



FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19: AAP TO MAKE OXIMETERS AVAILABLE IN 30,000 VILLAGES |P10



DONALD TRUMP 'WRONG PRESIDENT', SAYS MICHELLE OBAMA ON DAY 1 OF DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION |P11

JACQUELINE FERNANDEZ ADOPTS TWO MAHARASHTRA VILLAGES, TO LOOK AFTER MORE THAN 1500 PEOPLE FOR THREE YEARS |P16



SOUTH ASIAN

MidWeek

NEWS WEEKLY



Tuesday, August 18, 2020

www.southasiandaily.com

Vol 20 Issue 33, Phone 647-272-8182, 905-670-3687

CANADA CABINET RESHUFFLE : BILL MORNEAU RESIGNS, DEPUTY PM CHRYSTIA FREELAND STEPS IN AS CANADA'S FIRST FEMALE FINANCE MINISTER



OPINION: IN TRYING TO STEER AWAY FROM WE SCANDAL, TRUDEAU MAKES HIS REPLACEMENT STRONGER

This entire week has been nothing short of a circus as Prime Minister Justin Trudeau resort to navigate himself through a pool of political mess. Marred by the WE Charity controversy that the Opposition refuses to let die down, the Liberal government gave revelation after revelation in the last few days. Bill Morneau stepped down as finance minister, and Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland promptly filled the hole he left behind. The Parliament, meanwhile, has been adjourned for a month, taking down with it multiple committee inquiries into the WE affair. Was Morneau deliberately made the butt of the ongoing scandal? That is a question for another day. For now, political analysts have their eyes glued on Canada's first female Finance Minister. Chrystia Freeland is a tough leader who has previously held several high-level cabinet positions, including the international trade portfolio. With Finance, however, she has a long, thorny road ahead of her as Canada powers through its worst economic crisis since the Second World War. Y Media Group Editor Yudhvir Jaswal says Trudeau has made his "replacement" much stronger with the move. "With Morneau's departure and Freeland stepping in while also retaining the post of Deputy PM, I would certainly say that the loss is not for Trudeau or the Liberals, but Canadians lost a competent finance minister. Most importantly, on the political front if I look at the next five or ten years, she is a potential candidate for the Liberal leadership race. Her claim to the throne has only become stronger than before."

He says, "As much as we would all agree that Morneau should have covered his blind spot in a better way, he did commit a mistake and has apologised. Given his background, he was one of the best choices for finance minister the federal Liberals' have in their talent pool." Jaswal adds, "Will Freeland's lack of corporate experience come in her way? Only time will tell." "However," he says, "Chrystia has been delivering very well. She can be referred to as the 'Minister for Everything' when it comes to inter-governmental affairs. She helped renegotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with the US and Mexico, which, considering President Donald Trump, we all know would not have been a cake walk." Jaswal states there is already a general murmur within the media world about Freeland being a contender against Trudeau. "During an interview with CBC's Mark Kelly, he had asked if and when there would be a time for Trudeau to move on? In a way, Trudeau made his replacement stronger today." When asked what lies ahead for the new FM, the Group Editor says, "This is not an easy crown to wear, simply because of the deficit we are seeing right now. We all are anticipating a second COVID wave, we see job losses, there are still 1.2 million people still looking for employment. When the federal government's COVID-19 emergency finance programs faze out by the end of this year, how will the government support the Canadians? The recent GDP growth, and low inflation rate is a downer. This is a very challenging time for Freeland."

| CONTD. ON PAGE 8

TORONTO CITY MARKS INDIA'S 74TH YEAR OF INDEPENDENCE; ONTARIO'S ICONIC SITES ILLUMINATES IN TRICOLOR



COMPLETE COVERAGE ON PAGE 3

Y MEDIA EXCLUSIVE: MINISTER OF FAMILIES, CHILDREN AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AHMED HUSSEN MAKES AFFORDABLE HOUSING INVESTMENT ANNOUNCEMENT IN TORONTO



The Minister of Families, Children, and Social Development Ahmed Hussen made an announcement of federal investment worth \$73 million towards the construction of 233 residential rental homes, including 70 affordable homes. He made the announcement along with Toronto Mayor John Tory who also announced \$5.5 million in capital grants as part of the City's Open Door Affordable Housing Program.

| CONTD. ON PAGE 6

CANADA INFLATION RATE INCREASES BY JUST 0.1 PER CENT IN THE YEAR UP TO JULY

New data posted by Statistics Canada reveals only a 0.1 per cent inflation on a year-over-year basis in July as lower gasoline prices and air travel continues to push the Consumer Price Index lower. In its report published, it said Canada's annual inflation rate would be 0.7 per cent without calculating the gasoline prices.

| CONTD. ON PAGE 6

RECORD HOME SALES IN JULY, AVERAGE CANADIAN HOUSE PRICE UP BY 14%

Canada's housing market has made a major return in July, with new listings hitting their highest level on record for the month, while sales posted the highest level of any month in history. The Canadian Real Estate Association (CREA) reveals in a report that 62,355 Canadian resale homes were sold in July – 26 per cent higher than the previous month.

| CONTD. ON PAGE 6

RESOLUTION INTRODUCED IN THE US CONGRESS SAYS SIKH, HINDU MINORITIES IN AFGHANISTAN "ENDANGERED"

A resolution has been introduced in the US Congress seeking to resettle persecuted religious communities – Sikhs and Hindus, from Afghanistan to the US. Introduced last week by Congresswoman Jackie Speier and co-sponsored by seven others, the resolution notes the "systematic religious persecution, discrimination and existential danger" faced by the community members.

| CONTD. ON PAGE 6

SOUTH ASIANS, BLACKS, HEALTHCARE, TRANSPORT & FACTORY WORKERS WORST-AFFECTED BY COVID-19 IN PEEL



During Brampton Mayor Patrick Brown's weekly COVID-19 update on Wednesday, Peel region's Medical Officer of Health Dr Lawrence Loh revealed the region's COVID-19 data based on race and occupation. According to figures presented by Dr Loh, South Asians, Blacks, and Latinos are the worst-affected by the pandemic in the region and made up for 4 out of 5 cases in Peel.

| CONTD. ON PAGE 6

THREE FAMILY MEMBERS DROWN AT CRESCENT FALLS, ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE ; IDENTIFIED AS ANOOP KUMAR OAD, 25, PARTAB RAI OAD, 38, AND VENJHAR OAD, 38

In a tragic accident, three members of a family drowned at the bottom of Crescent Falls in Alberta. The adults were swimming when one of them got swept under the falls, the other two lost their lives trying to save them. Three children aged 10, six, and three reportedly were on the bank yelling for help. The victims have been identified as Edmonton residents – Pakistani exchange student Anoop Kumar Oad, 25, his uncle Dr Par tab Rai Oad, 38, and aunt Venjhar Oad, 38.



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CONSULATE GENERAL OF INDIA, TORONTO HOLDS A FLAG HOISTING CEREMONY ON OCCASION OF THE 74TH INDIAN INDEPENDENCE DAY



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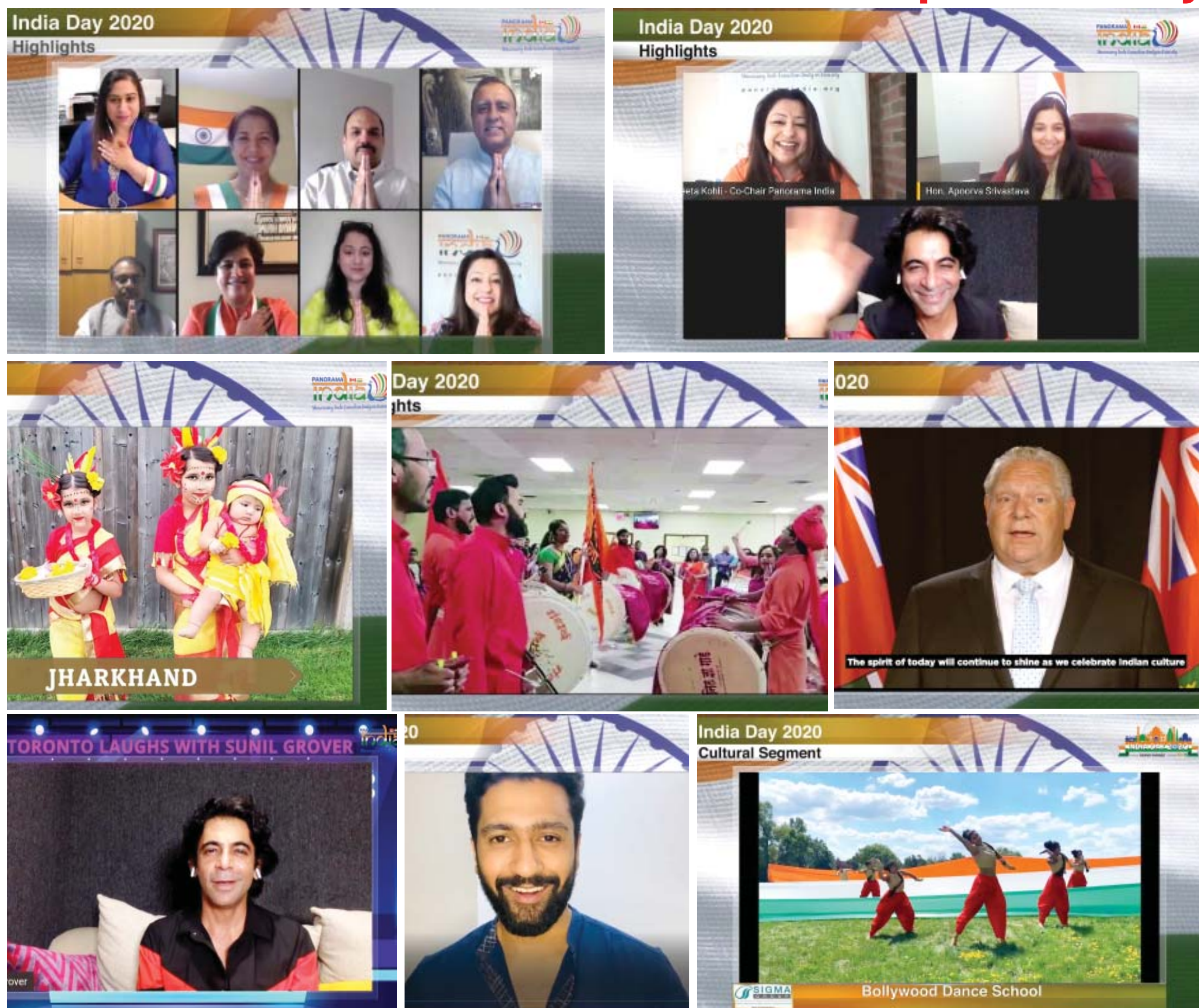
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Panorama India Celebrates India's 74th Independence Day



Panorama India, along with the support of the Consulate General of India in Toronto, celebrated the 74th Independence Day of India on Saturday, August 15th and Sunday, August 16th. Over the two days, Panorama India showcased the first-ever digitally curated Virtual Grand Parade representing 28 States of India and more than 100 artists along with many Bollywood celebrities as Parade Marshalls, and a special show with comedy king, Sunil Grover. The entire 14 hours of unique original programming was live-streamed on 20+ Channels in the GTA including television, social media and various other mediums. "The Community come together to celebrate first time a digital India Day and Virtual Grand Parade, it has been amazing to witness the engagement and the response" shared the Hon. Ms. Apoorva Srivastava, Consul General of India, Toronto.

The opening of the India Day 2020 festival on August 15th witnessed

a welcome address from Ms. Sumeeta Kohli, Co-chair – Digital & Event Strategy, Hon. Ms. Apoorva Srivastava, Consul General Of India, Sanjay Makkar – Co-chair Sponsorship and Finance, Hon. Ajay Bisaria, High Commissioner of India in Canada, Premier Doug Ford, Hon. Andrew Scheer, Canadian MP's and MPP's, Mayor John Tory, Mayor Bonnie Crombie, Mayor Patrick Brown and the Panorama Board wishing Happy Independence Day to the entire Indo-Canadian community.

Panorama India created a virtual large-scale India Day 2020 celebration by launching their official tagline "Mera India, Humara India" and the 90-sec official theme song which was instantly loved by all viewers. Many children sent in their versions of the theme song which were also shared on Panorama India's social media. The cultural heritage and diversity of India were showcased throughout the two

days. The much-talked about segment of the weekend was certainly the Virtual Grand Parade, as various community organizations presented visual compilations showcasing their represented State's iconic beauty, heritage, personalities, traditions to present a unique vibrant collage.

For the first time in Panorama India's history, the audience voting was enabled on the organization's website so viewers could vote for their favourite float. A total 2,765 votes were received online for the public voting. The official selection jury for the parade – Lata Pada, Jasmine Sawant, Lalita Krishna and Jake Dheer – evaluated the floats based on creativity, originality and production values and delivered the signed-off scores maintaining all protocols of confidentiality. The winners were derived based on the 50% Judges scores marks combined with 50% audience votes.

First official Indian Independence celebrations held in Niagara. Consul General of India, Toronto Apoorva Srivastava officiated the flag hoisting. The iconic Niagara Falls was illuminated in the colours of the Indian flag





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Racial attacks on Sikhs not declining ; Group Editor Yudhvir Jaswal says “Enough is Enough”



A video circulating on social media this week has prompted multiple debates and discussions within the Sikh community. Allegedly shot in Toronto’s Humber Park, the video shows a man deliberately brush off a senior Sikh cyclist’s turban off his head as he passes by him. The clip has been widely circulated on Twitter, and Facebook igniting disgust from the community.

It also resonated in India, with Punjab’s Akali Dal spokesperson, and President of the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management committee, Manjinder Singh Sirsa posted the clip on his Twitter account.

He captioned it, “Disgusting! Shocked to see such hate attacks – a rowdy man disrespects Dastar of an elderly Sikh cyclist in #humberbaypark in Toronto. We stand in support of Sikh community of Canada and demand prompt action by the authorities.” Group Editor Yudhvir Jaswal condemned the incident, saying attacks on the elderly are the vilest of them all. Discussing the incident on his radio show Radio Y, he heard from several

within the community urging actions on the mischief makers.

He said, “Despite being really active and a vibrant community. Despite being represented in all levels of the government, federal, provincial, municipal – from Cabinet ministers, to MPs, and MPPs, even Councilors. Despite being involved in the grassroots of local, national and international businesses, the corporate world. Despite being in the forefront of voluntary services, racist attacks on Sikhs show no signs of stopping.”

“The Sikh community in Afghanistan suffers every day. Sikhs in Europe are discriminated against. In the US, after 9/11, attacks on Sikhs only increased, even today.”

Jaswal said, “Today, a senior Sikh gentleman was attacked. His turban removed. This is very disheartening to see. When will such incidents stop? The concerned authorities must take note. It is unfortunate that the elderly have to face this in 2020.” Y Media has reached out to Toronto Police, and Mayor John Tory for their comments.

RESOLUTION INTRODUCED IN THE US CONGRESS SAYS SIKH, HINDU MINORITIES IN AFGHANISTAN “ENDANGERED”

CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

The resolution states, “Sikhs and Hindus are indigenous but endangered minorities in Afghanistan, numbering approximately 700 out of a community that recently included over 8000 members.” It condemns all terrorist attacks, religious persecution and discrimination against members of the communities. The resolution also supports resettling Sikhs and Hindus from Afghanistan in the US under the United States Refugee Admissions Programme pursuant to the Immigration and Nationality Act.

It mentions the Kabul gurdwara attack on March 25 that killed 25 worshippers including a 4 year old girl, the Jalalabad suicide bombing that claimed the lives of 19 people including Sikh and Hindu

community leaders. The resolution said, “These acts of violence follow a greater pattern of targeted violence against Sikhs, Hindus, and other religious minorities in Afghanistan in recent years.”

The Department of US and US Commission on International Religious Freedom have documented systemic discrimination against Sikhs and Hindus in Afghanistan, according to the resolution. It includes restrictions on religious practices, illegal seizure of property, inability to send children to public schools, judicial bias, and much more.

US President Donald Trump proposed resettling up to only 18,000 refugees for 2020, a stark contrast to the Obama administration’s proposal of 1.1 lakh refugees for 2016.

This is not the first time the West has taken notice of the Afghan minorities’ tragic situation. Canadian leaders – both community, and otherwise, have been long fighting to resettle members of the communities in Canada. In July, 25 MPs had written to Immigration Minister Marco Mendicino calling for a special program for Afghan Sikh and Hindu refugees. The letter was signed by 16 Conservative Party MPs, 6 NDP, and 3 Green MPs. The letter expressed “concern about the existential threat to religious minorities in Afghanistan, specifically, Sikhs and Hindus.”

Not just them, the World Sikh Organization of Canada (WSO) along with the Manmeet Singh Bhullar Foundation have constantly urged the government to help the refugees.

CANADA INFLATION RATE INCREASES BY JUST 0.1 PER CENT IN THE YEAR UP TO JULY

CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

Gasoline prices fell 14.9 per cent on a year-over-year basis in July, following a 15.7 per cent decline in June. While prices rose 4.4 per cent on a monthly basis amid reopening of several businesses and services, crude oil prices increased minimally in July. Air transportation prices too fell for the first time on a year-over-year basis since December 2015. While flights remained cancelled or suspended as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, airlines were offering various incentives such as reduced fees, discounts, and promotions. Prices for traveller accommodation too fell, 27 per cent year-over-year, posting record declines for the third consecutive month.

RECORD HOME SALES IN JULY, AVERAGE CANADIAN HOUSE PRICE UP BY 14%

CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

CREA Chair, Costa Pouloupoulos said, “With more and more of regular every day life are making up for lost time, and it’s been a very busy summer as a result. With sellers and buyers returning to the market in record numbers as lockdowns are increasingly lifted, we continue to make sure clients stay safe by complying with government and health officials’ directives and advice, while continuing to use virtual technology to show properties and complete required forms and contracts.”

CREA’s chief economist Shaun Cathcart said, “What a difference three months makes, from some of the lowest housing numbers ever back in April to the multiple monthly records logged in July. A big part of what we’re seeing right now is the snap back in activity that would have otherwise happened earlier this year.” The biggest m-o-m gains, in the range of 3 per cent, were recorded in the GTA, Guelph, Ottawa and Montreal; although, generally speaking most markets east of Saskatchewan are seeing prices accelerate in line with strong sales numbers. Price gains were more modestly positive in B.C. and Alberta.

WIFE OF HINDU PRIEST SHOT DEAD IN BRAMPTON, AIRPORT/COUNTRYSIDE

A woman has died after being found with life-threatening injuries in a garage of a home. Peel Police revealed emergency crews were called to a residence on Treeline Boulevard and Linstock Drive, east of Airport Road, just after 7 p.m. On Thursday.

Authorities are currently investigating the suspicious death. While Peel Police have not released the identity of the victim, Y Media sources have identified her as Sangeeta Sharma, owner of Torbram Pharmacy. She is said to be the wife of Hindu Sabha Temple head priest Abhay Shastri. This information has NOT been verified by Peel Police or any other authorities involved.

Y MEDIA EXCLUSIVE: MINISTER OF FAMILIES, CHILDREN AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AHMED HUSSEN MAKES AFFORDABLE HOUSING INVESTMENT ANNOUNCEMENT IN TORONTO

CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

In an exclusive interview with Y Media Group Editor Yudhvir Jaswal, Minister Hussen spoke elaborately about the investment. He said, “We are continuing our historic announcement in housing. This particular announce was in the amount of \$73 million to create over 233 rental units including 70 deeply affordable housing units for the residents of the City of Toronto. We did this in collaboration with the City, Mayor John Tory was with us.”

He added, “This is a demonstration of the National Housing Strategy. We are there to create more affordable housing units and putting more affordable rental units in the market, in addition to incentivising developers, NGOs, and municipalities to make housing more affordable for citizens.”

Jaswal raised the topic of people having to pay higher premiums in terms of insurance/mortgage during these difficult times. “I hear from people all the time and always take their feedback back to the government. We are always examining issues and I am happy to take this feedback back to our government,” Hussen said.

The Minister talked about further plans for housing saying that the government will continue. “We have \$55 billion national housing strategy that aims to build 125,000 new units, repair existing 300,000 units and renew 530,000 households out of housing needs. But it takes a collaboration, we cannot do it on our own. If we are to meet the targets we will need to work with all partners.” Hussen said last week’s housing announcement in Peel came about due to “partnership with the cities of Caledon and Mississauga”.

“When the municipal government, target sectors, and the NGOs move, the federal government can do more on their part. We will continue to announce and continue this work,” he said. He commended developer Concert Properties, saying they really “stepped up” and will be building 20 additional affordable units beyond those funded.

SOUTH ASIANS, BLACKS, HEALTHCARE, TRANSPORT & FACTORY WORKERS WORST-AFFECTED BY COVID-19 IN PEEL

CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

Dr Loh said, “Last Friday Peel Public Health released COVID-19 data based on race and occupation. Our data shows differences between groups in our community mirror trends seen elsewhere in Ontario, Canada, and the World. Visible minorities made up for 4 of 5 cases despite making up for only 2/3rd of Peel’s population. Residents who identify as South Asian, Blacks, or Latinos are over-represented compared to their proportion to Peel’s population.”

He added, “While those who identify as White, East Asian, Southeast Asians, and Middle Eastern are under-represented.”

The chief health officer also presented occupation-based data, citing that healthcare workers and transport-equipment operators are the most-affected by COVID-19 in Peel. While healthcare workers made up for 1/3rd cases, the second group made up for “nearly 1 in 5 cases”.

“Healthcare workers were the most-affected by COVID-19, representing 1/3rd cases we have analysed despite being only five per cent of Peel’s labour force. Transport and equipment operators represented the second group, making up nearly 1 in 5 cases we analysed,” Dr Loh said. The group ranked 3rd were individuals employed in manufacturing and utilities with 13 per cent of the cases analysed when they only represent seven per cent of Peel’s labour force.

Addressing the gross representation of the South Asian community in COVID-19 numbers, Y Media Group Editor Yudhvir Jaswal said there may be two-fold reasons to it. “We have to change our casual approach towards the ongoing pandemic. I would consider discussions held on our radio shows as a premise to my point. Several callers on our show during the initial discourse of the pandemic, suggested COVID is just like any other flu. Our attitude towards a situation affects the outcome entirely,” he said.

Jaswal added, “Also, if you closely monitored the most-affected occupations – Healthcare, Transport, and Manufacturing. The South Asian community is very closely associated with these three sectors. Transport not only includes the Trucking Industry, it also involves taxies. Having said this, I would like to pat the community on its back for being on the frontlines of this outstretched emergency and participating in keeping cities, and the country moving.”

Commending mayors of all three Peel cities, he said, “Over all, Mississauga and Caledon have done well. While we do understand Caledon covers a larger geographical area, and holds lesser population in comparison to Mississauga and Brampton, it deserves special mention. There are still concerns regarding Brampton, though it has done well. While I commend mayors of all three cities, I must appreciate Brampton Mayor Patrick Brown for remaining actively involved in promoting awareness regarding COVID-19.”

NON-ESSENTIAL TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS BETWEEN CANADA, U.S AND MEXICO EXTENDED UNTIL SEPT 21

In a brand new update, the Canada-US border will remain closed to non-essential travel for yet another month as both countries work to curb the spread of COVID-19. As current extension of the cross-border agreement expires on August 21, ban on discretionary travel has been extended to at least September 21. Canada’s Public Safety Minister Bill Blair tweeted, “We are extending the reciprocal restrictions at the Canada-US border for another 30 days, till September 21, 2020. We will continue to do what’s necessary to keep our communities safe.” This is the fifth renewal of the border restrictions since the pandemic was declared.

MidWeek

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Newspaper

MIDWEEK NEWS WEEKLY

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PREMIER FORD ANNOUNCES FULL 3 STOP SCARBOROUGH SUBWAY



The Ontario government is one step closer to getting shovels in the ground on part of the largest subway expansion in Canadian history with the expectation that the Request for Proposals (RFP) to advance tunnelling work on the Scarborough Subway Extension will be issued in the coming days. The announcement was made by Premier Doug Ford and Kinga Surma, Associate Minister of Transportation (GTA).
“After waiting over 30 years for a subway, our government is taking another critical step forward to build the improved, three-stop Scarborough Subway Extension for the people of Scarborough,” said Premier Ford. “This project will create thousands of jobs, drive housing development, and triple the daily ridership to help reduce congestion and cut travel times for riders and commuters.”
On August 20, 2020, the province will invite the selected teams from the Request for Qualifications process to respond to an RFP that details how they plan to design and deliver the tunnelling work for the Scarborough Subway Extension. Upon evaluating the proposals received, Infrastructure Ontario (IO) and Metrolinx expect to award this tunnelling contract in mid-2021. “The RFP release is the next step in our plans for transit expansion in Scarborough as we develop a world-class transportation network that gets people where they want to go, when they want to get there,” said Caroline Mulroney, Minister of Transportation. “Each project milestone demonstrates our commitment to building a modern, efficient rapid transit network that best serves Scarborough for generations to come.”

To expedite work on the Scarborough Subway Extension, tunnelling will begin first, to be followed by separate contracts for the balance of the work. “Issuing this RFP demonstrates that we are making progress on these priority subway projects to reduce commute times,” said Associate Minister Surma. “With the province and municipal governments now firmly supporting our transit expansion plan, we continue to jointly call on the federal government to provide its fair share ? funding at least 40 per cent of our four nationally significant subway projects. Formalizing this funding partnership with the federal government remains a top priority.” The release of the RFP is part of the government’s continued commitment to deliver the largest subway expansion in the country’s history to commuters and businesses in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). On August 5, 2020, Ontario announced three teams of bidders per project were shortlisted to advance tunnelling work on two of the four priority transit projects, the Scarborough Subway Extension and the Eglinton Crosstown West Extension, included in the Subway Transit Plan for the GTA. In April 2019, the province announced its historic new transportation vision, with a preliminary estimated cost of \$28.5 billion. In addition to the Scarborough Subway Extension and the Eglinton Crosstown West Extension, this plan includes the all-new Ontario Line and the Yonge North Subway Extension. Planning is underway for all four priority projects and procurements will be staged to ensure each project is delivered successfully.

How OVS helped Arjan Singh Batra overcome the COVID crisis in India

2020 has been a very hectic year for students around the globe. We here at Ontario Virtual School are proud to have been able to help some of those students keep from falling behind, even as many countries heavily altered, or even completely closed, their traditional school systems. Arjan Singh Batra is one such student.
Arjan is from India, and was just months away from finishing high school when suddenly, most of his Grade 12 final exams were cancelled due to the worldwide pandemic. Arjan’s regular school attempted to adjust to the new situation by assigning final marks based on an adjusted assessment scheme, which resulted in very different marks than what Arjan felt he could have earned in a normal school year, particularly in his Math class. For this reason, Arjan felt that he needed to improve his marks.
“Most of our final grade 12 exams were cancelled due to the pandemic and we were marked on the basis of an adjusted assessment scheme, due to which my marks in maths were greatly different from what we were expecting and as a reason, I needed to improve my marks.” Luckily, that’s when Arjan found out about Ontario Virtual School, and how we could give him the opportunity to earn higher grades. Adjusting to a new form of school, a fully online school, seemed like a radical adjustment, but Arjan says that it was much simpler than one may expect. “My time spent learning on OVS was very pleasant, the interface and lessons are easy to use and access. Chapters were well explained and would even be helpful for someone who has no prior knowledge of the topic.”
Even for a student who might find difficulty making this adjustment, Arjan says that his instructors were able to help him with any issues. “My teacher was very helpful too, I did not face a lot many problems, but when I did, I was helped out by my teacher in just the way I wanted to be assisted. The overall service was very good.”
Thankfully, with the help of the instructors and administrators at Ontario Virtual School, and the school’s unique, intuitive Learning Management System, Arjan was able to achieve the grades that he always knew he was able to earn. With those grades, Arjan has since been accepted to Ryerson University, and this fall, he will begin earning his Undergraduate degree in Computer Science. All of us here at Ontario Virtual School could not be prouder of Arjan, and we cannot wait to see what a bright future is in store for this talented young man.



Conservative Leadership Race : Survey Reveals Mackay Ahead With 51 Per Cent Support, O’Toole Close Second With 49 Per Cent



As the curtains begin to drop on the national Conservative Leadership race, a Mainstreet Research poll has pegged a close competition between Peter MacKay, and Erin O’Toole. A telephone survey of 5,267 Conservative Party members on August 14 and 15, reveals that MacKay has a 51 per cent to 49 per cent edge in points over O’Toole. However, the latter leads the popular vote based on total votes on the third count with 52 per cent of support, while MacKay accounts for 47 per cent. Mainstreet’s survey indicates MacKay would gain 41 per cent of leadership points, followed by O’Toole with 32 per cent of points. The poll also revealed Conservative voters were likely to abandon their ballot after their first two votes.
The Conservative Party point system gives each riding in the country a 100 points, which are then awarded to candidates based on their share of votes in that riding. The winning candidate will be determined on the majority of the points they garner – 16,901 in total. Results of the leadership election will be announced on August 23, Sunday. Ballots are due on August 21, Friday. This is touted to be the largest leadership race in Canadian history, with 269,469 members receiving ballots to vote.
Co-chair of the Leadership Election Organizing Committee (LEOC), Dan Nowlan said in a press release, “Our Leadership Election Organizing Committee is excited to be able to finally announce the Conservative Party’s next leader, and we want to thank all the candidates for their hard work over the past eight months to get here.”
Group Editor Yudhvir Jaswal said, “As the poll numbers indicate, it’s going to be a close fight between MacKay and O’Toole. However, I think they have to prove to Canadians how and what they would do differently to what the Liberals have been doing. This time Trudeau’s government is marred by the WE Charity controversy, last time there was the SNC Lavalin fiasco. The new Conservative leader will have to prove to Canadians that they do not just rely on the Liberals’ goof-ups to prove their own worth.”
He added, “By the time Stephen Harper left the government, he brought in the budget to a surplus. If taxes start going up, it’s Canadians who will have to pay the deficit. People want accountability and transparency. It is certainly questionable when the ethics commissioner launches an investigation into PM Trudeau, and former finance minister Bill Morneau and how much their families benefited from WE Charity, even if they haven’t. These are the kinds of things for what Canadians want answers.”
Jaswal added, “CBC is continuously reporting issues within the Governor General’s office. Canadians have begun to think that the elites consider themselves entitled. They are looking for someone who can really deliver.” He ended on a strong note, saying, “Whoever the new leader will be, has to focus primarily on the GTA.”

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WE CHARITY LAYING OFF STAFF, PUT PROPERTIES UP FOR SALE



Marred by controversies, WE Charity is reportedly reducing operations, prompting dozens of layoffs in both – Canada and the United Kingdom. The organization reportedly is financially hit by the COVID-19 pandemic and the scandal connecting to the federal Liberal government. 16 full-time employees at its global headquarters in Toronto will be laid off along with another 51 fixed-term contracts which won't be renewed after they expire at the end of the month. All UK operations will be centralized in Canada, meaning lay-offs of 19 full-time and

contract employees in London. The announcement comes after months of intense scrutiny over its ties to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Finance Minister Bill Morneau. The federal ethics commissioner is investigating whether both leaders violated the Conflict of Interest Act by handing over administration of the Canada Student Services Grant program to WE. The organization also plans to reduce office space. Reports reveal it plans to keep its headquarters on Queen Street, Toronto, but its other real estate holdings will be assessed to be sold.

OPINION: IN TRYING TO STEER AWAY FROM WE SCANDAL, TRUDEAU MAKES HIS REPLACEMENT STRONGER

CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

The 52 year old has a lot of admirers in the provincial, and municipal level. "In an interview with Premier Doug Ford, I asked him what he thought about Freeland, and he spoke very highly about her. Even on Tuesday, on hearing about her appointment as the new Finance Minister, Ford promptly said he will have her back. So support from different levels of the government should not be a problem for her."



Brampton Regional Councillor Paul Vicente elected to AMO's 2020-2022 Board of Directors



Brampton Regional Councillor Paul Vicente has been elected to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) Board of Directors as a member of the Regional and Single Tier Caucus for the 2020-2022 board term. The AMO Board of Directors is comprised of 29 elected municipal officials and affiliate members representing various groupings of Ontario municipalities.

Coun Vicente said, "I am honoured to have been elected to the AMO Board of Directors, and look forward to working with Mayor Brown, Mayor Crombie, Mayor Thomson, Chair Iannicca and our Councils to bring the City of Brampton and Peel Region's growth and economic recovery priorities to the provincial level."

Brampton Mayor Patrick Brown welcomed the news. He said, "Brampton will be well represented on the AMO Board by Councillor Vicente. Ontario's municipalities must work together and share the advocacy load as we look to partner on making Brampton a greener city, managing our growth and charting a path for economic recovery from the impacts of COVID-19. Councillor Vicente's commitment to a strong Brampton and Peel Region will be an asset to AMO members."



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FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19: AAP TO MAKE OXIMETERS AVAILABLE IN 30,000 VILLAGES



In a bid to combat COVID-19, the Delhi Government will now set up 'Oxygen Jaanch Kendra' in 30,000 villages across the country. These centres will be set up for testing the saturation of oxygen content in the blood. The village youth will be trained and provided with the oxymeters to set up these centres, said Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday. Taking to micro-blogging site Twitter, CM Kejriwal wrote, "Already received commitments for 30,000 oxymeters. I am overwhelmed. Will now set up "oxygen jaanch kendra" in 30,000 villages. Commitments still pouring in. Will help set it up in more villages. Thank you, donors. We will train village youth and give them oxymeters to set up oxygen kendras."

"This will help us in saving lives by detecting a drop in oxygen levels in time," he added. Oximeters are used to measure the oxygen level and heart rate, and are extremely useful for coronavirus patients, who in many cases battle breathlessness due to a drop in oxygen level. CM Kejriwal on Saturday urged people to donate oximeters to Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) so that it can be provided to the villages across the country. "We all have come together to fight COVID-19. I would appeal people to donate oximeters to Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and we will send these oximeters to the villages where locals can use them as per need," he said.

MP GOVT JOBS TO BE RESERVED FOR PEOPLE FROM THE STATE: SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN



Government jobs in Madhya Pradesh will be reserved for people belonging to the state and necessary legal provisions are being made to ensure this, chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said on Tuesday. "The state government has taken an important decision that government jobs will be given to youths of Madhya Pradesh. We are making necessary legal provisions for this. Resources of Madhya Pradesh are meant for children of the state,"

Chouhan said in a video statement. The CM, in a tweet, also urged the children of the state to study hard, saying that it was his dream that the locals should join state services and improve the state's future. In his Independence Day speech, Chouhan had said preference would be given to locals in government jobs, reports PTI. He had also said that his government will devise a mechanism to ensure employment to youth on the basis of their marks in classes 10 and 12. This is not the first time that an announcement regarding job reservation for local people has been made in the state. Last year in July, the then chief minister Kamal Nath had said that his government was mulling a law to ensure 70 per cent jobs to local youth in the private sector. "We will bring the law to ensure 70% reservation for domiciles of MP in private jobs. The law will make it mandatory for both private and government sectors to give more employment to domiciles of MP," he had said in the state assembly. On Tuesday, the former CM, in a series of tweets, reminded Shivraj Singh Chouhan of steps taken by him on this issue. "In my 15 month tenure, I made many provisions to ensure that the youth of the state get priority in jobs," he said. He added, "At least now you have woken up on the job crisis after 15 years and have imitated our decision to reserve jobs for people of the state. It should not remain just an announcement on paper."

Bengaluru Riots: P Naveen, accused of posting derogatory material on social media, sent to judicial custody

A local court remanded P. Naveen, accused of posting derogatory material on social media, to judicial custody for further investigation following the riots in Bengaluru last week, police said on Tuesday. "As Naveen's interrogation in our (police) custody was completed on his derogatory post on social media which triggered the riots on August 11 in the city's eastern suburb, he has been remanded to judicial custody pending further investigation in the case booked against him," Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) for Bengaluru East, S.D. Sharanappa told IANS here. Naveen has been lodged in the central jail on the city's southern outskirts. Naveen, 26, is the nephew of Congress legislator Akhanda

Srinivasa Murthy from the Pulakeshinagar Assembly (reserved) segment in the eastern suburbs whose house was burnt by an unruly mob in protest against the post on Facebook. "In the course of interrogation, Naveen admitted to having posted the derogatory remark after denying earlier and claiming that his Facebook account was hacked when he was arrested on August 12," Sharanappa said. On a complaint against the social media post, the police booked Naveen under the cyber crime law and asked him to hand over his mobile handset for investigation, as he had reportedly exchanged a number of controversial posts on the WhatsApp platform with a couple of Socialist Democratic Party of India (SDPI) activists during the last 2 weeks.

CHINA WANTS TO KNOW THE REASON BEHIND GORKHAS JOINING INDIAN ARMY, FUNDS NEPALESE NGO TO STUDY

China has funded 12.7 lakh Nepalese rupees to a non-government organisation (NGO) based in Kathmandu, to carry out a study on the motivation behind Gorkha community members joining Indian Army. Sources stated that in June first week, China's Ambassador to Nepal Hou Yanqi funded a Nepalese NGO, China Study Centre (CSC), to conduct a study on Nepalis being recruited in the Gorkha regiment of Indian Army. A fund of 12.7 lakh Nepalese rupees was allocated by the Chinese Embassy for this task. There are seven Gorkha regiments in the Indian Army comprising 28,000 Nepali Citizens. The regiments have a total of 39 battalions. In total, there are 11 Gorkha regiments, out of which four went to the British Army after Independence. India has 1st, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 8th, 9th, and 11th Gorkha regiments and the British Army has 2nd, 6th, 7th and 10th regiments. The Gorkha community consists of mainly four different tribes - Khas (or Chetri), Gurung, Limbus, and Rais.



The recruitment of Nepali Gorkhas into the Indian Army stems from an arrangement agreed to in 1947 between India, the UK and Nepal, known as the Tripartite Agreement. But Nepal has now stated that this agreement is redundant. The assertion was made after Nepal Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli first raised the issue during his meeting with former UK Prime Minister Theresa May.

Coronavirus Outbreak: India's COVID-19 death toll crosses 50,000-mark; tally mounts to 26.47 lakh



With more than 57,000 new cases reported in the last 24 hours, India's COVID-19 count on Monday crossed the 26.47 lakh-mark, while the death toll has crossed the 50,000-mark as well. At 9:30 AM on this day, the COVID-19 tally in the country has reached 26,47,664 cases, which include 6,76,900 active cases; 19,19,843 cured, discharged, or migrated patients, and 50,921 deaths. According to the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, as many as 57,982 new COVID-19 cases and 941 deaths were reported in the country in the last 24 hours, marking a significant spike. Total coronavirus cases in the worst-hit state of Maharashtra has climbed to 5,95,865. Maharashtra is followed by Tamil Nadu with 3,38,055 cases. The state crossed Andhra Pradesh to take up second place in the list due to a recent massive surge in the number of cases. Andhra Pradesh is third on the list with 2,89,829 cases. After Andhra Pradesh comes Karnataka, where the COVID-19 figure stands at 2,26,966 cases with 1,41,491 patients recovered, and 3,956 fatalities. National capital Delhi has reported 1,52,580 cases of which 1,37,561 have recovered and 4,196 patients are dead. West Bengal has reported 1,16,498 positive cases so far of which 86,771 patients have recovered and 2,428 patients have lost their lives due to the virus. In Bihar, as many as 1,04,093 people have confirmed COVID-19, of which 72,566 recovered and 537 people succumbed to it. In Kerala, which reported the country's first COVID-19 case, 44,415 people have been detected positive for coronavirus so far.

LCA Tejas deployed on western front amid border tensions with China: Report



In a significant achievement for the indigenous fighter aircraft programme, the Indian Air Force (IAF) deployed the home-grown Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas on the western front along the Pakistan border in view of the tensions with China on the Ladakh front. "The LCA Tejas was deployed by the Indian Air Force on the western front close to the Pakistan border to take care of any possible action by the adversary there," government sources told ANI. The first LCA Tejas squadron, 45 Squadron (Flying Daggers) based out of Sullur under the Southern Air Command, was deployed in an operational role there, the sources said. The indigenous Tejas aircraft had been praised by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his Independence Day speech where he had stated that the deal to buy the LCA Mark1A version was expected to be completed soon. While the first squadron of the planes is of the Initial Operational Clearance version, the second 18 Squadron 'Flying Bullets' is of the Final Operational Clearance version and was operationalized by the IAF chief Air Chief Marshal RKS Bhaduria at the Sullur airbase on May 27.

India negotiating with 13 countries to establish bilateral air bubble arrangements: Puri

NEW DELHI: India is negotiating with 13 countries, including Australia, Japan and Singapore, to establish separate bilateral air bubble arrangements for international flight operations, Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said on Tuesday. Under a bilateral air bubble pact, airlines of both countries can operate international flights with certain restrictions. Puri said on Twitter air bubbles have also been proposed with our neighbours Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Nepal and Bhutan. Since July, India has established such bubbles with the following countries—the US, the UK, France, Germany, the UAE, Qatar and the Maldives. Puri said, "We are now taking these efforts forward & are negotiating with 13 more countries to establish such arrangements." "These countries include Australia, Italy, Japan, New Zealand, Nigeria, Bahrain, Israel, Kenya, Philippines, Russia, Singapore, South Korea & Thailand," he added. Scheduled international passenger flights continue to remain suspended in India since March 23 due to the coronavirus pandemic.

'Prince of Incompetence': Nadda attacks Rahul Gandhi for raising question on PM-CARES



BJP president JP Nadda on Monday hit out at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for raising question on PM-CARES Fund after the Wayanad MP alleged "improbability".

Sharing a report by a newspaper, Gandhi tweeted, "PM-Cares for Right To Improbability." In response, Nadda came down hard on the Congress leader, calling him "Prince of Incompetence".

"It happens when 'Prince of Incompetence' shares articles without even reading. RTI was to know details of other RTIs & it's maliciously spun by you as attack on transparency," Nadda said.

"Your family's dubious legacy includes appropriating a permanent position in PMNRF and then diverting money from PMNRF into your family trusts," he further said.

"You and your mother also took money from the Chinese to hurt our national interest. Can anyone stoop lower?" the BJP chief asked.

In another tweet, Nadda said the entire nation has full faith on the PM and his initiatives and this faith was yet again visible with the massive support for PM CARES.

"Being the loser you are, you can only crib and spread fake news while the entire nation has joined hands in the fight against COVID-19," he said.

Earlier on Sunday, Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad had called him 'losers who keep cribbing that the entire world is controlled by BJP and RSS.'

The minister's remarks came after Rahul shared a report published by a US media outlet accusing the ruling BJP along with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) of controlling Facebook and WhatsApp in India. "BJP & RSS control Facebook & Whatsapp in India. They spread fake news and hatred through it and use it to influence the electorate. Finally, the American media has come out with the truth about Facebook," Rahul said.

"Losers who cannot influence people even in their own party keep cribbing that the entire world is controlled by BJP & RSS. You were caught red-handed in alliance with Cambridge Analytica & Facebook to weaponise data before the elections & now have the gall to question us?" the minister said.

"The fact is that today access to information and freedom of expression has been democratized. It is no longer controlled by retainers of your family and that is why it hurts. Btw, haven't yet heard your condemnation of the Bangalore riots. Where did your courage disappear?" Prasad said in another tweet.

'Losers keep cribbing': RS Prasad attacks Rahul Gandhi's claims that BJP-RSS control Facebook, WhatsApp



In a fierce attack on Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad on Sunday called him 'losers who keep cribbing that the entire world is controlled by BJP and RSS.'

The minister's remarks came after Rahul shared a report published by a US media outlet accusing the ruling BJP along with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) of controlling Facebook and WhatsApp in India. "Losers who cannot influence people even in their own party keep cribbing that the entire world is controlled by BJP & RSS. You were caught red-handed in alliance with Cambridge Analytica & Facebook to weaponise data before the elections & now have the gall to question us?" the minister said.

"The fact is that today access to information and freedom of expression has been democratized. It is no longer controlled by retainers of your family and that is why it hurts. Btw, haven't yet heard your condemnation of the Bangalore riots. Where did your courage disappear?" Prasad said in another tweet.

The scathing attack on Gandhi came after the Congress leader claimed

that the BJP and RSS were using Facebook to influence the electorate. "They spread fake news and hatred through it and use it to influence the electorate. Finally, the American media has come out with the truth about Facebook," Rahul had tweeted.

Congress leader Randeep Singh Surjewala tweeted, "Facebook - WhatsApp sinister connection to BJP government exposed! Is Facebook being used to spread 'Fake News' and 'Hate Material'? What is the connect of Facebook-India leaders to BJP?"

The US media report, titled "Facebook Hate-Speech Rules Collide With Indian Politics - Company executive opposed move to ban controversial politician" highlighted how WhatsApp and its parent company Facebook failed to act against BJP leaders for posting objectional material and hate speeches.

The article also claimed that Facebook executive did not approve the move to ban controversial politicians of the ruling BJP, saying that punishing violations by BJP workers "would damage the company's business prospects in the country."

MANIPUR: UNION MINISTER NITIN GADKARI TO LAY FOUNDATION STONE FOR RS 3,000 CRORE HIGHWAY PROJECTS

In a bid to provide better connectivity in the state, Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari will lay the foundation stone of 13 National Highway Projects worth Rs 3000 crores in Manipur on August 17.

The event will be held in the presence of state Chief Minister N Biren Singh at 11:30 AM.

"Manipur will progress on the path of development in new India. Union Minister Nitin Gadkari and Chief Minister of Manipur N Biren Singh will lay the foundation stone of National Highway Projects and will inaugurate Road Safety Project on Monday, 11.30 am on Monday," Office of Nitin Gadkari tweeted.

Meanwhile, the Manipur government termed it 'a big day' and thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the Act East policy.

"Tomorrow is a big day for Manipur! Union Minister Nitin Gadkari will lay the foundation stone of 13 National Highway Projects worth Rs 3000 crores and inaugurate a road safety project via video conferencing at 11:30 AM. Thanks, Hon' PM Narendra Modi ji for the Act East policy," Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh tweeted.

Paving the way for development of Manipur, these roads will enhance better connectivity, convenience, and economic growth in the state.



Mamata's 'feminist' card: TMC aiming for two crore female voters ahead of 2021 West Bengal polls



In attempting to sweep the 2021 West Bengal Legislative Assembly election, the ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC) party in the state has revealed a new campaign strategy. This time, the Mamata Banerjee-led party is aiming to win over the two crore female voters in the state by appealing to the voter base. The party's women wing, Trinamool Mahila Congress, launched a week-long campaign on Sunday for this purpose, focusing on social media campaigning as a primary cause. Female party workers have been provided the responsibility of pulling this campaign through.

How will this campaign work?

According to sources, every polling booth will have one Trinamool Mahila Congress worker, who will bring Mamata Banerjee's message and the party's promises to around 20 women in the area. The campaigning work will consist of delivering word regarding all the work that the Mamata-led TMC government in the state has done for women. This strategy will be carried out for 70,000 polling booths in West Bengal. Trinamool Mahila Congress chief Chandrima Bhattacharya said, "Mamata Banerjee has brought in a material change in the lives of women in West Bengal. The campaign is being held so that the word can be delivered regarding all the opportunities made available by the TMC for the women, to the women. We are also making sure that the benefits of initiatives such as the Kanyashree Prakalpa and the Rupashree Prakalpa reach women in even the most remote villages in the state." Notably, female voters form an important constituent of the voter base in West Bengal and TMC looks set on winning over this section to ensure its victory in the upcoming state assembly polls next year. According to the latest available statistics, it has been seen that a major section of the female voter base had tended to vote for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), both in 2014 and in the 2019 Lok Sabha Polls. This is also why BJP's 17% vote share in 2014 had reached all the way up to a formidable 42% in 2019. Political commentators have noted that the TMC is aiming to address this issue and fortify its campaigning with this strategy ahead of the 2021 West Bengal Legislative Assembly Elections.

Pakistan plans to deploy Chinese UAV at LoC to push Kashmir into unrest

Pakistan is planning to deploy medium-altitude long-endurance unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) at Line of Control (LoC) to create further unrest in Jammu and Kashmir, according to reports. Security agencies' sources said that Pakistan is procuring Cai Hong-4 (CH-4) UAV from China in big numbers in order to unleash mayhem in Kashmir valley.

It has been learned that a 10 member-team of Pakistan Army led by Brigadier Mohammad Zafar Iqbal has visited China to review the procurement process. The Pakistan Army team recently visited China for a factory acceptance test for items procured from Aerospace Long-March International Trade Company (ALIT) in China. Iqbal had earlier visited China in December 2019 for the factory acceptance test of the first tranche of Cai Hong-4 for which delivery was to commence in 2020. The CH-4 has a take-off mass between 1,200-1,300kg depending on the variant. It can also carry a wide range of payloads. The UAV is already in service with military forces including the Iraqi Army and the Royal Jordanian Air Force. A few days ago, intel reports had revealed that Pakistani Army Special Service Group (SSG) commandos are giving arms training to Taliban and Afghan terrorists in secret places of Afghanistan. The report added that these terrorists are planning to launch attacks on the security establishment and patrolling parties in Jammu and Kashmir.

The report also claimed that different terrorist outfits in Kashmir were working in tandem with each other to launch terror attacks in the valley and facilitate the infiltration of terrorists from Pakistan.

BJP used social media to spread religious hatred: Shiv Sena

The ruling Shiv Sena, which is part of Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA) coalition government, comprising the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and the Congress, on Tuesday, launched into ally-turned-rival the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and alleged that the party benefitted the most electorally using social media and gained politically by spreading religious hatred since it assumed power at the Centre in 2014. An editorial in Saamana, the party mouthpiece, referred to a news report published in The Wall Street Journal (WSJ) on August 14 that took a dig at Facebook's India operations for turning a blind eye to hate speech by a BJP elected representative and three other "Hindu nationalist individuals and groups" in a bid not to hurt the social media company's lucrative business prospects in its biggest market. The editorial in the Marathi daily said that social media platforms can be used to voice opinions but "if it is used to spread hatred to divide the country, then action should be taken against those without thinking about which party they belong to. Facebook cannot turn a blind eye to the person spreading hatred because he is from the ruling party."

Donald Trump ‘wrong president’, says Michelle Obama on Day 1 of Democratic Convention



Former First Lady Michelle Obama made the most compelling case for Joe Biden, the Democratic presumptive nominee for president, on the first day of the party’s most unconventional convention yet on Monday with a stirring speech casting President Donald Trump as the “wrong president”.

Politically, Independent Senator Bernie Sanders, who went toe-to-toe with Biden for the nomination in the primaries, was more significant with his appeal for party unity. His reluctance to support Hillary Clinton in 2016 had split the party, with many of his fiercely loyal supporters choosing to stay home.

John Kasich, the former Republican governor of Ohio, was the other politically significant voice at the convention. He represented growing disaffection with President Donald Trump in his own party. They are increasingly assertive, more organized and less inhibited of their support for Biden.

But Michelle Obama, the former first lady, it was who delivered the defining speech of the night, which, it was noted by observers, did not mention Kamala Harris, the first Black and Indian-descent nominee for vice-president, at all. The speech was recorded before Biden announced his pick.

It was an unconventional convention, held virtually for the first time in the history of US elections. It was shorter than the daily fare at a regular convention, and lacked the usual on-site energy and excitement. But it found quick acceptance given the circumstances, a raging Covid-19 epidemic.

“So let me be as honest and clear as I possibly can,” said Obama, the first lady, in the night’s most anticipated speech. “Donald Trump is the wrong president for our country. He has had more than enough time to prove that he can do the job, but he is clearly in over his head. He cannot meet this moment. He simply cannot be who we need him

to be for us. It is what it is.”

The last sentence — “It is what it is” — was an unmistakable take-down of President Trump response to the mounting Covid-19 infections and fatalities using his own words — Trump has used that phrase several times — reflecting abject surrender to the consequences of his own inactions.

Building on the iconic lines from her speech at the 2016 convention — going high against the low blows of the Trump campaign — Obama said, “But let’s be clear: going high does not mean putting on a smile and saying nice things when confronted by viciousness and cruelty. “Going high means taking the harder path. It means scraping and clawing our way to that mountain top. Going high means standing fierce against hatred while remembering that we are one nation under God, and if we want to survive, we’ve got to find a way to live together and work together across our differences.”

Obama’s spirited appeal for party unity was pre-empted by Sanders. whose words, however, would count for more. “My friends, I say to you, and to everyone who supported other candidates in this primary and to those who may have voted for Donald Trump in the last election,” Sanders said, imploring supporter to do more.

He added: “The future of our democracy is at stake. The future of our economy is at stake. The future of our planet is at stake. We must come together, defeat Donald Trump and elect Joe Biden and Kamala Harris as our next president and vice president. My friends, the price of failure is just too great to imagine.”

Kasich, the other standout-speaker of the first day, was characteristically blunt. “I’m a lifelong Republican, but that attachment holds second place to my responsibility to my country. That’s why I’ve chosen to appear at this convention. In normal times, something like this would probably never happen, but these are not normal times.”

Novel coronavirus mutating into 'more infectious' strain; here's what it means

An increasingly common mutation of the novel coronavirus found in Europe, North America and parts of Asia may be 'more infectious' but appears to be 'less deadly', according to a prominent infectious disease doctor.

Paul Tambyah, a senior consultant at the National University of Singapore and president-elect of the International Society of Infectious Diseases, said evidence suggests the proliferation of the D614G mutation in some parts of the world has coincided with a drop in death rates, suggesting it is less lethal.

"Maybe that's a good thing to have a virus that is more infectious but less deadly," Tambyah told Reuters.

Tambyah said most viruses tend to become less virulent as they mutate.

"It is in the virus' interest to infect more people but not to kill them because a virus depends on the host for food and for shelter," he said.

Scientists discovered the mutation as early as February and it has circulated in Europe and the Americas, the World Health Organization said. The WHO has also said there is no evidence the mutation has led to more severe disease.

On Sunday, Malaysia's director-general of health Noor Hisham Abdullah urged greater public vigilance after authorities detected what they believe was the D614G mutation of the coronavirus in two recent clusters.

Sebastian Maurer-Stroh of Singapore's agency for science, technology, and research said the variant has also been found in the city-state but that containment measures have prevented large-scale spread.

Malaysia's Noor Hisham said the D614G strain detected there was 10 times more infectious and that vaccines currently in development may not be effective against this mutation.

But Tambyah and Maurer-Stroh said such mutations would not likely change the virus enough to make potential vaccines less effective. "(The) variants are almost identical and did not change areas that our immune system typically recognise, so there shouldn't be any difference for vaccines being developed," said Maurer-Stroh.

After TikTok, Trump likely to ban Alibaba, other Chinese-owned firms in US

US President Donald Trump has indicated that he was looking to ban other Chinese-owned companies, including e-commerce giant Alibaba in the United States, days after signing an executive order targetting TikTok's parent company, ByteDance, Fox News reported.

The development came after Trump issued an executive order on August 14, requiring ByteDance to divest its interests in video-sharing app TikTok's operations in the US within 90 days.

"There is credible evidence that leads me to believe that ByteDance ... might take action that threatens to impair the national security of the United States," the US President said in the order.

The new order came after an earlier executive order was signed by Trump. The previous order could have forced US-based app stores to stop distributing the TikTok app if ByteDance did not reach a deal to divest from it in 45 days.

Under the latest order, ByteDance is expected to destroy all its copies of TikTok data attached to American users.

Earlier this month, US Secretary of State Michael Pompeo said that the Trump administration is "working hard" to protect Americans from the threats of "untrusted vendors" such as TikTok and WeChat, which it wants to remove from US app stores like those operated by Apple and Google.

US politicians have repeatedly criticised TikTok, owned by Beijing-based startup ByteDance, of being a threat to national security because of its ties to the Chinese Communist Party.

'Kamala Harris is a step worse; I have more Indians than her': Donald Trump attacks Joe Biden's running mate

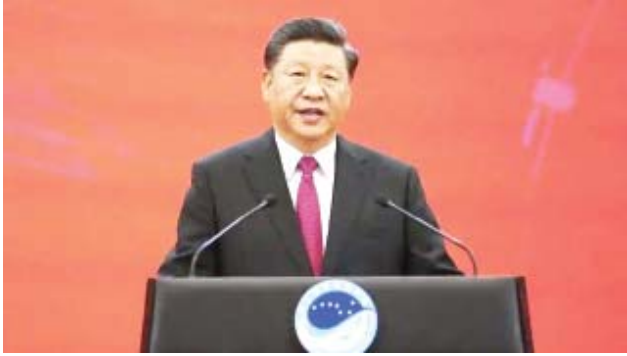
US President Donald Trump, in another attack, has claimed that he has "more Indians" than Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden's vice presidential candidate Kamala Harris, who is of Indian and Jamaican heritage.

Trump made the remarks while addressing the New York City law enforcement union, the Police Benevolent Association (PBA) on Friday. "(If) Sleepy Joe Biden were to become President, he would immediately pass legislation to gut every single police department in America. And probably she's a step worse, Kamala."

"She is of Indian heritage. Remember, I said I have more Indians than her. I have more than she does," he added.

Trump's latest attack on Harris came a day after he said that the California Senator "doesn't qualify" to serve as US Vice President, while amplifying the fringe legal 'birther' theory that critics decry as racist. "I just heard it today that she doesn't meet the requirements and by the way, the lawyer that wrote that piece is a very highly qualified, very talented lawyer," Trump was quoted as saying.

PROPERLY HANDLING BORDER DISPUTE WITH INDIA PART OF XI JINPING DOCTRINE, SAYS CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTRY



Properly handling the boundary dispute with India but safeguarding China's territorial integrity is part of President Xi Jinping's blueprint for Beijing's "major country" diplomacy, the Chinese foreign ministry has said.

In an analysis of "Xi Jinping on Governance and Politics", the ministry indicated that maintaining peace and tranquility along the boundary with India is as important as stabilising the "maritime situation" in the South China Sea (SCS) where Beijing is entangled in disputes with multiple littoral states over the ownership of islands, reefs and the surrounding seas. The analysis by the ministry also hailed the "new model" of informal meetings between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Xi.

There was no mention of the ongoing friction with India along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh, which has plunged bilateral ties to the worst low in decades.

The ministry, quoting Xi, said China will "resolutely" safeguard China's "...sovereignty, territorial integrity, and maritime rights and interests, steadily advance the consultation process of the 'Code of Conduct in the South China Sea', stabilise the maritime situation, properly handle border disputes between China and India, and maintain peace and tranquility in the border areas."

Published by the Chinese foreign ministry's Communist party committee in Mandarin in the party mouthpiece, People's Daily, the analysis claimed that China's relation with "regional powers" like India has improved.

"Relations with neighbouring countries continue to improve. For regional powers, the leaders of China and India have created a new model of bilateral exchanges at annual informal meetings, leading the two countries to deepen strategic mutual trust, properly manage differences, and stably develop bilateral relations," the analysis said. It was referring to the two informal summits between Modi and Xi held in Wuhan in 2018 and in Chennai in 2019. The Chinese government analysis avoided referring to the ongoing discussions between India and China to resolve stalemate in the troop disengagement process in eastern Ladakh. India had rejected China's contention that disengagement has been completed at most locations along their disputed border, and called on Beijing to work sincerely for complete de-escalation and full restoration of peace along the LAC. The new analysis comes a week after the foreign ministry had said in a statement that maintaining peace along the disputed boundary and deepening strategic trust with India is one of China's diplomatic priorities. "For the China-India relationship, the two sides should jointly safeguard peace and security in the border areas and maintain a steady and sound development of bilateral ties," spokesperson Zhao Lijian had said.

Responding to a query about China's future diplomatic priorities as the Covid-19 pandemic impacts the world, Zhao was briefly outlining Beijing's plans for the way ahead in bilateral ties with the US, Russia, EU, Japan, and India.

The current analysis also looked at Beijing's ties with the US, Russia, the European Union, Japan, South Korea besides Latin America, Africa and Central Asian countries.

The ministry said that since the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, held in October 2017, Xi had travelled for 2,15,000 km and visited 27 countries.

"In the direction of Northeast Asia, General Secretary Xi Jinping made a historic visit to North Korea. The top leaders of China and North Korea met 5 times," it said.

INFECTIOUS COVID-19 MUTATION MAY BE A GOOD THING, SAYS DISEASE EXPERT

A mutation of the novel coronavirus increasingly common throughout Europe and recently detected in Malaysia may be more infectious but appears less deadly, according to a prominent infectious diseases doctor.

Paul Tambyah, senior consultant at the National University of Singapore and president-elect of the U.S.-based International Society of Infectious Diseases, said the D614G mutation has also been found in Singapore.

The city-state's health ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Tambyah said there is evidence the proliferation of the mutation in Europe has coincided with a drop in death rates, suggesting it is less lethal.

The mutation is not likely to impact the efficacy of a potential vaccine, despite warnings to the contrary from other health experts, he added. "Maybe that's a good thing to have a virus that is more infectious but less deadly," Tambyah told Reuters.

Tambyah said most viruses tend to become less virulent as they mutate. "It is in the virus' interest to infect more people but not to kill them because a virus depends on the host for food and for shelter," he said.

Scientists discovered the mutation as early as February and it has circulated in Europe and the Americas, the World Health Organization said. The WHO has also said there is no evidence the mutation has led to more severe disease.

On Sunday, Malaysia's director-general of health Noor Hisham Abdullah urged greater public vigilance after authorities detected what they believe was the D614G mutation of the coronavirus in two recent clusters.

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