bollywood actor Shilpa Shetty's mother in a case related to alleged non-repayment of a loan of Rs 21 lakh, PTI reported.

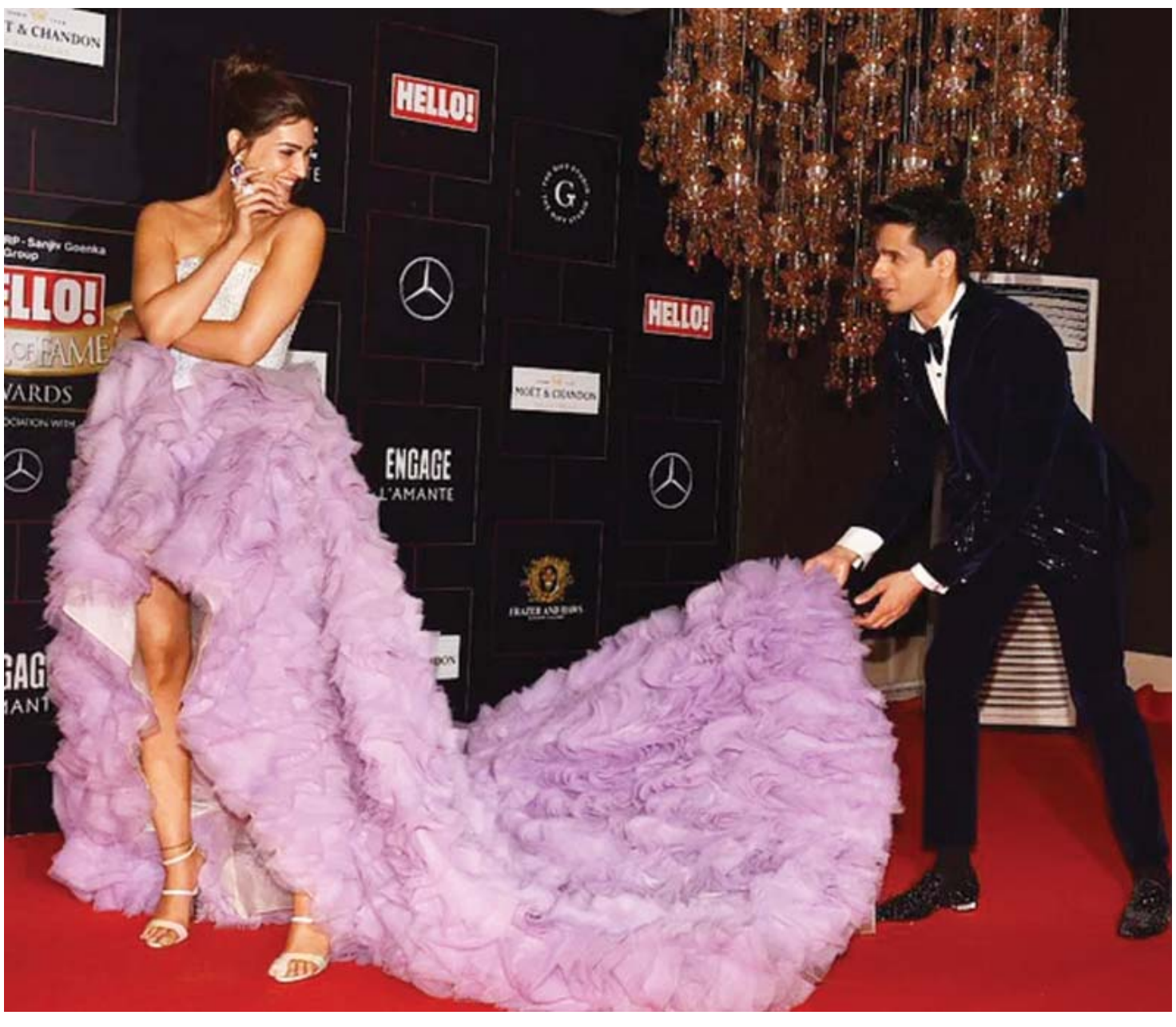
The case was filed by a businessman, Parhad Amra, who has alleged that Surendra Shetty borrowed money from him in 2015 and it was supposed to be repaid by January 2017, but was never repaid. Earlier this week, Metropolitan Magistrate RR Khan issued summons to Shilpa Shetty, her mother Sunanda and sister Shamita in conection with the case. The family challenged the summons before the sessions court. On Monday, sessions judge AZ Khan stayed the magistrate's order against Shilpa and Shamita, but gave no relief to their mother, PTI reported. "The deceased Surendra Shetty (Shilpa's father) and Sunanda seemed to be partners in his (businessman) firm while no documents have been produced to show that their daughters were partners too and had any concern with the loan," the court had said. On Tuesday, Sunanda Shetty failed to appear before the court and the magistrate refused to grant exemption from appearance. The court then and issued a bailable warrant against her, said advocate Zain Shroff of Y&A Legal, which is representing complainant Parhad Amra.

HELLO AWARDS: ANANYA WINS 'MOST PROMISING TALENT', REKHA IS 'CINEMATIC LEGEND'

Kiara was seen posing solo for the photographers in a yellow gown. She took home the Best Actress Critics Choice award. The actor and Sidharth were seen in Shershaah last year. Sidharth took home the Outstanding Talent of the Year award.

Taapsee Pannu attended the event in a ruffled red gown. She mentioned on her Instagram Stories that it takes 'a village' to get ready for a red carpet appearance. She took a trophy for being the Disruptive Actor of the Year. Ananya Panday attended the event in a sheer black, uneven gown. She was named the Most Promising Talent of the Year at the ceremony. Veteran actor Rekha arrived for the awards ceremony in a white silk saree. She was honoured with the Cinematic Legend award at the event. Vicky Kaushal, who received the Performance of the Year award, attended the event in a black suit. Akshay Kumar was given the Person of the Year award. Among others who attended the event were Raqesh Bapat and girlfriend Shilpa Shetty, fashion designer Masaba Gupta, Sanjay Kapoor with wife Maheep, Neelam, Bhavana Pandey, Isha Koppikar, Ekta Kapoor, Jim Sarbh, Anusha Dandekar and Tanishaa Mukerji.

Jim Sarbh was given an award for being 'Style Dispurtor', while Ekta Kapoor took home Game Changer in Entertainment award. Siddhant Chaturvedi was named the Millennial Star of the Year, Karan Johar took home the Most Iconic and Powerful Personality award at the event.



I PLAYED MY COMMUNITY'S PAIN, NOT A CHARACTER: ANUPAM KHER

NEW DELHI, (IANS) Anupam Kher's incredible performance in 'The Kashmir Files' has been garnering critical acclaim. Calling it the result of the pain of being a Kashmir Pandit himself and listening to the tragic stories of his community members, he said the role is about the truth in Kashmir. Addressing the media in the Capital, Kher said: "I act … play roles … but this time I have not played any character. I didn't. 'The Kashmir Files' is not about dialogues … 32 years ago what happened to the Kashmiri Pandits … 90 crore people of the country were silent, the police had vanished ,,, the Army was in the barracks … nobody knew what happened to us. There's been no trial, no one has been punished. The film is about knocking on the souls of every Indian. I am Pushkar Nath."

Kher said: "It is not a film but a wound that can never be healed." He said the movie presented a truth that had never come out. His character of Pushkar Nath is central to the movie; it is the soul of the gut-wrenching movie.

He said: "Nobody spoke about the Kashmiri Pandits. Nobody had any knowledge about the trauma they went through. It was Abhisekh Agarwal, a producer from Hyderabad, who came forward for the movie when there was no one to support."

Kher slammed those who are spreading misinformation about what happened in Kashmir.

Reacting to the now-deleted tweets by the Kerala unit of the Congress, which alleged that the Kashmiri Pandits left the Valley under the directions of the then Governor, of Jammu and Kashmir, Jagmohan, Kher said; "Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi were Kashmiri Pandits and Rahul Gandhi is now heading the party. The Congress should not have done this. It was insensitive." He added: "When people are appreciating, applauding and embracing the film, that is what matters. More and more people are talking. At the airport when 12-15 people tell you that they saw 'The Kashmir Files', and say, 'Sorry we didn't know about this', and then a security officer says, 'Kher Sahib, your movie stirred us', it means that the film is reaching tje masses." He concluded by saying: "That is what the aim is at the end. The truth is out there now."

AYUSHMANN KHURRANA-TAHIRA KASHYAP MARKS 21 YEARS OF THEIR DATING ANNIVERSARY

NEW DELHI: It's no secret that Ayushmann Khurrana and Tahira Kashyap are one of Bollywood's loveliest couples. On Tuesday, novelist Tahira Kashyap marked her 21 years of dating anniversary with hubby, Ayushmann. They had been dating since they were in their early 20s and were married in 2008. Ayushmann and Tahira were married seven years later after Ayushmann Khurrana expressed his love for Tahira on the phone in 2001. With such a long relationship and a thirteen-year marriage, they've been together for 21 years, and it's been nothing but miraculous. Tahira posted a picture of herself kissing Ayushmann on the cheek on Instagram. Tahira captioned the photo, "21 years of creating memories And we still fight and love like how it was in 2001! @ayushmannk only you bring out the best in me even in the most testing situation! Umm forever #happydatinganniversary."

NEELIMA AZEEM CONFIRMS THAT ANANYA PANDAY IS A PART OF THEIR 'FAMILY CIRCLE'

NEW DELHI: Many people are interested in the romance news between actress Ananya Panday and Bollywood heartthrob actor Ishaan Khatter. Rumors of their love have been circulating since they worked together in 'Khaali Peeli' in 2020.

There has been no public denial of Ananya and Ishaan's romantic connection. Now, Ishaan's mother, Neliima Azeem is igniting more speculation about their connection.

Neelima Azeem recently spoke with India Today about her son's relationship with Ananya Panday, and what she thinks of her now that she has become a member of their extended family.

When questioned about her bond with Ananya, the seasoned actor shared her thoughts, "She is a part of our inner circle and family circle. She is a good friend of Shahid and Mira. And obviously, she is an important part of Ishaan's life. I would say that they are great buddies and good companions. With his friends also, she fits in very well."

PARINEETI CHOPRA POSES BEAUTIFULLY IN A BLACK SLIT DRESS

From western attire to Indian garb, Parineeti Chopra can pull off every ensemble effortlessly with grace. In the most recent episode of the reality show 'Hunarbaaz', Parineeti Chopra wore a body-hugging black and golden dress. The golden section of Parineeti Chopra's dress makes it ideal for a night out or an evening party. She accessorised her look with black stud earrings and a ring of the same colour.

Parineeti Chopra posed beautifully showing off her toned legs in the high-slit dress. She was wearing black and transparent heels.

Parineeti's hair was pulled back into a low ponytail with a centre partition. Bronze eye makeup and nude brown lips makes her look like a diva.

Taapsee Pannu Shares The 'Sweetest Trailer' Of Her New Movie 'Mishan Impossible'

NEW DELHI: 'Mishan Impossible', the film from Matinee Entertainment, one of Tollywood's most well-known production houses, is the most awaited film. Taapsee Pannu will appear in the film, which is directed by Swaroop RSJ. The telugu movie is releasing worldwide on April 1st 2022. Swaroop RSJ has created a mark with the 2019 detective comedy-thriller 'Agent Sai Srinivasa Athreya'. And 'Mishan Impossible' also appears to belong under the same category. Mahesh Babu, the superstar actor of Tollywood, premiered the trailer for Taapsee Pannu's next film 'Mishan Impossible' and expressed his best wishes to the whole cast and crew. Taapsee also took to Twitter and posted the trailer. She wrote, The sweetest trailer of the 'smallest film'. The three-minute trailer really provides us with some insight into the film's overall narrative. It starts off on a serious tone with Taapsee, who portrays an investigative journalist, stating that a corrupt politician has become used to the cycle of arrest, influence, and release from jail. When she and her team believe it is practically impossible to complete a job, they enlist the assistance of three children who attempt to apprehend India's Most Wanted Criminal 'Dawood Ibrahim' in order to become wealthy in a short period of time.

TEAM 'BACHCHHAN PAANDEY' ON PERKS OF WORKING IN MASALA ENTERTAINER

MUMBAI, (IANS) For a comedy film, it's imperative to have a sparkling chemistry between its cast members and looking at the camaraderie between the team of the upcoming action-comedy 'Bachchhan Paandey', the film looks all set to deliver enormous entertainment and comedy.

In a recent conversation with IANS, the cast of 'Bachchhan Paandey' - Akshay Kumar, Kriti Sanon, Arshad Warsi and Jacqueline Fernandez spoke about the blast that they had while shooting for the film, the importance of a tentpole for the economy of the industry and their biggest takeaway from the film. Akshay Kumar, who is known for holding comedy by the scruff defines 'Bachchhan Paandey' as grey character with shade of an anti-hero, "It is a grey character and comes with action, emotions and humour. I like the fact that it is a blend of all these three. I wouldn't say that this film has a social message. My character is on a bit of a high note as this film belongs to commercial cinema."

Arshad adds to his co-actor saying that the titular character is very unapologetic in his approach and how he deals with the world, "I think it is one of those films where the villain is just unapologetic. We have seen a lot of films where the villain is born out of a troubled past but in this film the villain was just born like that. He does unthinkable things because he likes to." For Kriti, who plays a filmmaker in 'Bachchhan Paandey', the performance came from a space of imbibing the surroundings of film sets over the years as an actor, "I have worked with a lot of directors and that is why I know how a director sort of moves around us or what goes on their minds while taking a shot or even the basics of how they normally are." For Jacqueline, the experience of being on the sets of a fun film and doing a death scene for the first in her filmography was gratifying, "We had a great team which made the job very much easier. We had a great team, the situation was such that it was like the first time for me and I thoroughly enjoyed it." Arshad got a broad idea of his character from a simple narration from the film's director, Farhad Samji. Arshad says, "He just told us the story of the film and that's it. It happens that when you hear a film or when you hear a script you know the characters and I think somewhere Farhad also has a lot of faith in us about the characters and the back and forth always goes on about what to try and what not to try about the role." After months of a lull period, the Hindi film industry has high hopes from 'Bachchhan Paandey' given its appeal to a wide set of audience.

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MidWeek Sports

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IPL 2022 SCHEDULE

MATCH	DATE	DAY	TIME (IST)	TEAM	VENUE
1	26 MAR	SAT	7:30 PM	CHENNAI vs KOLKATA	WANKHEDE STADIUM
2	27 MAR	SUN	3:30 PM	DELHI vs MUMBAI	BRABOURNE - CCI
3	27 MAR	SUN	7:30 PM	PUNJAB vs BANGALORE	DY PATIL STADIUM
4	28 MAR	MON	7:30 PM	GUJARAT vs LUCKNOW	WANKHEDE STADIUM
5	29 MAR	TUE	7:30 PM	HYDERABAD vs RAJASTHAN	MCA STADIUM, PUNE
6	30 MAR	WED	7:30 PM	BANGALORE vs KOLKATA	DY PATIL STADIUM
7	31 MAR	THU	7:30 PM	LUCKNOW vs CHENNAI	BRABOURNE - CCI
8	1 APR	FRI	7:30 PM	KOLKATA vs PUNJAB	WANKHEDE STADIUM
9	2 APR	SAT	3:30 PM	MUMBAI vs RAJASTHAN	DY PATIL STADIUM
10	2 APR	SAT	7:30 PM	GUJARAT vs DELHI	MCA STADIUM, PUNE
11	3 APR	SUN	7:30 PM	CHENNAI vs PUNJAB	BRABOURNE - CCI
12	4 APR	MON	7:30 PM	HYDERABAD vs LUCKNOW	DY PATIL STADIUM
13	5 APR	TUE	7:30 PM	RAJASTHAN vs BANGALORE	WANKHEDE STADIUM
14	6 APR	WED	7:30 PM	KOLKATA vs MUMBAI	MCA STADIUM, PUNE
15	7 APR	THU	7:30 PM	LUCKNOW vs DELHI	DY PATIL STADIUM

IND VS SL, 2ND TEST: INDIA BEAT SRI LANKA TO SWEEP SERIES 2-0, REGISTER 15TH SUCCESSIVE TEST SERIES WIN AT HOME

FOR SRI LANKA, THEIR CAPTAIN KARUNARATNE SCORED HIS 14TH TEST TON BUT ONLY TO DELAY THE INEVITABLE AS ASHWIN & BUMRAH PICKED 7 WICKETS BETWEEN THEM TO SWEEP TEST SERIES 2-0

NEW DELHI: Rohit Sharma-led Team India on Sunday bundled up Sri Lanka for 208 runs in their second innings to win the Bengaluru Day/Night Test by 238 runs, sweep the two-match Test series 2-0. India's win over the visitors is their 15th consecutive Test series win on home soil. After in-form Shreyas Iyer's 92 made sure that India posted a respectable total, pacers Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Shami wreaked havoc with the pink ball under the lights. They blew the Lankan batters away with their lethal spells.

Right from day 1, India had put itself on top and ensured to not lose its momentum till the end. Six Lankan batters returned to the pavilion in the last session of day 1 and later four more wickets fell in the morning session of day 2 as India bowled out Sri Lanka for 109.

India gained a massive lead, courtesy Rishabh Pant's 28-ball 50, the fastest Test fifty by an Indian in the longest format, and fifties from Shreyas Iyer in both innings. India set a record 447-run target for Sri Lanka by declaring their innings at 303 for 9.

For Sri Lanka, their captain Dinesh Karunaratne scored his 14th Test ton but only to delay the inevitable as Ashwin and Bumrah picked seven wickets between them in the 2nd innings to bowl out Sri Lanka for 208 and sweep the Test series 2-0.

MITHALI RAJ, SMRITI MANDHANA SLIP IN ICC WOMEN'S ODI RANKINGS

India skipper Mithali Raj's descent in the ICC ODI rankings continued as she slipped three places to seventh while opener Smriti Mandhana dropped to 11th in the latest standings released on Tuesday, taking into account the ongoing World Cup in New Zealand.

Raj, who slipped a couple of places last week, has 696 points after she was dismissed for 31 and 5 against New Zealand and West Indies respectively. She is currently joint seventh with Australia opener Rachael Haynes. Mandhana, on the other hand, moved out of the top 10 to 11th despite hitting 123 against West Indies on Saturday.

Veteran pacer Jhulan Goswami, who became the leading wicket-taker in World Cups, has also slipped two places to be sixth in the bowlers' chart while Deepti Sharma maintained her sixth place in the all-rounders' list. Sophie Ecclestone, Amy Satterthwaite, Marizanne Kapp and Laura Wolvaardt have all taken major leaps in the rankings after their sizzling performances in the ongoing World Cup.

Despite England failing to win a single match at the World Cup, Ecclestone has been a shining light for her team, bowling with great discipline. Her performances have seen her rise to the No.1 spot in the bowling charts, overtaking Australia's Jess Jonassen.

IPL 2022: DELHI CAPITALS NAME SHANE WATSON AS ASSISTANT COACH

IPL franchise Delhi Capitals on Tuesday appointed former Australian all-rounder Shane Watson as an assistant coach for the upcoming season of the league.

The 40-year-old joins the DC coaching staff comprising Ricky Ponting (Head Coach), Pravin Amre (Assistant Coach), Ajit Agarkar (Assistant Coach) and James Hopes (Bowling Coach).

"The IPL, the best T20 tournament in the world. I've got incredible memories as a player, first of all with Rajasthan Royals winning it in 2008, led by the incredible man Shane Warne, RCB and then CSK," Watson said in a statement issued by DC.

"I've got incredible memories as a player, and now coaching opportunities. It's come to be able to work under the great Ricky Ponting. He was an amazing leader as a captain, and now to be able to coach under him. "He is one of the best coaches in the world now. So, for me to be able to learn the ropes under Ricky, I am really excited," he added. Considered one of the best all-rounders in white ball cricket, Watson has been a part of Australia's two World Cup-winning campaigns in the 50-over format -- in 2007 and 2015.

At the 2012 T20 World Cup, he was named Player of the Tournament. Watson has over 7000 runs, and more than 200 wickets to his name in limited overs cricket, having represented Australia in 190 ODIs and 58 T20Is. In the Indian Premier League, he has played for Rajasthan Royals, Royal Challengers Bangalore and Chennai Super Kings and won the title twice -- with RR in 2008 and with CSK in 2018.

LAKSHYA SEN CLIMBS A SPOT TO 11TH, PV SINDHU STATIC AT SEVENTH POSITION

Rising Indian shuttler Lakshya Sen rose a place to 11th in the men's singles chart, while double Olympic medallist PV Sindhu is static at the seventh spot among women in the latest BWF world rankings issued on Tuesday.

Sen has risen remarkably over the last few months in the BWF rankings riding on his impressive performances at the world stage. He currently has 70,086 points in the men's singles list which is being headed by Olympic champion Viktor Axelsen of Denmark, followed by Japan's Kento Momota and another Dane Anders Antonsen. India's Kidambi Srikanth dropped a rung in the chart to be in the 12th spot with 69,158 points, while B Sai Praneeth also dropped a place to be in the 19th position. Sen rose up the chart riding on his sensational form over the last six months, finishing runners-up at the German Open last week after his title-winning run at the India Open and his bronze medal feat at the World Championships in December last year. HS Prannoy and Sameer Verma are the next best placed Indians at the 24th and 26th spots respectively.

Among women, Sindhu has maintained her seventh spot with 90,994 points, while another Olympic medallist Sania Nehwal occupies the 28th position. In the men's doubles rankings list, Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty are static at eight spot, while the next best Indians are MR Arjun and Dhruv Kapila in the 40th position.

HOW DOES THE WORLD TEST CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS TABLE READ AFTER INDIA'S 2-0 SERIES WIN OVER SRI LANKA?

NEW DELHI: Team India defeated Sri Lanka on the third day of Ind vs SL 2nd Test to sweep series 2-0, won their 11th consecutive match across formats. India defeated Sri Lanka by 238 runs, after which the visitors suffered a great loss in the ICC World Test Championship points table. The Sri Lankan team was ruled out of the top 4 spots, while after a long time, India managed to enter the top 4 in the WTC points table.

When the Sri Lankan team came for the Indian tour, they were on the number one spot in ICC World Test Championship 2021-23 Points Table, but post humiliating 0-2 loss in the two-match Test series, Sri Lanka slipped to fifth place. Australia currently holds the number one spot in the WTC points table, while Pakistan is sitting at number two. The team that holds the third spot is South Africa.

Team India, who now sits at number four position in the points table of the World Test Championship 2021-23, was in fifth place before defeating Sri Lanka. India's winning percentage has gone up to 58.33. On the other hand, the winning percentage of Sri Lanka is now 50.

The winning percentage of Australia, current number one team in WTC points table, is 77.77, while the win percentage of Pakistan is 66.66. South Africa has won matches at the rate of 60 percent, so far.

POINTS TABLE — Powered by MRF TYRES — AS ON 14 MARCH 2022 — ICC WORLD TEST CHAMPIONSHIP

	PCT (%)	POINTS	MATCHES WON	MATCHES LOST	MATCHES DRAWN	SERIES
AUSTRALIA	77.77	56	4	0	2	2*
PAKISTAN	66.66	40	3	1	1	3*
SOUTH AFRICA	60.00	36	3	2	0	2
INDIA	58.33	77	6	3	2	4*
SRI LANKA	50.00	24	2	2	0	2
NEW ZEALAND	38.88	28	2	3	1	3
BANGLADESH	25.00	12	1	3	0	2
WEST INDIES	23.33	14	1	3	1	3*
ENGLAND	11.67	14	1	6	3	3*

ICC WORLD TEST CHAMPIONSHIP (2021-2023)

FIH PRO LEAGUE: INDIA NAME 22-MEMBER MEN'S TEAM FOR MATCHES AGAINST ARGENTINA

Midfielder Moirangthem Rabichandra Singh is expected to make his senior debut after being included in the 22-member Indian men's hockey squad for the double-leg FIH Pro League tie against Argentina even as striker Gurjant Singh has also returned to the set-up from a brief injury lay-off.

The match against the world number six side will be played on March 19 and 20 at at the Kalinga Stadium in Bubhaneswar.

Rabichandra, who was part of the Indian junior men's squad at the FIH Junior World Cup, will be the lone new face in the squad announced by Hockey India on Wednesday.

In a few changes in the main squad, goalkeeper Krishan Bahadur Pathak has replaced Suraj Karkera while Amit Rohidas and Jugraj Singh have replaced Mandeep Mor and Dipsan Tirkey in the backline. Jaskaran Singh and Akshdeep Singh made way for Sumit and Rabichandra in the midfield.

The forward line will witness the return of Gurjant and Dilpreet Singh. Mandeep Singh, Lalit Kumar Upadhyay, Shilanand Lakra, Sukhjeet Singh, Dilpreet Singh and Abhishek are also there.

The team, to be led by Olympic medal-winning captain Manpreet Singh, also has experienced custodian PR Sreejesh and vice-captain and star dragflciker Harmanpreet Singh.

Besides, the selectors also named 10 stand-by players in Suraj Karkera, Mandeep Mor, Dipsan Tirkey, Nilam Sanjeep Xess, Sanjay, Jaskaran Singh, Akashdeep Singh, Ashis Kumar Topno as well as Gursahibjit Singh and Mohd Raheel.

Commenting on the team, India's chief coach Graham Reid said, "These games will provide great exposure for young, new players coming up the ranks, while as a team we are also getting to work out different combinations ahead of the Asian Games.

"Rabichandra is an exciting young midfielder who showed a solid glimpse into what he can bring to the team during the Junior World Cup. I am looking forward to seeing the defensive pressure he takes to the opposition and his uncanny control with the ball, both great assets in the way we like to play," the Australian said.

The Indian men's team has so far played six matches in the ongoing FIH Hockey Pro League season and is placed second in the standings with 12 points, behind Netherlands who are at the top with 16 points. India defeated South Africa at home (10-2, 10-2) while they won a game and lost one against France (5-0, 2-5).

Against Spain last month, India won and lost one (5-4, 3-5).

ICC Women's World Cup 2022: India suffer second defeat, lose to England by 4 wickets

An inconsistent India paid the price for a shoddy batting effort but England infused a new life into their title defence with a four-wicket win in a league-stage game of the ICC Women World Cup, here on Wednesday. Inconsistency returned to haunt Indian batters as they were bundled out for a meager 134 by England, who chased down the target in 31.2 overs to record their first win in the tournament after a hat-trick of defeats. India got some runs on the board, thanks to the previous game's centurion Smriti Mandhana, who top-scored for the side with a 35-run knock while wicketkeeper batter Richa Ghosh made 33. With wickets falling intermittently, England bowled out India in 36.2 overs. England also made a stuttering start to their chase as they lost both their openers -- Danni Wyatt (1) and Tammy Beaumont (1) -- cheaply with the scoreboard reading four for two in the third over. Wyatt was first to depart in the second over, courtesy of a sensational diving catch by Sneh Rana off medium-pacer Meghna Singh (3/26). Veteran Jhulan Goswami, the highest wicket-taker in the history of the tournament, then trapped Beaumont in the second over after India went for the review.

It was the 250th wicket for the pacer in ODIs. England skipper Heather Knight (53 not out) and Nat Sciver (45 off 46) then steadied England's innings, playing cautiously to reach 34 for 2 in 10 overs.

While Knight played a captain's knock by anchoring the chase, Sciver took the attack to the Indian bowlers, hitting as many as eight boundaries during her entertaining knock, in which she pulled off some pull shots.

With just 135 required for a win, what England needed was a decent partnership after the early blows, and Knight and Sciver provided that by sharing 65 runs for the third wicket. Sciver's innings was cut short by Pooja Vastrakar.

It was a soft dismissal and against the run of play as Sciver spooned a length ball to Goswami while looking to work the ball on the on-side. Amy Jones (10) then stitched a 33-run stand for the next wicket with Knight before the former fell to a stunning backward running catch by India vice-captain Harmanpreet Kaur at mid-on off Rajeshwari Gayakwad's bowling.

IPL 2022: GUJARAT TITANS SKIPPER HARDIK PANDYA REPORTS AT NCA, TO UNDERGO FITNESS TESTS FOR NEXT FEW DAYS - REPORT

NEW DELHI: Team India's out-of-favor all-rounder Hardik Pandya has reported at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) in Bengaluru. Pandya will have to pass fitness tests before playing for Gujarat Titans in the upcoming Indian Premier League (IPL), PTI reported. In order to get an all-clear, to lead new IPL franchise Gujarat Titans, Pandya will undergo fitness tests at the NCA for the next few days. During Hardik's tests at the NCA, it will be interesting to see whether the 28-year-old will get a nod to bowl for his team in the IPL or not. Gujarat Titans will start its IPL campaign against Lucknow Super Giants on March 28.

"Hardik will be at the NCA for the next two days and appear in the various fitness tests. He is a centrally contracted cricketer and has not played any cricket since T20 World Cup in UAE," a BCCI source told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

"He would need to pass the fitness test as it has been mandatory for some time now. Last year, even Shreyas Iyer appeared for a fitness test post shoulder surgery before playing IPL," he added.

The national team and the NCA medical staff always keep a close watch on their centrally contracted players and it has been learned that Hardik bowled during a few sessions during the Gujarat Titans' five-day training camp in Baroda.

It is understood that he is fully prepared when it comes to batting and fielding fitness. Playing as a pure batsman will not be a problem for the flamboyant Baroda all-rounder, but Team India's management will want him as an all-rounder when and if he returns.

'WE'LL SEE WHO GOES TO PLAY IPL OVER PSL IF...': RAMIZ RAJA MAKES BIG CLAIMS

NEW DELHI: Taking inspiration from the Indian Premier League (IPL), Pakistan Cricket Board chairman Ramiz Raja is keen to bring some major changes in the Pakistan Super League (PSL).

He believes that this will help in earning huge revenue. The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman said that it is time to "uplift the concept of PSL" and introduce the auction system instead of the ongoing draft system, ESPNCricinfo reported.

Raja said that PSL can play a major role in generating revenue, which in turn will enhance the prestige of the country. The former Pakistan cricketer feels that if everything goes well, PSL will emerge as one of the main competitors of the IPL, claiming that many cricketers would prefer to take part in the Pakistan T20 league than the IPL.

"We need to create new properties to be financially independent. We have nothing for now but the PSL and ICC funds. There's an argument over the model from next year; I want to switch it to an auction model from next year. The market forces are conducive, but we'll sit down with the franchise owners to discuss it," he said while speaking to ESPNCricinfo. "This is a game of money. When the cricket economy grows in Pakistan, our respect will rise. The main driver of that financial economy is the PSL. If we take the PSL to auction model, increase the purse, then I'll put it in the IPL bracket. And then we'll see who goes to play the IPL over the PSL," the PCB Chairman added.

R ASHWIN BECOMES FIRST BOWLER TO COMPLETE 100 WICKETS IN ICC WORLD TEST CHAMPIONSHIP

NEW DELHI: Indian star off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin continues to stun everyone with his remarkable bowling in Test cricket. The senior spinner picked 12 wickets in the two-match Test series against Sri Lanka. He now has 442 wickets in Test cricket and has reached number eight in the list of bowlers with the most Test wickets.

The Indian star off-spinner attained a big feat during Ind vs SL 2nd Test that is part of the ICC World Test Championship (WTC). Ashwin now has the highest wickets (100) in the WTC. He has become the first bowler in the world to complete 100 wickets in the history of ICC World Test Championship.

After Ashwin, Australia's Test captain Pat Cummins has the second-highest number of wickets in the ICC World Test Championship. Cummins so far has taken 93 wickets in WTC. England fast bowler Stuart Broad is third in this list with 83 wickets, New Zealand fast bowler Tim Southee is at number four with 80 wickets, Indian fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah is fifth with 74 wickets and Australia spinner Nathan Lyon is at number six with the same number of wickets.

Highest wicket-takers in World Test Championship

100- R Ashwin
93- Pat Cummins
83- Stuart Broad
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SHAMA SIKANDER AND JAMES MILLIRON WEDDING CELEBRATION WAS NO LESS THAN A PARTY

AFTER DATING FOR YEARS, ACTOR SHAMA SIKANDER HAS FINALLY EXCHANGED VOWS WITH BEAU JAMES MILLIRON IN GOA. THE TWO TIED THE KNOT ON MONDAY AS PER CHRISTIAN RITUALS IN THE PRESENCE OF CLOSE FRIENDS AND FAMILY MEMBERS.

Canada, Ontario commit millions for Honda plant upgrades to manufacture hybrid cars

Federal and Ontario government is supporting a historic investment by Honda of Canada Mfg. (HCM), a division of Honda Canada Inc., to upgrade and retool its plants in Alliston. Honda Canada's nearly $1.4 billion investment, including $131.6 million in grant support from the province, will ensure next-generation vehicle models are built here in Ontario, by Ontario workers and sold across North America."""Our government has a plan to build the future of auto manufacturing right here in Ontario," said Premier Doug Ford. "We're attracting more skilled workers to fill critical jobs and connecting resources and industries in northern Ontario to the future of manufacturing electric and hybrid vehicles so that every region can enjoy the economic benefits of these game-changing investments. We are so pleased that Honda has made this investment in Ontario and know that the cars of the future will be built here in Alliston and all across Ontario for decades to come.""With support from the provincial and federal governments, Honda's major investment will upgrade assembly lines to begin manufacturing hybrid models. Currently, Honda of Canada Mfg.'s vehicle and engine production facilities produce gas engine-based variants of the CR-V and Civic.

Canada's Average Home Price Hits $816,720, Up 20.6% Last Year

Statistics released today by the Canadian Real Estate Association (CREA) show national home sales were up in February 2022 as buyers jumped on the first batch of spring listings.

Highlights:

National home sales rose 4.6% on a month-over-month basis in February. Actual (not seasonally adjusted) monthly activity came in 8.2% below the record February in 2021.

The number of newly listed properties bounced back by 23.7% month-over-month.

The MLS® Home Price Index (HPI) rose a record 3.5% month-over-month and was up a record 29.2% year-over-year.

The actual (not seasonally adjusted) national average sale price posted a 20.6% year-over-year gain in February.

Home sales recorded over Canadian MLS® Systems climbed 4.6% between January and February 2022. The monthly increase in activity was likely the result of a rebound in new listings in February following big a decline in January. As such, stronger activity may persist as late-February new listings continue to sell in March.

Sales were up in about 60% of local markets in February, led by some big jumps in Calgary and Edmonton, as well as a gain ahead of the national increase in the GTA.

The actual (not seasonally adjusted) number of transactions in February 2022 came in 8.2% below the monthly record set in 2021. That said, as was the case in January and throughout the second half of 2021, it was still the second-highest level on record for that month.

"As expected, after a bit of a lull in January, we saw the first batch of spring 2022 listings come to market in February, and they were quickly scooped up by buyers" said Cliff Stevenson, Chair of CREA. "It's unclear if this is the beginning of a re-emergence of some of the many would-be sellers who have been dormant for the last two years, or if the supply will fade towards the summer like it did in 2021. Either way, your best bet is to contact your local REALTOR®, who has the information and guidance you'll need if you are planning on entering the market in 2022," continued Stevenson.

"New supply bounced way up in February, which is similar to what we saw play out in 2020 and again in 2021," said Shaun Cathcart, CREA's Senior Economist. "The real question is what comes next? In the short term, expect at least one more month of stronger sales as the majority of those new listings came onto the market near the end of the month so many of the associated sales likely won't happen until early March. Ideally, listings will continue to come out in big numbers in the months ahead. Combined with higher interest rates and higher prices, we could be at a turning point where price growth begins to slow down and inventories finally begin to recover after seven years of declines. Still, in order to turn this market back towards balance long-term, building more new homes across the spectrum remains the key."

OMICRON INFECTION LINKED WITH COMMON RESPIRATORY ILLNESS IN CHILDREN: STUDY

BOSTON: Infection with the Omicron variant of the SARS-CoV-2 virus is associated with a common respiratory illness in young children, known as croup, a previously unrecognised complication of COVID-19, according to a study. The observational study, published recently in the journal Pediatrics, describes 75 children who came to the Boston Children's Hospital emergency department (ED) with croup and COVID-19 from March 1, 2020, to January 15, 2022. The researchers noted that some cases were surprisingly severe, requiring hospitalisation and more medication doses compared to croup caused by other viruses, adding that just over 80 per cent occurred during the Omicron period. "There was a very clear delineation from when Omicron became the dominant variant to when we started seeing a rise in the number of croup patients," said study first author Ryan Brewster, from Boston Children's Hospital and Boston Medical Center. Croup, also known as laryngotracheitis, is a common respiratory illness in babies and young children. The illness is marked by a distinctive barking cough and sometimes noisy, high-pitched intakes of breath known as stridor. It happens when colds and other viral infections cause inflammation and swelling around the voice box, windpipe, and bronchial tubes. In severe cases, including some seen at Boston Children's, croup can dangerously constrict breathing, the researchers said. Previous studies of COVID-19 in animals have found that the Omicron variant has more of a "preference" for the upper airway than earlier variants, which mainly targeted the lower respiratory tract.

KIARA ADVANI | URVASHI RAUTELA | REKHA | SHAMITA SHETTY | TAAPSEE PANNU

INDIA AT PARIS FASHION WEEK 2022

Dash and Dot debuted their Fall/Winter 2022 collection at Paris Fashion Week, which was inspired by the rich history of Indian textiles and craftsmanship. It's a celebration of traditional Indian craftsmanship presented on a global scale in ready-to-wear silhouettes. The goal was to bring affordable luxury from India to the rest of the world.

Each piece incorporated a component of sustainability. Starting with coats and jackets made from upcycled bohris and jute bags embellished with mirror work, the collection demonstrates how Indian artisanship can help upcycle even the most basic textile. The shirts were created using a one-of-a-kind embroidery technique that made use of waste sewing threads from export factories. The collection embraced carpet making's traditional history, with materials hand knitted using organic cotton and recycled polyester threads.

Dash & Dot's Fall/Winter Collection empowers Indian artisans and forges a link between the global fashion industry and India's time-honoured techniques. The goal was to blur the distinction between Indian craftsmanship and ready-to-wear clothing.

Speaking of his experience at Paris Fashion Week 2022, Ashray Gujral, founder of Dash & Dot said, "Being welcomed to showcase Indian history and being a part of the global community was truly an enriching experience. It was everything one could ever dream of. It was even more heartwarming to witness our Indian workmanship being appreciated so much. To be surrounded in an environment of creative people who do what we do makes us realize how much we love the process of creating."

More specifically, Ashray believes that there is a lot of hard work and team effort that goes into making the luxurious brand accessible to global platforms such as Paris Fashion Week.

Ashray advises young Indian fashion brands seeking a global audience, saying, "We shouldn't be ashamed of the fact that we are from India." We come from one of the world's richest textile and artisanship histories, and it is critical for us as designers to take on the responsibility of bringing that rich history into the present day."

(IANSlife can be contacted at ianslife@ians.in)

OPTIMISE NUTRITION AS YOU AGE

Let's pause to understand what healthy eating looks like for a woman. Literally. What should we be feeding our bodies so that we can enjoy good health throughout the changing stages of our lives? Whether you're a student attending online classes or a corporate honcho working from home these days; a home-maker who never gets a moment's rest or maybe you're none of the above but as a woman, you need to know what nutrition is right for you and more importantly, when.

Starting from the stage of a teenager, what you eat will define who you are in the years to come as nutrient needs are higher now than at any other time in your lifecycle. "As teenage years are a time of rapid growth and development, eating a well-balanced diet is key, as healthy food is essential for proper hormonal balance. One must stay fit by consuming good fat from fish, avocado, nuts, olive oil etc. The onset of menstruation at this stage often causes low haemoglobin so load up on food rich in iron, protein and avoid junk food containing refined sugar, saturated and trans-fat." said Dr Ganesh Kadhe, Associate Director, Nutrition Medical and Scientific Affairs, Abbott She added, "If you're under 30, it's a good time to start increasing your calcium intake. In case the pandemic continues to play a spoilsport of how much sunshine vitamin you can absorb, add vitamin D into your diet to enable the absorption of calcium. If you're pregnant or breastfeeding then lean proteins, iron, and vitamin C (to absorb the iron) are all must-haves for you. In case you are planning a pregnancy, intake of supplements comprising of vitamin D, B12, iron, calcium and folic acid are essential. A well-balanced diet for all women this age should include some meat and dairy, seafood, green leafy veggies, pulses and grains, dry fruits, and citrus-rich fruit." Make the transition into menopause a smooth one by limiting foods high in salt, preservatives, and saturated fats. "Women in their 40s and 50s must say hello to more calcium and iron, food rich in antioxidants like berries, cocoa, green tea and more fibrous food like whole grains, veggies, and fruit. In addition to vitamins D and C, another one that cannot be ignored as we age is B12 which is responsible for neurological function and is usually deficient in vegetarians so consciously supplement your diet with vitamin b12 fortified food if you don't get it naturally. As the onset of metabolic disorders and vitamin deficiencies are seen often in this age group, following a low glycaemic, low-fat high protein diet topped with regular exercise is essential." says Dr Ganesh.

ARE 'DIET', 'LOW-CARB' OR 'GLUTEN-FREE' LABELS YOUR DIET COMPANIONS?

People have developed a sense of a healthy lifestyle in recent years as a result of making conscious choices. Many fitness enthusiasts eat healthier foods because everything counts.

Suhasini Sampath, Co-Founder of Yoga Bar, earned a CA #50 AIR, MBA from London Business School and Wharton, has founded the Yoga Bar with her sister, Co-founder and CEO Anindita Sampath. The name came to them while attending a yoga class. Suahasini speaks to IANSlife about the brand's journey and how one should be cautious when purchasing food packaged with labels that aid weight-loss but don't necessarily mean a healthy lifestyle.

Read Excerpts:

Q: What was it that snagged you so hard in a yoga class that you decided to open Yogabar?

A: The sense of immateriality of yoga was a huge part of both my and Anindita's lives. It gave us what we call the goodness of gratitude, to cultivate a healthy relationship with one's life, surroundings, and most importantly one's body. When we initially got into the corporate rigmarole, we worked late hours every day away from family and began finding it very difficult to sustain a healthy diet back then. Healthy snacking options were not widely known but we did notice an unexpressed demand for them. That's when Yoga Bar took form and grew tremendously over the past few years.

Q: Debunk the myth that nutrition information labels in recent years have all been sugar-coated.

A: All that glitters isn't gold and all that says "diet", "low-carb", or "gluten-free" isn't your weight-loss companion. Many times, the food industry's advertisements fool us into believing that they care for our health and wellness, thanks to a few labels on their packets. That is what we call a 'Health Halo Effect'. Employing good marketing techniques to brainwash potential customers leads to mixed messaging under a false premise.

While a few of these buzzwords hold some merit, we aim to provide every consumer with as much information we can for them to make an informed choice. We brought the clean label revolution to India and now the industry is following suit. Yoga Bar, as our brand proposition, calls out each ingredient for its naturality.

We believe if you can't pronounce an ingredient, it shouldn't go into your body. That's why all Yogabar products are made from all-natural whole nuts, fruits and whole grains. No secret ingredients and absolutely nothing artificial -- just a delicious way of getting your body essential nutrients like fibre, protein and antioxidants among others.

Q: How's your brand different from others?

A: Yogabar set out to improve the snacking habits of Indians and make consumers more aware of what they're eating with a promise of complete transparency in what the products offer and consist of.

Each of the ingredients that we choose has definite nutritive value. We stay away from ingredients that contribute to empty calories. Our use of sugar is minimal. We don't use any artificial sweeteners, preservatives, or colouring agents. The bulk of any of our products by calories is one of the following ingredients: nuts and seeds, whole grains, and dried fruit; all of which are locally sourced. The guiding principle that led the brand journey was to offer a product, designed by nutritionists and not market-

ers, that promises 100 per cent clean and natural ingredients with exemplary taste.

We also advocate a 'No-Maida' policy, unlike other brands, having recently launched our childrens' nutritional snacking segment with new mixes, 'YoChos and Yo Fills' with the Power of seven consisting of five whole grains (Jowar, Bajra, Ragi, Quinoa, Oats) and 2 Dals (Moong and Channa) ensuring that kids are not consuming maida-filled snacks.

On the back of our products, instead of celebrities, we feature neighbourhood advocates whose stories we can all connect with. We are on the path to becoming a household name in the snacking segment as we are a brand that Indians trust as we have been able to build that integrity for ourselves.

Q: What should one look for in a nutrition information label when buying packaged food?

A: The information on food labels is intended to help consumers become savvy about their food choices. The front, back and sides of a package are filled with information to inform us what the food contains and to guide us in making healthier selections of processed foods. However, all the numbers, percentages, and sometimes complex-sounding ingredients can lead to more confusion than clarity.

The three key things that food labels offer in terms of information include ingredients, nutrition content, and allergen information. The second gives well-defined segregation of macros detailing what amounts of calories, total fats, saturated fats, carbohydrates, proteins, and vitamins the food contains. This information is extremely crucial when you're planning to make some dietary changes with some additions and restrictions to your daily diet. It also helps you reject certain food items if you have an intolerance or allergy to certain ingredients such as dairy, nuts, etc. When you read food labels and pay attention to the 'serving size' mentioned, you can keep a tab on how many servings you are actually consuming. In case you're consuming three servings of a particular food item, it means you're consuming triple the amount of calories mentioned for a single serving. If you read your food labels well, you will be able to identify foods that contain higher amounts of trans fats and saturated fats. When choosing healthy options, go for foods that contain lower amounts of saturated fats. Ignore foods that contain 'partially hydrogenated fats' since they are high in trans fats as well.

DOES THE PANDEMIC HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH SUGAR CONSUMPTION?

The pandemic turned out to be the world's most severe socioeconomic and health crisis. The abrupt change in lifestyle caused by social estrangement and isolation became the new normal for everyone. But the silver lining to the pandemic is a noticeable behavioural change in people's diets and health habits. With the onset of the pandemic, people became more concerned about their health, diet, and way of life. One thing that was eliminated from a slew of diets was sugar. The consumption of white crystals decreased as people became more serious about their health goals. Sugar has been linked to a variety of negative health effects, including chronic infection, heart disease, autoimmune disease, diabetes, obesity, pain syndrome, and candida.

People's health awareness has grown significantly as a result of digital access, the influence of famous public figures, and natural alternatives are just a few examples of factors that have played an important role in motivating people to live healthy lifestyles.

In 2020, people all over the world were subjected to lockdowns and quarantines, and no one was permitted to leave their homes. To avoid boredom, they began to spend more time on the internet for entertainment. Hand-to-hand digital access in the form of smartphones, tablets, and laptops aided in increasing people's awareness of their health by providing useful information.

According to a study, eight out of ten people changed their eating habits as a result of the Covid-19 lockdown. The Ministry of Ayush issued a set of guidelines based on Ayurvedic principles to keep people alert and aware of how to combat coronavirus. During this time, there was a significant evolution and transformation in sugar consumption. PrathameshKrisang, co-founder of Magicleaf said: "The pandemic marked an immediate impact on people's eating habits and lifestyles. They started exercising and following a healthy diet to boost their immunity. During this course, they become aware of the harmful effects of sugar on their health and immunity. Because of the imposition of lockdown everywhere, people were not able to go out for a walk or exercise, and their routine became monotonous."

"As the virus was more dangerous for people with severe medical conditions and low immunity, sugar patients became more active in reducing sugar from their diet to avoid obesity and stay fit during this hard time. They started following keto diets and switched to no-sugar products in order to increase their immunity to fight the deadly virus. Indians are so fond of sweets and sugar that we are ranked number two in terms of diabetes. But, this sugar consuming behaviour changed instantly as people became more aware."

TIPS FOR PREVENTING PREMATURE HAIR GRAYING

When you are youthful from within, it shows from the outside as well, through your skin, body and hair. Hair that is healthy and shiny is a manifestation of good overall health as well as youthfulness. However, some of us often tend to battle premature graying. We are told it's hormonal and all attempts to prevent it would be futile? Is it really so? The answer is definitely not. There are a lot many ways with which we can treat or nourish our strands and scalp so that premature graying is prevented.

Before we get into the ways to prevent such conditions, it is very important to understand the causes behind the same. When strands suffer premature graying, they often appear to lose growth speed, become brittle, lose their natural colour and get drier. When we talk about premature graying we are essentially referring to the ageing of capillaries, which might occur anytime in the anagen or capillary growth phase, thereby shortening the period of the respective phase. With growing age, collagen-producing fibroblasts suffer a significant decrease. The double whammy at this point is the changes in the soft tissues like muscle, skin or fascia, referred to as trophic changes, which cause damage to the hair follicle cells. In a process called apoptosis, the cells that produce melanin die, causing graying prior to expected age.

Our hairs thrive on nutrients and moisture obtained from within the body, and scalp in particular, but they turn gray, there is no mechanism to prevent its loss owing to the open cuticles. Therefore, it becomes imperative that added nutrients are ensured for the hair and the scalp. It is advisable that you maintain a healthy lifestyle and consume foods and vegetables rich in anti-oxidants. Also required is to protect the strands and scalp from excessive exposure to strong sunlight. If it is unavoidable, do so with protection in place. If these two are adhered to, the issue can be tackled to a great extent.

The other most important thing to do to avoid premature graying is to stop being aggressive on the hair. The need of the hour is to ensure gentle cleansing and hydration. When going for hair care products for the purpose, do remember to strictly avoid aggressive ingredients like sodium chloride, sulfates etc. Investing in ones with anti-oxidant action would further ease the task to prevent the early greying of strands. Instead, herbs and extracts of plants or fruits must be banked on while checking the ingredient list of products. Amla, Malva and guarana like ingredients, which are rich in vitamin C, and babassu oil - rich in fatty acid essence aiding lipid replacement - ensure the required nutrition and restore natural elasticity, making the strands soft, strong and dry, without the fears of premature ageing.

1 in 5 women investing for the first time, amidst Covid-19: Scripbox survey

Scripbox, leading digital wealth manager, conducted the third edition of their annual survey, to understand the qualitative aspects of women's investing habits and financial goals. The survey highlights a growing trend of women taking greater control of their money, accelerated by the economic impact of the pandemic.

Women are proactively seeking to educate themselves on money matters, reveals the survey. Nearly 30 per cent of women share that they had sought to educate themselves on personal finance during the pandemic. Thirty per cent of them rely on digital investment platforms for information on financial planning and investing, 20 percent depend on friends and family and 15 percent refer to articles on personal finance.

Seventy per cent of women (60 per cent in 2021) have said that they are either independently managing their own money (32 percent) or are actively involved in financial decision-making with their spouse (38 per cent). Compared to last year's survey, there is an 11 percent uptick in the number of women who are independently managing their expenses today.

Independence in financial decision-making has led to a sense of personal empowerment in women. This is promoting positive action. Forty-four per cent women say they prioritised creating a financial plan; 40 per cent say they committed to saving more, while 23 per cent increased their investments. One in five women (22 per cent) have started to invest for the first time amidst the pandemic. Prudence has been the order of the day, with only less than 10 per cent of women resorting to revenge shopping.

Despite these strides taken with investing their money, women continue to be cautious with their savings. Mutual Funds is the most preferred investment instrument and is the choice of 22 per cent of women surveyed, followed by Shares and Gold. 34 per cent of women prefer to put their money in a mix of traditional investment options like fixed deposits, recurring deposits, PPF and savings account. "The survey highlights a progressive reduction in gender role gaps and increased independence in women with wealth management. With an increase in awareness and interest in financial planning and wealth creation, we are witnessing a positive shift in investment preferences, goals, behaviours and mindsets. Women are motivated to save and invest and take control of their financial journey now more than ever. As a digital wealth manager, our aim is to help investors make these informed decisions that allow them to achieve their life goals," said Atul Shinghal, Founder and CEO at Scripbox.

Long term life goals continue to be a priority. Saving for retirement (20%) and for children's education (20%) emerged as the most important financial goals for women across India. While women under 35 years wish to make more money as their next financial goal, women over 35 years have said that they would prefer to create an emergency fund.

"The simple truth is that being in control of your own money, means you're in control of your own life. Investing, just like any other skill, needs to be developed. It's encouraging to see women bring their natural predisposition to action to this important area of their life. Only positive things can come from this change!" said Neela Kaushik, Founder and CEO, GurgaonMoms& a Community Specialist & Columnist. Taking money matters into their own hands helps create a virtuous cycle of benefits. Seventy per cent of women have said that it gave them a greater sense of confidence and independence, and helped improve their overall well-being.

WHO ARE THE MOST INFLUENTIAL STAR KIDS?

These Bollywood star kids might not officially entered the film industry, but they frequently feature across headlines and also rule social media platforms. With a large follower base and dedicated fan pages, these youngsters enjoy huge stardom. Here's a look at the names already part of the glitzy world.

Suhana Khan

Shah Rukh Khan and Gauri Khan's daughter is an internet sensation who frequently steals the show. Suhana's recent videos on Justin Bieber's hit song "Peaches" went viral on social media. She is currently a student at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, and frequently shares pictures on Instagram with her girlfriends. She has over 2.4 million followers.

Khushi Kapoor

Khushi Kapoor, the younger daughter of late actress Sridevi and film producer Boney Kapoor, is quite active and popular on Instagram, with over 758k followers. Khushi is currently studying in New York and has an incredible sense of fashion, as evidenced by her stunning social media photos. She is a fashion glossy favourite for her stylish outings.

Krishna Shroff

Jackie Shroff and Ayesha's daughter e Krishna Shroff is a fitness enthusiast and a Basketball coach who often raises the temperature with her bold and beautiful posts on Instagram. She has over 1 million followers on Instagram and often steals headlines for her marvelous figure.

NavyaNaveli Nanda

Granddaughter to megastar Amitabh Bachchan, NavyaNaveli Nanda is a millennial beauty. Understaded, casual and yet very fashionable she balances business and glamour with finesse. After completing her graduation from New York's Fordham University in digital technology and UX design, she stepped into the business world becoming the co-founder of an online healthcare portal for women named Aara Health. Navya commands over 575K followers on Instagram.

DO SILVER ANKLETS HAVE ANY BODY BENEFITS?

Anklets account for more than 34 per cent of the total silver market. We are all obsessed with gold as Indians, but anklets made of yellow metal are never worn on the feet because they represent the Goddess of Wealth and Prosperity. As a result, anklets and toe rings are made entirely of silver.

Amit Gilra, Associate Director, Augmont Gold For All said: "The significance that anklets carry has been diluted in the cities and is limited to weddings. In the southern part of India silver is used as gifts and as holy puja items during the naming ceremony of babies, engagement ceremonies and even during pujas during major Indian festivals like Diwali and Holi.

According to Indian Ancient astrologers, Silver is associated with the moon. It is believed that silver was produced from the eyes of Lord Shiva due to which Silver is a symbol of prosperity. So whosoever wears silver is fulfilled with prosperity according to traditions."

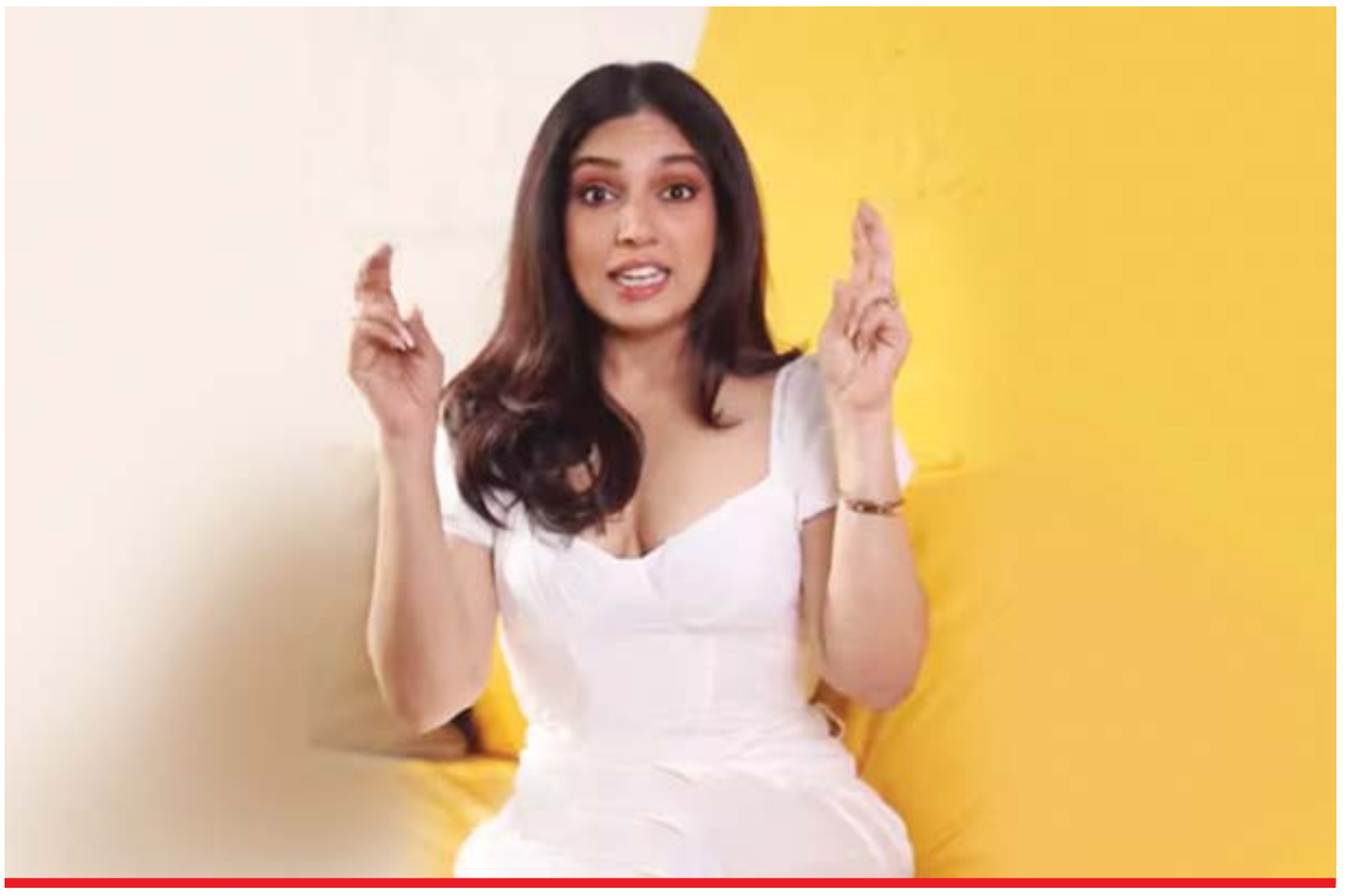
More than an ornament, less than a medicine

. While anklets are of prime importance in Indian culture, the ornament also finds a prominent place in ancient cultures of Egypt and the Middle East. This is because it goes beyond beauty and benefits in aspects of health and overall wellbeing.

. Silver is a reactive metal and it reflects and reverts back the energy radiated from one's body. Most of our energies leave our bodies from hands and feet and metals like silver, bronze act as a hindrance, helping the energy revibrant back into our bodies. This helps to gain more positivity and zeal. According to Ayurveda and modern science, silver reacts well with the Earth's energy, while gold reacts well with the body's energy and aura. Therefore, silver is worn as anklets or toe rings while gold is used to adorn the upper parts of the body.

. Looking back at history, silver was identified for its antibacterial properties. Thousands of years ago, when sailors used to travel on long voyages, they used to carry silver coins with them, rest those coins in their bottles of water. They used to drink the silver induced water as it was a good disinfectant. Silver ions destroy bacterial sheaths and this is a major reason why women even in tier 2 and 3 cities invest in silver anklets.

. Additionally, women spend a huge amount of time standing in the kitchen and toiling in the household chores. They often end up with swollen or painful feet. The pain travels through the lower back spine all the way to the legs. Silver aids blood circulation and since it is on our feet, the foundation of our bodies, it keeps pacifying the weakness of our legs. Besides these benefits, there is ongoing research to prove that silver strengthens immunity and also balances hormonal levels. This is one of the reasons why in our country married women wear silver toe rings e it maintains a healthy uterus, fortifying the reproductive process and also eases menstrual pains.



BHUMI PEDNEKAR PARTNERS WITH BUMBLE

Bumble, the women-first dating app, has partnered with popular actor Bhumi Pednekar in India to show some of the gendered inequalities women face in dating and relationships.

The campaign aims to raise awareness of the 'Romance Gap' - the discrepancy in behaviour expected from men and women when dating and in relationships.

In an engaging and evocative video, Pednekar shared anecdotes on the deeply ingrained traditional gender roles and the expectations which exist in dating. Through this campaign, Bumble and Bhumi urge viewers to make romance equal by taking steps to bridge the romance gap.

Bhumi Pednekar speaks to IANSlife:

What are your thoughts on old and dated gendered inequalities in romantic relationships?

Bhumi: It's actually convoluted. People don't have the awareness that things need to be equal in life. Most women are taught to obey whatever is being said, while men defying rules Is considered brave and bold. So, it all starts back home. Unless the parenting doesn't change, nothing will. Have you faced gender inequality in any of your past relationships? A little bit on what was it or how did you tackle?

Bhumi: No, I haven't really faced any gender inequality. But yes, men do have expectations in a relationship or marriage. But I feel in the last few years a certain level of understanding has seeped in men.

How was it working on a campaign which addresses an issue that is so prevalent in the society we live in?

Bhumi: Nothing is more empowering than striking a positive conversation and it feels purposeful to be a part of such a strong campaign. It's a belief system that we are trying to challenge and change.

What would you expect from a relationship?

Bhumi: There definitely needs to be mutual respect and unconditional love. We should be able to empower and be building blocks for one another.

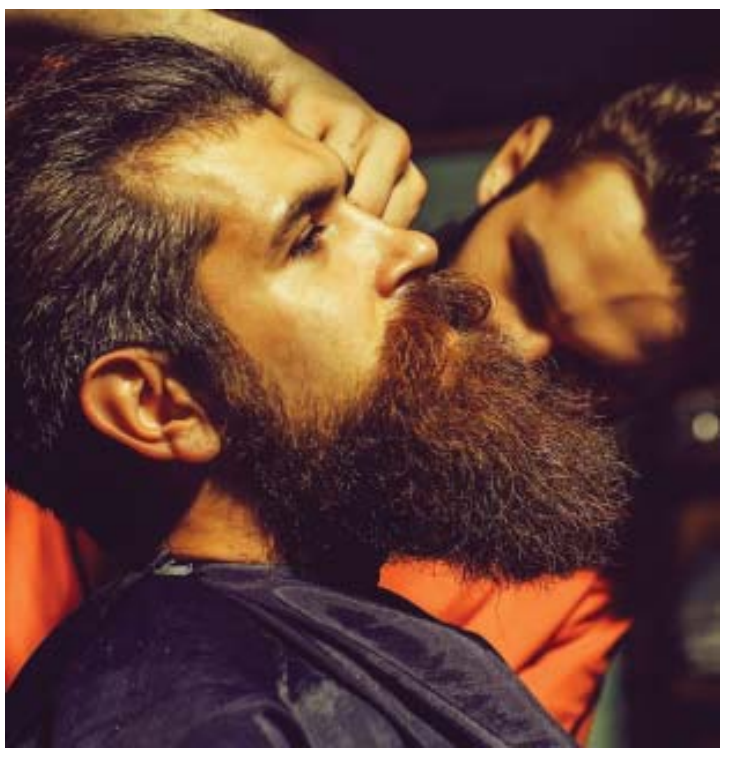
A little bit about your upcoming projects

Bhumi: I have GovindaMera Naam with Vicky and Kiara, Raksha Bandhan with AK sir, Bheed with Rajkumar and Bhakshak, amongst many that I'm still shooting.

What is that one piece of dating advice you would give to young single daters?

Bhumi: Date smart and date fair. Life is not a bed of roses and love is not a sprint, it's a marathon so make it worthwhile.

A NEW BEARD STYLING RANGE



While men's fashion and grooming habits have evolved, the broody bearded style remains a timeless classic.

Man Arden, a premium men's grooming brand with superior formulas and packaging looks to redefine the grooming game for men by creating special products using the finest ingredients and a quality regulated production procedure.

The brand has joined PETA's Beauty Without Bunnies Program and is certified as cruelty-free.

The beard styling range includes:

* Beard Wash -- Developed exclusively for the unshaved face and infused with Aloe Vera as well as extra virgin oil. It effectively cleanses, moisturises and nourishes the skin and hair on the face while helping the skin restore its natural shine leaving their beard smooth and lustrous. Price -- Rs 399 for 100 ml.

* Beard Oil -- Nutrient-rich oils provide your hair shafts with excellent nourishment and hydration. It also helps in the reduction of flakiness and itching caused by dryness. The power of seven oils aids in the growth of a healthy beard. It is available in different variants -- Irish Coffee, Royal Oudh, Hydra Sport, Spearmint, Love Spell, Musk, Lavender, Cedarwood and many more. Price--Rs 399 for 30 ml.

* Beard Styling Cream -- Plant-based ingredients help keep your facial hair well-hydrated by supporting the moisture balance. It doesn't contain any harmful chemicals and hence ensures a safe beard styling experience. Price: Rs 375 for 50 gm.

* Shaving Foam -- Man Arden Shaving Foam has hydrating elements that can help prevent shaving cuts and soothe sensitive skin. It's made up of a combination of substances that might help protect delicate skin from infections. As the foam envelops your beard region, you will notice a cooling feeling owing to the presence of menthol. Price--Rs 375 for 500 gm.

* After Shave Balm -- It provides antioxidant support while also calming, moisturising, soothing, protecting, refreshing and brightening the skin. The Aftershave Balm's smooth, lightweight and creamy consistency helps to rejuvenate the shaven region and soothe sensitive skin. The substances combine smoothly over the freshly shaven region and enter into the cells, giving you a more youthful appearance. The mixture of cold-pressed oils will assist to protect the skin and limit harm to the beard region. Price-Rs 375 for 100 ml.

* Beard Elixir Oil -- The quick-absorbing beard oil produces a protective coating around each hair strand, smoothing down the frizzy, unruly beard and keeping them soft. It contains nutrient-rich oils that preserve your facial hair from breakage and damage. It maintains the health of your beard, moustache and goatee while providing SPF protection. Price--Rs 699 for 50 ml.

* Wooden Neem Beard comb--It's the right pick-up for smoothening the rough beard hair without facing skin irritations. The wooden make-up of the comb and the leather pouch, being unbreakable and undamageable respectively, assure a longing companion with great durability. Its easy to carry while travelling since it comes in a compact D shape mini version. Price--Rs 325.

HOME STAYS AND PRIVATE VILLAS

Ekostay, a homestay venture known for its opulent and comfortable homestays, reports a 250 per cent increase in business since its inception in 2018. Their luxurious villas and cosy nestled homestays are a visual treat, and they are spread across the lush hill stations of Lonavla, Panchgani, Mahabaleshwar, Khandala, Karjat, Nashik, Igatpuri, and North and South India. Ekostay also has stunning properties in Goa and Alibaug for visitors who enjoy the beach and sunshine. Varun Arora, CEO and co-founder of Ekostay, was quoted as saying, "We started our journey with only three properties in 2018 and have grown into a strong family of 100 employees managing over 125 properties." I am humbled and overjoyed to expand Ekostay's operations and tap into the potential of India's growing homestay market. We are thrilled to be able to provide travellers with a diverse range of new and undiscovered destinations." Ekostay leverages its footprints by providing consistent services and experiences across all of its locations, allowing travellers to unwind and enjoy the perfect homestay vacation. It is a convenient getaway option for families and friends looking to relax, rejuvenate, or celebrate a special occasion in their exclusive villas and apartments. In terms of future property additions, the Managing Director and Co-Founder, Husain Khatumdi, was quoted as saying, "Ekostay currently averages around 1500 bookings monthly, but with travel restrictions easing, we are finding it difficult to manage the overwhelming inquiries for our properties. "Our expansion strategy has been implemented, and we intend to meet rising demand by acquiring properties in prime locations. The attached private pools and lawns, as well as a team of in-house caretakers, plumbers, electricians, and handymen, are the selling points of Ekostay villas. Our unique selling point will be extended to all of our new properties as well." Ekostay acquires properties that appear to be brick and mortar and magically transforms them into luxury stays with lazy pools and beautiful views by renovating and converting them.

SIDHARTH MALHOTRA AND ANANYA PANDEY TEAM UP FOR NEW CAMPAIGN

With Sidharth Malhotra and Ananya Panday as their style ambassadors for the season, Scott Eyewear's latest range celebrates its 20th anniversary with a refreshing approach to accessorising. The Spring-Summer collection features a range of trend-forward sunglasses and optical frames. Splashes of various hues, a good-looking mixture of metallics and mattes, pastels and neutrals across a range of sunglasses and optical frames is what you can look forward to. Along with its diverse features, the collection embraces creativity, passion and innovation in each element with a range that is appealing to the young generation of the day. Sidharth Malhotra and Ananya Panday are the New Faces Of Scott Eyewear. The collection also sees a revival of many popular retro shapes that are sure to make their way into fashionista closets. With Retro-Squares, Modified-Aviators and Butterfly, the collection is about to redefine eyewear fashion. Sleek metallic frames, glamorous metallic embellishments and various plays of transparency & colours are the perfect additions to the Spring-Summer look.

FEMINA'S MARCH ISSUE PUTS THE SPOTLIGHT ON REAL WOMEN

Femina, a women's magazine, pays tribute to women in its March issue. The magazine salutes the spirit of real women who defy stereotypes and choose to be in control of their lives, bodies and stories every day. The cover depicts ten inspiring and empowering women who reflect the Indian women of today. Because every story is important. Every single story is true. Deepak Lamba, CEO -- Worldwide Media, said at the launch of the March issue, "Women have always set the standard for self-acceptance, self-love and inner beauty." "Femina's March issue features ten extraordinary women, each with their own unique take on what it means to be a woman. This is yet another step in Femina's ongoing effort to highlight and normalise the notion that beauty extends beyond the conventional imagery conformed by society." "This issue is dedicated to the women we all know, as well as the un-airbrushed reality we inhabit," says Ambika Muttoo, Editor-in-Chief -- Femina.

AN EXCLUSIVE BRIDGERTON THEMED AFTERNOON TEA IN LONDON

The Lanesborough, London, announced the latest in its innovative series of seasonal afternoon teas, inspired by the hit Netflix show 'Bridgerton'.

Created in partnership with Netflix and Shondaland, the limited-edition tea will pay homage to the Regency era; a time of great revelling and high style, of elegant parties, balls, and grand dinners, with a contemporary twist.

Launching on March 25, the Bridgerton Afternoon Tea will take place in The Lanesborough's richly decorated dining room, naturally illuminated during the day by a domed glass roof while seductively aglow under softly lit chandeliers in the evening. A Regency icon in the capital, beneath the original skydome there is bas-relief artwork meticulously cast from 250 different mouldings, and Wedgwood china mounted on the walls, evoking a sense of Regency neoclassical grandeur. Carefully crafted by The Lanesborough's Head Pastry Chef, Kevin Miller, the menu will pay tribute to the key families in 'Bridgerton', in addition to 'Lanesborough House' as we now know it, built-in 1825 in the fashionable classical style by William Wilkins at the highpoint of Regency era and today, London's quintessential Regency building. Finger sandwiches and brioche sliders will comprise of Coronation chicken, fresh coriander, Clarence court egg mayonnaise, wholegrain mustard, Smoked salmon, horseradish, watercress, Organic cucumber, natural yoghurt, mint, Rare roast beef slider, black pepper mayonnaise, onion seed.

Bridgerton Tea at The Lanesborough.

To accompany savoury flavours and The Lanesborough's delectable scones, cream and jam, Miller's curated cake and sweet treat concept will include five signature highlights.

. The Queen's Diamond - dedicated to the star of the season, to celebrate great revelling and high style. Exquisite hand-crafted chocolate blended with honey, green cardamon and white chocolate ganache, displayed in a beautiful jewel-coloured ring box, is a nod to Edwina Sharma, this season's diamond.

. The Rake - in honour of Viscount Anthony, The Rake is a cake of distinction - a real big spender - good looking and refined. A dandy white shirt enveloped in a crisp tailored suit with a dashing cream cravat, the delectable cake is a chocolate sable with milk chocolate mousse and a burst of whipped passionfruit curd centre. It is finished in a dark chocolate glaze, chocolate shard collar, and a whipped passionfruit cream Chantilly cravat.

A True Love Match -a British staple inspired by the exquisite Queen Charlotte, A True Love Match is an elegant, largesse classic layered Charlotte sponge cake constructed from a delicious light vanilla sponge, layered by the seasons, with strawberry jam and vanilla twisted cream. The Lady Whistledown - a nod to Lady Whistledown, the narrator and high society columnist in Bridgerton, this cake is reflective of her inkpot and quill. Inside is a pistachio nut financier and pistachio mousse, coated in milk chocolate and cocoa butter.

All is Fair in Love & War - the star of the show sitting atop the cake stand, All is Fair in Love & War celebrates the Bridgerton family and is pale blue in colour, embossed with a bee - the symbol of Bridgerton. The concept roots back to the earliest known origin of the sentiment 'all is fair in love in war', found in poet John Lyly's 1579 novel, Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit. This dessert is to share between two; a rosewater cheesecake with a burst of raspberry jelly in the centre, on a crumble crunch base coated in sprayed-blue white chocolate.

HEALTH TIPS WHILE WORKING IN A HYBRID WORK ENVIRONMENT POST COVID

Unfortunately, the widespread coronavirus pandemic has ruled our lives for the past two years. The constant arrival of new variants is posing demanding challenges for organisations and posing difficult scenarios for them to resume full-fledged operations. Expecting the workplace to return to their daily office routine is akin to wishing for a life on the moon. Being adaptable in terms of workplace norms is currently the best option, and thus the hybrid work environment has become the new normal.

While there is always a silver lining to every cloud, technology has removed the stress of uncertainty from the heads of the bosses, and everyone has adjusted to working from their desks at home with online meetings and working scenarios.

While we've all gotten used to the hybrid work environment, we can't ignore the impact it's having on us, both mentally and physically. Working online does not reduce stress; in fact, it increases it in many ways. It is substantial to focus on our health while putting in our best foot forward towards our work.

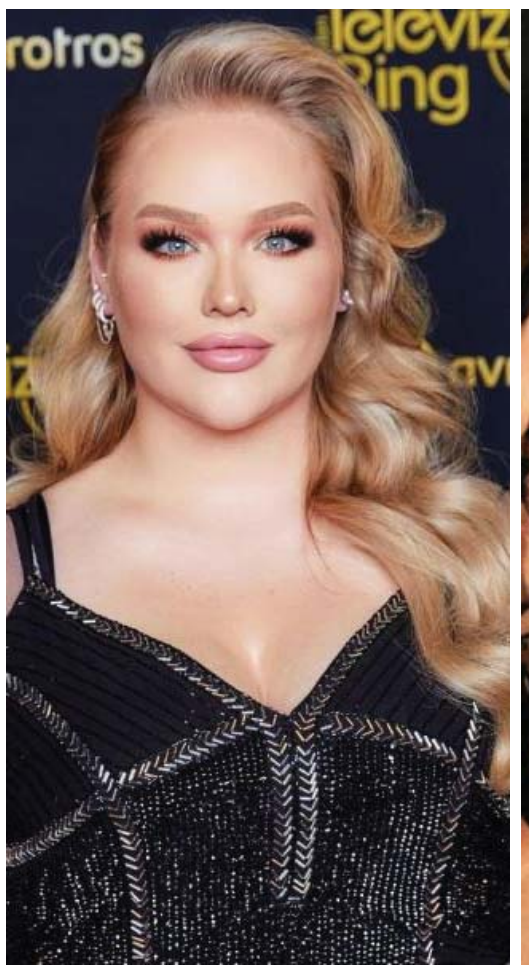
Let us look at some tips to remain healthy while working from home or from the office.

. Keep yourself hydrated- As much as we take this point casually, we should keep drinking water and maintain our fluid intake throughout the day to keep ourselves hydrated through all the exhaustion. The body gets dehydrated even when you're sitting inside the house, so you must develop a habit of keeping a water bottle with you and keep sipping the water. You must also include the intake of other healthy fluids like coconut water, buttermilk, lemon water, infused and detox water in your daily routine. If you are someone who has a habit of forgetting, you also have the option of setting drinking water alarms on your phone to remind you of the same.

. Eat nutritious food - While working we tend to munch on snacks but we must keep in mind that the importance of the three main meals should not be disregarded and one should have a proper balanced breakfast, lunch and dinner while working from both home and office. Skipping meals can be extremely harmful to the body and can cause severe gastric issues. A meal packed with proteins, carbs, fibres and other crucial nutrients keep you energized for the day and saves you from issues like bloating, gastric attacks and fatigue.

. Mid-meal snacking-As significant as it is to have a nutritious meal it is also necessary to snack in between to satisfy your hunger pangs. You must always keep a few healthy snacking options handy like roasted makhana, roasted peanuts, fruits, unsweetened nut butter, protein bars, and other healthy snacks so that it keeps you away from munching on unhealthy food items which have a high content of sugar and salt and are low on nutrition. They can cause bloating, weight gain and other health issues. . Breathing exercises-It is no secret that breathing exercises can calm you down, relax your mind and increase your focus. Breathing exercises enhance the oxygen flow in your blood and boost your energy. Deep breathing can help you fight anxiety and decrease your stress levels. Practising these exercises on a daily basis can keep your brain fresh and ready to take all the workload with a positive mindset.

BEAUTY INFLUENCERS YOU NEED TO KNOW



Beauty influencers are gaining ground in the social media world. Fans enjoy seeing their posts and videos to learn new make-up, hairstyle, and product tips. Many influencers have launched beauty brands as a result of their online success.

Huda Kattan (Followers: 50M)

Kattan is an Iraqi-American entrepreneur and make-up artist best known for her brand Huda Beauty, which she co-founded with her sisters Mona and Alya. She shares beauty tips and product information on her Instagram page. These products, according to her bio, have not been tested on animals.

Nikkie de Jager (Followers: 15.4M)

The Dutch make-up artist, who announced her transgender identity in January 2020, is one of the most well-known beauty influencers. Her make-up tutorials on YouTube, where she first started posting tutorials, are among the most popular. Her Instagram feed features videos and posts of her experimenting with various looks, make-up tips, and shout-outs to celebrities with whom she has collaborated.

ZoÃ" Sugg (Followers: 9.3M)

Sugg has been an influencer for a little more than a decade, during which time she also launched her own brand, Zoella. The brand's Instagram account, which has approximately 1.1 million followers, features a variety of posts about make-up, women's issues, food, and fashion. Sugg's personal Instagram account is like a diary in which she chronicles her life.

Manny Gutierrez (Followers: 4M)

Unlike many other beauty influencers, Gutierrez, also known as Manny Mua on social media, began his influencer career on Instagram and only later expanded to YouTube. He is one of the most popular male influencers on social media. Gutierrez's influence in the beauty industry led to him becoming Maybelline's first male ambassador. On his feed, he shares make-up tips, beauty challenges, and product reviews, but his fans also appreciate his sense of humour. Follow him for his glamorous eye looks and amusing video mash-ups.

Shayla Mitchell (Followers: 2.8M)

Mitchell, a trailblazer for people of colour in the world of beauty influencers, uses her Instagram account to share everything she knows and does in the worlds of beauty, fashion, and make-up. Every beauty post she shares exudes an undeniable sense of glitz. Her longer make-up tutorials are available on YouTube.

Nabela Noor (Followers: 2.2M)

Noor is a Bangladeshi-American who is leading a revolutionary shift in preconceived notions of beauty. Noor's Instagram account contains both beauty secrets and important messages about her advocacy.

Thuy Le (Followers: 1.8M)

Thuy Le began her career as a beauty influencer on Instagram while working part-time at M.A.C. Cosmetics and freelancing as a make-up artist. As her following grew, the London-based influencer began producing YouTube content.

KiitanAkinniranye (Followers: 785k)

Kiitan, who was born in Nigeria, is now a beauty, travel, and fashion blogger based in Los Angeles. Her blog was where she first gained recognition as an influencer. Her candid discussions about her hair, skin, and personal fears drew readers in. Kittan quickly established herself as a major figure among beauty influencers. Kiitan's Instagram account features posts about her make-up routine, hair styling tips, and fashion advice.

BOOKS TO DIVE INTO IN THE MONTH OF APRIL

These Penguin launches are set to make your reading list all the more interesting in the coming weeks.

Soli Sorabjee: Life and Times: Abhinav Chandrachud

How does a Parsi lawyer, deeply influenced by the principles of Roman Catholicism, fall in love with a Bahai and go on to become the Attorney General of India for a Hindu nationalist BJP government?

How does a boy with a broken leg, who studied in a Gujarati medium school and lost his father at the age of nineteen, go on to mount a heroic defense of the Janata government's decision to dissolve Congress state legislatures in the Supreme Court in 1977?

How does a newspaper columnist who admires Nehru, who criticizes the BJP for being 'obsessed' with 'demolishing mosques' and advises them to replace 'Hindutva' with 'Bharatva' or 'Indianness', get chosen by Prime Minister Vajpayee to represent the government in the Supreme Court in many cases including the Ayodhya case?

How does a lawyer with a humdrum customs and excise law practice, whose grandfather sold horse-drawn carriages in Bombay, become a U.N. human rights rapporteur, and repeatedly defend the fundamental right to free speech and expression in the Supreme Court of India?

Authorised, comprehensive and absolutely unputdownable, this first biography of Soli Sorabjee opens a window to life and times of India's foremost constitutional experts.

Journey to the Edge of the Earth: Joeanna Rebello Fernandes and Cdr Abhilash Tomy (Retd.)

Imagine an infinite blue ocean and somewhere in the middle of it, tossed by wind and wave - a single boat. In it a solitary sailor.

This is the gritty, glorious and true adventure of Commander Abhilash Tomy, a former officer of the Indian Navy, who in 2012 set off on the journey of a lifetime. Without once stopping by land, he circumnavigated the world alone for 151 days, encountering deathly perils on choppy waters! No other Indian had sailed like this before. When he finally returned to India, Abhilash was awarded the Kirti Chakra for his heroism.

THE SIGHTS, SOUNDS AND TASTES OF SOUTH AFRICA IN INDIA

In a bid to build aspiration for destination South Africa from their largest Indian source market Mumbai, South African Tourism brings the sights, sounds and tastes of South Africa alive in India. With performances by South African dance troupes, indigenous music and delectable food cooked by South African chefs at Phoenix Palladium in Mumbai, South Africa is all set to engage and delight audiences. The two-day event that runs from 12 pm to 8 pm on 12th and 13th March 2022, will also host culturally immersive activities like South African face painting, hair braiding, beadwork and DIY graffiti walls in addition to Oculus -- a virtual reality journey into the deep blue seas and mesmerizing safari routes of South Africa.

. Venue: Palladium, Lower Parel

. Date: 12 & 13th March

. Timings: 12 pm to 8 pm

To make this experience even more exhilarating, Chefs Abigail and Sipho from South Africa will showcase a delectable food experience that one can try their hands onto in a masterclass followed by food tasting at Foodhall, Khar --Linking Road on 12th & 13th March 2022.

HYUNDAI'S ART FOR HOPE CAMPAIGN CHAMPIONS THE INTERESTS OF ART AND ARTISTS

Art for Hope is India's first dedicated CSR program to encourage artists across various domains like Digital Arts, Crafts, Multidisciplinary Arts, Performance Arts and Visual Arts. This one-of-its-kind CSR initiative was launched by Hyundai Motor India Foundation (HMIF), the philanthropic arm of Hyundai Motor India Ltd. Twenty-five artists, with community art project concept around the theme of Hope Solidarity and Gratitude will receive a grant of Rs 1 lakh each. The project commenced in October, 2021.

Puneet Anand, AVP, Corporate Affairs, HMIL speaks to IANSlife about the initiative.

How important is it for corporates to patronise the arts and promote them?

Puneet: Corporates must emphasise the need for the creation of space for exposure of the art and culture. We believe that there is a need to create a platform for artists to exhibit their talent and for economic development in an effective manner.

Also, businesses that support local arts and cultural organisations can add immense value to their corporate brand and their bottom line. Inspired by Hyundai's global vision of 'Progress for Humanity', the Art for Hope program aims to showcase India's rich heritage in art, craft and culture and help elevate the lives of artisans and craftspeople.

This is your first CSR project in the field of art, what led to it and what is its aim?

Puneet: Loss of livelihood of the artists' community has been one of the biggest fall outs of the Covid pandemic. Many organisations are focusing on skilling and reskilling those who have lost jobs, but artists and artisans have been neglected.

Hyundai has responded to the pandemic with various meaningful social initiatives and Art for Hope is a step to encourage India's Best Artists from diverse genres. Art for Hope is India's first dedicated CSR program to encourage artists across various domains like Digital Arts, Crafts, Multidisciplinary Arts, Performance Arts and Visual Arts. The project are on display for community viewing at Bikaner House, Delhi, from March 11-14, 2022.

Hyundai Motor India Foundation (HMIF) recognises in today's world digital art and multi-disciplinary cannot be ignored, your thoughts?

Puneet: Art is the core of the universe. Art is the mother of every creation. Art inspires change to positivity for happiness and composure of humanity and hence art cannot be ignored.

To add to your point, the world has moved ahead, digital art and multi-disciplinary art has taken centre stage and the world over, these art forms are deriving great strength owing to the expansion of different social media platforms.

Under the guidance and mentorship from renowned curators, from across the country, these artists will get a platform to exchange their ideas with the think tanks from art community. In addition, the artists will also be trained to become social media savvy, so that they can reap the benefits of harnessing the power of social media and showcase their art pieces and engage a wider base of audiences.

Lastly in terms of the percentage of CSR what percentage you intend on budgeting to the art space in the next five years?

Puneet: We forayed into Art last year to lend a helping hand towards the COVID induced ailing artists community. This year we have earmarked a 25 lakhs budget as grants to 25 artists i.e. Rs 1 lakh grant to each artist. We want to make Art for Hope, a cause championing the interests of all the artists who get constrained to only regional locations.

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