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Anchor WholeHearted News

| DETAILS ON PAGE 8

LOCKDOWN IN SOUTHERN ONTARIO UNTIL JANUARY 23RD, NORTHERN ONTARIO TILL JANUARY 9TH

Government Providing Grants of up to \$20,000 to Small Businesses Impacted by New Public Health Measures

TORONTO: As COVID-19 cases continue to rise at an alarming rate, the Ontario government, in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health and other health experts, is imposing a Provincewide Shutdown. Additional restrictions will be put into place and reinforce that Ontarians should stay at home as much as possible to minimize transmission of the virus and prevent hospitals from becoming overwhelmed. The Provincewide Shutdown will go into effect as of Saturday, December 26, 2020, at 12:01 a.m.

Details were provided today by Premier Doug Ford, Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health, Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education, Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health, and Dr. Naveed Mohammad, President and CEO, William Osler Health System. "The number of daily cases continue to rise putting our hospitals and long-term care homes at risk," said Premier Ford. "We need to stop the spread of this deadly virus. That's why, on the advice of Dr. Williams and other health experts, we are taking the difficult but necessary decision to shutdown the province and ask people to stay home. Nothing is more important right now than the health and safety of all Ontarians." In response to these exceptional circumstances, the Provincewide Shutdown would put in place time-limited public health and workplace safety measures similar to those in other jurisdictions.

It would help stop the trend of high COVID-19 transmission in communities, preserve health system capacity, safeguard vulnerable populations and those who care for them, and save lives. Measures include, but are not limited to:

Restricting indoor organized public events and social gatherings, except with members of the same household (the people you live with). Individuals who live alone may consider having exclusive close contact with one other household.

Prohibiting in-person shopping in most retail settings - curbside pickup and delivery can continue. Discount and big box retailers selling groceries will be limited to 25 per cent capacity for in-store shopping. Supermarkets, grocery stores and similar stores that primarily sell food, as well as pharmacies, will continue to operate at 50 per cent capacity for in-store shopping.

Restricting indoor access to shopping malls - patrons may only go to a designated indoor pickup area (by appointment only), essential retail stores that are permitted to be open (e.g. pharmacy, grocery store), or, subject to physical distancing and face covering requirements, to the food court for takeout purchases. Shopping malls may also establish outdoor designated pickup areas.

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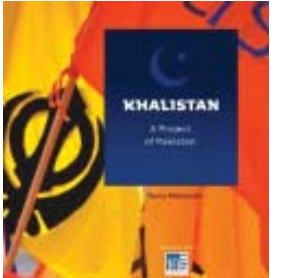
OSLER DELIVERS FIRST DOSES OF COVID-19 VACCINE IN BRAMPTON



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SFJ FILES LAWSUIT AGAINST MLI ON KHALISTAN REPORT

SIKHS FOR JUSTICE ORGANIZATION ALLEGES DEFAMATION, FILES LAWSUIT AGAINST MACDONALD-LAURIER INSTITUTE & FORMER CBC REPORTER, TERRY MILEWSKI THE LAWSUIT CLAIMED MILEWSKI AUTHORED MISLEADING REPORT ON KHALISTAN DAMAGING SFJ'S REPUTATION THE REPORT WAS PUBLISHED SEPTEMBER 2020- KHALISTAN A PROJECT OF PAKISTAN .MACDONALD-LAURIER INSTITUTE & TERRY MILEWSKI STAND BEHIND THE REPORT .THIS LAWSUIT IS MERITLESS ATTEMPT TO SILENCE PUBLIC DEBATE : TERRY



PAKISTANI ACTIVIST KARIMA BALOCH FOUND DEAD IN TORONTO

TORONTO- Karima Baloch, an activist, who had been vocal about Pakistan Army and government atrocities in Balochistan, has been found dead in Toronto, Canada, according to Balochistan Post. Karima was a Canadian refugee and named as one of the world's 100 most "inspirational and influential" women in 2016 by the BBC.



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CANADA SET TO RECEIVE 1.2 MILLION DOSES BY JAN 2021



Health Canada's approval of Moderna's COVID19 vaccine, the first of Flag of Canada's 40M doses will soon start arriving. With now 2 approved vaccines, Canada is set to receive 1.2M doses by the end of January, and on track for enough to vaccinate everyone who wants it by the end of Sep. 2021

NEW STRAIN OF COVID-19 WREAKS HAVOC IN UK, FRESH LOCKDOWN MEASURES IMPLEMENTED



A new variant of coronavirus which has caused a spike in COVID-19 infections has forced the UK to enforce a new stringent, stay-at-home lockdown. Under the new lockdown rules, non-essential shops and businesses will be closed.

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SUPERFAN NAV BHATIA TO BE HONORED WITH GLOBAL INDIAN AWARD 2020 BY CANADA INDIA FOUNDATION

WATCH EXCLUSIVE COVERAGE OF THE AWARD CEREMONY ON SUNDAY DECEMBER 27TH AT 6:30 LIVE ON CHANNEL Y (ROGERS 857,IGNITE 707, BELL FIBE 828, TELUS 2418 & ONLINE AT SOUTHASIANDAILY.COM OR DOWNLOAD Y MEDIA TV)



SUPPORTS NEEDED DURING LOCKDOWN: HORWATH

HAMILTON: People will need much greater financial supports to make it through this lockdown, while more public health supports will be needed to make it effective, said NDP Leader Andrea Horwath, who also said Ford has been putting politics and big-box CEOs ahead of public health.



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Happy Holidays & Happy New Year

Your Brampton MPs have been hard at work advocating for the residents of Brampton.



\$45 million invested in Brampton Transit, the largest investment in Brampton Transit in over 10 years.



\$38 million for the Riverwalk Project, unlocking economic potential to create thousands of jobs for our residents.



Our government has acted and banned assault style firearms. These guns have no place on our streets.



A historic \$276 million of funding for affordable housing, representing the largest housing investment ever made by the federal government in the Region of Peel.

Only together will we get through this crisis and keep all Canadians safe and supported.



8 out of every 10 dollars spent on the COVID-19 response has come from the federal government.



Our government acted swiftly to provide support to Canadians through CERB, CEWS, CEBA, Canada Emergency Rent Subsidy, additional senior support payments and extra Canada Child Benefit supports.



We have secured the most diverse portfolio of vaccines and the most number of doses per capita in the world – putting Canada at the front of the pack to receive the vaccine.



Over 7.4M rapid tests have been sent to provinces and territories to date.



STAY SAFE

Seasons Greetings from Your Brampton MPs



Kamal Kherra
M.P. Brampton West



Maninder Sidhu
M.P. Brampton East



Ruby Sahota
M.P. Brampton North



Ramesh Sangha
M.P. Brampton Centre



Sonia Sidhu
M.P. Brampton South

Turkey Donation to Mohamad Fakh, of Paramount Fine Foods



BRAMPTON- From December 14 to December 16, Regional Councillor Michael Palleschi hosted a drive-through Turkey Distribution event in Brampton, supported by the generosity of local business owners. 1500 Turkeys were distributed to local families and community organizations in Brampton on an appointment-based system in hopes of adding a little extra cheer to the Christmas holidays. While organizing this drive-through distribution event, Councillor Palleschi learned that Mohamad Fakh from Paramount Fine Foods has launched a Turkey Collection Drive to support families in need during the holidays. He, along with Councillor Doug Whillans and Mayor Patrick Brown prepared to donate 200 turkeys to Mr. Fakh on Wednesday, December 16,

to support his campaign. Councillor Palleschi hosted this event to recognize Mr. Fakh's dedication to his community and during the presentation, added an additional 100 turkeys to the campaign, to support 300 families in the community. This has been an especially difficult year and some residents have been hit very hard. Councillor Palleschi is pleased by the support of local businesses, businesses owners such as Mr. Fakh, and residents in the community that have been giving back. Yesterday's donation to Mr. Fakh was to inspire others and highlight community giving, to encourage residents to step up, be involved and lend a hand to their neighbours where they can, and show that Brampton Cares.



STAR INDIAN CRICKETER YUZVENDRA SINGH CHAHAL WRITES 'OUR HAPPILY EVER AFTER' AFTER HE TIES THE KNOT WITH DHANASHREE VERMA.

Mississauga Allocated \$20.968 Million from Federal-Provincial Safe Restart Agreement

This week, the Government of Ontario announced Phase 2 of Municipal Operating funding as part of the Safe Restart Agreement between the federal government and the provinces and territories. The City of Mississauga is receiving \$20.968 million in 2021 as part of the second round of funding through the municipal relief stream. This funding will offset the 2020 deficit, and the remainder will be used to offset anticipated 2021 pressures. This investment builds upon the first phase of the federal-provincial Safe Restart Agreement announced this summer and will help municipal partners deliver critical services during COVID-19. "I want to give my sincerest thanks to both the provincial and federal governments for supporting not only our City, but cities across the province and across Canada," said Mayor Bonnie Crombie. "Cities like Mississauga have been on the frontlines of the crisis and we know that we will continue to face financial pressures over the next few years. This funding goes a long way in allowing us to maintain the services that our residents expect." "COVID-19 has shown that the role of local government has never been more important," said Paul Mitcham, City Manager and Chief Administrative Officer. "We still face challenges and difficult decisions will need to be made but as we implement our recovery, this funding will help us continue to provide the essential services residents and businesses need." Additional funding is anticipated for the Phase 2 transit portion of the Safe Restart Agreement.

Merry Christmas,
Happy Holidays,
and a Joyful New Year!



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Miracle on Main deliveries to Salvation Army and Halton Women's Place



THE TIGER JEET SINGH FOUNDATION PURCHASED \$30,000 FROM RESTAURANTS ALL THROUGHOUT HALTON AND DONATED THEM TO FAMILIES IN NEED VIA THE SALVATION ARMY CENTRES IN MILTON, GEORGETOWN, BURLINGTON AND OAKVILLE, INCLUDING THE HALTON WOMEN'S PLACE SERVING BOTH MILTON AND BURLINGTON. THE HOPE WAS TO ASSIST LOCAL BUSINESSES THAT DO SO MUCH FOR THE COMMUNITY AND HELP FAMILIES AND WOMEN IN NEED OVER THE HOLIDAYS.

ONTARIO BUILDING ON SUPPORTS FOR EMPLOYERS DURING COVID-19

The Ontario government continues to provide a variety of supports to employers facing challenges as a result of COVID-19. The government will now be providing even more support to small businesses that are required to close or severely restrict their operations due to the necessary Provincewide Shutdown. This will help ensure they can continue serving their communities and employing people once COVID-19 has been eradicated.

The New Ontario Small Business Support Grant

The government is announcing the new Ontario Small Business Support Grant, which will provide a minimum of \$10,000 and up to \$20,000 to help small business owners during this challenging period.

Small businesses required to close or restrict services under the Provincewide Shutdown will be able to apply for this one-time grant. Each small business will be able to use the support in whatever way makes the most sense for their individual business. For example, some businesses will need support paying employee wages or rent, while others will need support maintaining their inventory.

Eligible small businesses include those that:

Are required to close or significantly restrict services due to the Provincewide Shutdown being imposed across the province effective 12:01 a.m. on December 26

Have fewer than 100 employees at the enterprise level

Have experienced a minimum of 20 per cent revenue decline in April 2020 compared to April 2019. Starting at \$10,000 for all eligible businesses, the grant will provide businesses with dollar for dollar funding to a maximum of \$20,000 to help cover decreased revenue expected as a result of the Provincewide Shutdown. The business must demonstrate they experienced a revenue decline of at least 20 per cent when comparing monthly revenue in April 2019 and April 2020. This time period was selected because it reflects the impact of the public health measures in spring 2020, and as such provides a representation of the possible impact of these latest measures on small businesses.

For small businesses not in operation in April 2019 or April 2020, eligibility criteria will be announced in January 2021.

Businesses that are not eligible include those that were already required to close prior to the introduction of modified Stage 2 measures, and essential businesses permitted to operate with capacity restrictions (e.g., discount and big box stores selling groceries, supermarkets, grocery stores, convenience stores, pharmacies, and beer, wine and liquor stores).

Further details, including how to apply for the Ontario Small Business Support Grant, will be announced in January 2021.

WISH YOU
Merry Christmas
& HAPPY NEW YEAR

MPP Amarjot Sandhu
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PAKISTANI ACTIVIST KARIMA BALOCH FOUND DEAD IN TORONTO

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She had gone missing on Sunday and was last seen at approximately 3 pm on the same day. Toronto Police had requested for public assistance in locating her. However, now her family has confirmed that Karima's body has been found. Karima Baloch, a famous personality in Balochistan, is believed to be the pioneer of women activism there. She has also raised the issue of Balochistan in the United Nations sessions in Switzerland. In an interview in May 2019, she had accused Pakistan of taking away the resources and eliminating the people of Balochistan, the province with immense geo-strategic importance and huge untapped natural resource reserves. Balochistan Post said that the sudden death of the activist has raised serious concern. This is not the first case that Pakistani dissident has been found dead. In May, Baloch journalist Sajid Hussain was found dead in Sweden. He had been missing from the city of Uppsala since March 2. The dissidents and critics of the

Pakistan authorities, who are living in exile are under constant fear as the criticism of the military in Pakistan has always been frowned upon. People who criticise the military and its policies are harassed by agencies. Balochistan is a restive province where the Pakistani military is accused of indulging in gross human rights violations including abducting and killing of innocents. Resource-rich Balochistan has been gripped by an insurgency for more than 15 years. The family members and relatives of Baloch political leaders and workers had always faced state brutalities and barbarism in Balochistan. There have been several instances where Pakistani security forces conduct operations on individual households, physically assault innocent women and children, and rely on extrajudicial death squads to subjugate Baloch civilians. Thousands of Baloch political activists in order to avoid persecution escaped from Balochistan and are compelled to seek asylum in European countries; journalists and human rights activists are

among these asylum seekers.

CPPC ISSUED A STATEMENT - The Committee of Progressive Pakistani-Canadians is deeply shocked and saddened by the sudden and untimely death of Karima Baloch who was only 37 years of age. We offer our sincerest condolences to her husband, Hammal Haider, also a political exile living in Canada, and to her family members and her comrades.

The masses in Pakistan - ruled by the capitalist and feudal classes through the army - face many problems: inequality, poverty, joblessness, lack of health and educational facilities, of proper housing, even adequate food supplies. The Baloch suffer the same conditions - only many times more. On top of that are the enforced disappearances and the killings of Baloch nationalists and activists (and others, primarily in Sindh, but also elsewhere in Pakistan).

The CPPC, since its inception in the early 1980s, has stood for fairness and social justice in Canada and in Pakistan, and with the just struggles of the Indigenous people here and the Baloch (and Sindhi-speaking people) in Pakistan. The CPPC is against national oppression. It supports the right of the Indigenous People of Canada, and the Baloch and Sindhis in Pakistan, to own and control their land and natural resources, to be free of the poverty and violence the state has inflicted on them, to live in equality, free of fear and discrimination.

The CPPC did not share all the nationalist politics of Karima Baloch. It does, as in the past, call again upon the military and 'security' agencies of Pakistan to put a complete end to forced disappearances - 5,000 according to the Pakistani English newspaper 'Dawn' of August 12, 2020 - and killings of Baloch nationalists and activists. Torture must be strictly prohibited, charges against accused must be brought in open court, the right of habeas corpus must be respected. Forced abductions and killings must be investigated; officials who are guilty of these crimes must be severely punished and the families of victims generously compensated.

While the police have announced that there are no suspicious circumstances surrounding Ms. Baloch's death, her husband and friends do not think she committed suicide and say that foul play cannot be ruled out. The CPPC joins them in calling upon the government to conduct an impartial, transparent and expeditious inquiry into her death.



Team Canada's effort has been like no other to get us to the other side of this pandemic. The next weeks and months are absolutely crucial in protecting one another and ensuring that Canada comes out of this in as strong a position as possible.

THE HON. ANITA ANAND
Minister of Public Services and Procurement



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Osler delivers first doses of COVID-19 vaccine in Brampton

Long-term care home employee receives first vaccine in Ontario's hardest-hit community as province rolls out Phase One of COVID-19 immunization program

BRAMPTON: William Osler Health System (Osler) administered Brampton's first COVID-19 vaccination today after opening its COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic at Brampton Civic Hospital. The clinic will initially vaccinate health care workers who provide direct care in high-risk settings, with a priority focus on staff working in long-term care in Peel Region.

Vilma Whyte, a Personal Support Worker with Tullamore Care Community, was the city's first recipient of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine under Phase One of the Ontario Government's three-phased immunization program.

"Today marks an important milestone in our collective efforts to combat COVID-19 and Osler is proud to administer the vaccine to our health care partners working in long-term care homes," said Dr. Naveed Mohammad, President and CEO, William Osler Health System. "The opening of our COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic represents renewed hope and will help save lives across our community."

Osler is among a number of hospitals in Phase One of the Ontario Government's COVID-19 immunization program. During the first phase of the program – in alignment with the government's direction – Osler will support the vaccination of health care workers in high-risk settings, followed by staff working in retirement homes, and other congregate settings for seniors and hospitals. "Every day, countless health care professionals prioritize the health and well-being of their patients and today's vaccination is welcome news for all, as we begin the process of offering additional protection to those who serve the most vulnerable in our community," said Kiki Ferrari, Chief Operating Officer, William Osler Health System. "Osler has worked closely with long-term care partners by providing additional support throughout this pandemic, and we are pleased to share this monumental moment with them."

The community Osler serves has experienced one of the highest COVID-19 positivity rates in the province since the start of the pandemic in March, which has also resulted in a high rate of hospitalizations at Osler's sites.

"We appreciate there is a long road ahead of us as we simultaneously continue to care for a growing number of COVID-19 patients in our hospitals and work toward reducing the spread of the virus," said Ferrari. "We are encouraged by the vaccine's arrival, but also recognize that this pandemic is not over and it is still critical that we all continue to practice public health and safety measures."

Through the Ontario Government's COVID-19 immunization program, rollout of the vaccine is expected to accelerate in the coming months, with all eligible Ontario residents who wish to be immunized being able to access a vaccine by the end of 2021.

As the situation around COVID-19 continues to evolve, Osler is committed to keeping the community informed. For more information about COVID-19 and Osler's COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic, visit: www.williamoslerhs.ca/coronavirus.



COVID is spreading rapidly from high outbreak areas to areas with fewer cases. Our hospitals are filling up more each day.

Remember, 75 percent of our intensive care unit beds at any given time are taken up by people who have had car accidents, heart attacks, or other emergencies. My friends, above all, we need to preserve capacity in our ICUs and our hospitals.

- PREMIER DOUG FORD

Seasons Greetings

*Warmest wishes for the holiday season,
with good health, happiness and prosperity
throughout the coming year!*

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year

Ron Starr

Councillor Ward 6

★ 905-896-5600 ★ ron.starr@mississauga.ca ★

MISSISSAUGA

Region of Peel

I support
small business
Shop Local!

Mississauga. Strong. Ready.

Face Covering Options

Mask

Bandana

Neck Warmer
(Neck Gaiter)

Scarf

Transparent
Mask

Stay safe & help stop the spread of COVID-19

ONTARIO ANNOUNCES PROVINCEWIDE SHUTDOWN TO STOP SPREAD OF COVID-19 AND SAVE LIVES

CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

Prohibiting indoor and outdoor dining. Restaurants, bars and other food or drink establishments will be permitted to operate by take out, drive-through, and delivery only.

On the advice of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, all Ontarians are advised to stay home as much as possible with trips outside the home limited to necessities such as food, medication, medical appointments, or supporting vulnerable community members. Employers in all industries should make every effort to allow employees to work from home.

The current COVID-19 Response Framework will be paused when the Provincewide Shutdown comes into effect. The impacts of these time-limited measures will be evaluated throughout the 14 days in Northern Ontario and 28 days in Southern Ontario to determine if it is safe to lift any restrictions or if they need to be extended. The Chief Medical Officer of Health will assess and apply lessons learned thus far to the COVID-19 Response Framework to ensure appropriate and effective measures are in place to protect the health of Ontarians and enable economic recovery after the Provincewide Shutdown ends. This will include an assessment of how a revised approach for the safe reopening of retail may be operationalized, according to the latest available evidence.

"This was not an easy decision before the holidays, but we have reached a tipping point," said Minister Elliott. "We continue to see sharp increases in hospitalizations and occupancy in intensive care units is reaching concerning levels. Urgent action must be taken to prevent our health care system from becoming overwhelmed. By implementing a Provincewide Shutdown, we can work to stop the virus in its tracks, safeguard hospital capacity, and save lives."

The government is also providing \$12.5 million to implement a High Priority Communities Strategy to contain the virus in high-risk communities. The strategy will take a tailored, community-based approach to fund community agencies in 15 priority communities in the York, Peel, Durham, Ottawa, and Toronto regions. The funding will also allow for the hiring of community ambassadors to make people aware of available services and assistance, for coordination of increased testing opportunities and for the arrangement of wraparound supports for those who are COVID-positive. Additional funding of \$42 million will also be available to establish isolation centres.

The province will work with our local municipal partners to establish new isolation centres to help those who may need to isolate following testing.

"We continue to see the number of cases in the province grow and the trends in public health indicators worsen. Additional measures are needed provincially in order to interrupt this concerning

growth," said Dr. Williams. "We must work together to enable everyone to follow these new and time-limited restrictions and protect our health system and our communities."

The government is working to limit the transmission of COVID-19 in workplaces by supporting essential businesses in doing whatever is necessary to keep workers safe. The Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development is leading a multi-ministry COVID-19 Safety Team. The team will partner with local authorities to carry out additional enforcement blitzes in sectors where they are needed most.

New School Protocols

While transmission in schools remains low, all publicly funded and private elementary and secondary schools are to move to teacher-led remote learning when students return from the winter break on January 4, 2021. This action is being taken in support of the Government's broader efforts to limit the spread of COVID-19. Schools located in the following Public Health Unit regions can resume in-person instruction on January 11, 2021 for both elementary and secondary students:

The District of Algoma Health Unit

North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit

Northwestern Health Unit

Porcupine Health Unit

Sudbury and District Health Unit

Thunder Bay District Health Unit

Timiskaming Health Unit

For schools in all other Public Health Unit regions, elementary school students are planned to be able to return to in-person learning on January 11, 2021, and secondary school students will continue learning remotely until January 25, 2021, at which point they may resume in-person learning. During this period, child care centres, authorized recreational and skill building programs and home-based child care services will remain open. From January 4-8, 2021, when elementary students move to remote learning, before and after school programs will be closed and emergency child care for health care and frontline workers will be provided. As part of the government's efforts to protect the most vulnerable, boards will be required to make provisions for continued in-person support for students with special education needs who cannot be accommodated through remote learning for whom remote learning is challenging.

"While our schools are not a source of rising community transmission, we can play an important part of the solution to save lives from COVID-19," said Minister Lecce. "During this period, students will pivot to teacher-led online learning, with child care provided for our frontline workers. We are taking proactive and preventative action to protect schools following the holiday break to ensure kids can continue in-class learning — something we believe is so important — for the remainder of the year."

The New Ontario Small Business Support Grant

The government recognizes that small businesses impacted by these necessary public health measures will require additional

support so they can continue serving their communities and employing people in Ontario once the COVID-19 pandemic is over. That is why the government is announcing the new Ontario Small Business Support Grant, which will provide a minimum of \$10,000 and up to \$20,000 to eligible small business owners to help navigate this challenging period.

"Ontario's business owners have shown remarkable resolve and ingenuity throughout the pandemic. They know better than anyone what they need to come through this very difficult time, so they can continue to serve and employ people in their communities," said Rod Phillips, Minister of Finance. "The new Ontario Small Business Support Grant will provide significant financial support to eligible small business owners in addition to the other supports made available to our small business community."

Small businesses required to close or restrict services under the Provincewide Shutdown will be able to apply for this one-time grant. Each small business will be able to use the support in whatever way makes the most sense for their individual business. For example, some businesses will need support paying employee wages or rent, while others will need support maintaining their inventory.

Eligible small businesses include those that:

Are required to close or significantly restrict services subject to the Provincewide Shutdown effective 12:01 a.m. on December 26, 2020;
Have less than 100 employees at the enterprise level; and
Have experienced a minimum of 20 per cent revenue decline in April 2020 compared to April 2019.

Starting at \$10,000 for all eligible businesses, the grant will provide businesses with dollar for dollar funding to a maximum of \$20,000 to help cover decreased revenue expected as a result of the Provincewide Shutdown. The business must demonstrate they experienced a revenue decline of at least 20 per cent when comparing monthly revenue in April 2019 and April 2020. This time period was selected because it reflects the impact of the public health measures in spring 2020, and as such provides a representation of the possible impact of these latest measures on small businesses.

Essential businesses that are allowed to remain open will not be eligible for this grant. More information about the Ontario Small Business Support Grant is available here. Further details, including how to apply, will be announced in January 2021.

Businesses that are impacted by the Provincewide Shutdown will also be eligible for the property tax and energy cost rebates. In November, the government launched a program to provide rebates to offset fixed costs such as property tax and energy bills for businesses that are required to shut down or significantly restrict services due to provincial public health measures. These Ontario Small Business Support Grant rebates will continue to be available for businesses impacted by the Provincewide Shutdown and earlier restrictions.

STOP THE SPREAD

CITY OF BRAMPTON RELEASES POWERFUL SHORT FILM TO INSPIRE BEHAVIOURAL CHANGES IN THE FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19

BRAMPTON – The City of Brampton has packed a powerful message in its three-minute short film *The Spread*, which aims to drive an emotional response in viewers by demonstrating how seemingly small and innocent actions can deeply affect those around them. Emotional connection is crucial to inspiring behavioural change, and it will take the effort of all residents being conscious of their day-to-day choices to protect themselves, their loved ones, and the community from the ongoing threat of COVID-19.

The Spread

The *Spread* storyline features Ana, a young Brampton woman, who thinks she is doing everything right to keep herself and her family safe from COVID-19. While Ana goes so far as to track her daily points of contact and limit interactions, her boyfriend Jordan attends a party with his friends and puts himself, Ana, and her entire family at risk. The *Spread* reminds residents of the importance of following health and safety protocols – and that carelessness can have major consequences.

Health and safety reminders

As one of the cities under the Province's Grey-Lockdown Level, it is more important than ever that Bramptonians wear their masks, practise physical distancing, maintain good hygiene and only gather with those within their immediate households and essential supports. Reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19. Protect yourself. Protect your loved ones. Protect our community.

Links

Watch *The Spread*

The City of Brampton's response to COVID-19

Cases of COVID-19 in Peel

Health and safety measures in Peel Region under the Province's Grey-Lockdown Level

Quotes

"With the holidays around the corner, I want to urge Brampton residents to put the health and safety of themselves, their loved ones and our community first and heed *The Spread*'s message. Our actions matter. COVID-19 remains an incredibly dangerous threat in our community, and it will take all of us working together to keep Brampton safe. Please continue to wear your masks and practise physical distancing, and do not gather with anyone outside of your immediate household. Together, we can stop the spread of COVID-19."

Patrick Brown, Mayor, City of Brampton

"COVID-19 continues to spread in our community, and it is greatly impacting our residents and businesses. The City remains committed to supporting Brampton in its recovery during this difficult time, but all residents must reflect on their actions and follow health and safety protocols in order to stop the spread of the virus. Working as a community, we will stop the spread."

David Barrick, Chief Administrative Officer, City of Brampton

SUPPORTS NEEDED DURING LOCKDOWN: HORWATH

CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

"It should never have come to this. We are facing a longer, deeper, wider lockdown because Doug Ford caved to politics in his caucus. He caved to the demands of the CEOs of big-box giants. And he sat on billions in COVID-19 funding because he didn't want to spend it," said Horwath. "Once again, Ford is scrambling to catch up, and it's Ontarians that now have to pay the price for that."

Despite the Ontario Hospital Association and other experts pleading for a lockdown days ago, Ford is delaying the lockdown until Boxing Day — which Horwath said looks like caving to political pressures and big-box-store demands again.

Horwath said now that it has come to this, people will need urgent, substantial direct support to make it through the lockdown, and to make sure the lockdown is effective. That echoes statements made Monday morning by Dr. Adalsteinn Brown, Dean of the Dalla Lana School of Public Health at the University of Toronto and Co-Chair of the Ontario COVID-19 Science Advisory Table.

"A lot of folks are already on the brink. This lockdown means more people are facing the collapse of their business, the loss of their job, or financial hardship. They won't make it through the lockdown if Doug Ford doesn't provide much more direct, meaningful financial compensation for small businesses, income support for workers, and eviction bans," said Horwath. "And the lockdown itself is not going to stop the spread without supporting measures, including more staff and infection control specialists in long-term care homes, paid sick days for essential workers, isolation centres so people don't unintentionally allow the virus to spread to their family members and roommates, and much more testing and contact tracing." Horwath and the NDP called for a circuit-breaker style lockdown on Nov. 12. They also called for a post-holiday plan to prevent spread. When people return to work and school, Horwath proposes in-workplace testing, in-school testing, paid sick days, family care days for isolation and more.

Y MEDIA GROUP EDITOR AND CEO DISCUSSES FARMERS’ PROTEST IN INDIA WITH RAJIEKABLI, ANCHOR AT WHOLEHEARTED NEWS, IN A SPECIAL SEGMENT CALLED ‘WHY ARE FARMERS PROTESTING IN INDIA?’

Y MEDIA SPECIAL

CHANNEL Y PRESENTS:



YUDHVIR JASWAL
CEO & Group Editor



RAJIE KABLI
Anchor WholeHearted News

WHY ARE THE FARMERS
PROTESTING IN INDIA?



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Rajie Kabli: Could you please provide the background related to the current situation in India?

Yudhvir Jaswal: In India, approximately 50-60 per cent of the 1.4 billion population works in the farming sector. The agricultural industry contributes around 15 per cent to the GDP India. Now, farming is not a very profit-making business. In 1960s, there was a food shortage. Hence, the India’s government extended their support to the farmers and asked them to grow paddy (rice) and wheat. This was because India had food grains deficit. The central government in India, supported the farmers through a Minimum Support Price or MSP. Through this MSP support, the farmers were assured of procurement that the government would acquire their produce. Now MSP and procurement has become one of sticky points between the Govt and farmers. The farmers did a magnificent job during the Green Revolution, which resulted in making India a food grain surplus country. In Punjab, around 86 per cent of the total agricultural area is now used to cultivate paddy and wheat. Since India has become food grains surplus there has been discussion on diversification of crops. Reforms are needed to keep farming sustainable. The government of India has brought three new farm laws which they claim will reform the agricultural sector. The farmers disagree with the govt’s Farm laws and want all three farm laws scrapped. The Indian government claims the new laws will make farming sector more profitable. The government is formally bringing in the private sector to buy the produce and invest the money. They believe the farmers’ income would increase as they would have more options to sell their produce through both ‘mandis’ and private sector players. The farmers disregard this and believe the new laws would have negative repercussions because the private sector comes with big corporate houses, making them vulnerable. Farmers say they would not be guaranteed an MSP, and private players might try to negotiate the MSP. Also, the government would not assure them of any procurement. **RajieKabli:** A lot of the farmers said that they feel that their livelihood is threatened. What do you have to say about this? **YudhvirJaswal:** Farming feeling like this is a big deal. We must understand the concern of the farmers with the current farm bills. The farmers from Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and a few other areas are concerned, and their situation is quite genuine. This is because the government procures 85 per cent of paddy produce and 70 per cent of wheat produce at MSP. With the introduction of the private sector, they are not guaranteed any MSP and procurement. Again the govt claims MSP won’t go away and more procurement is being done in the current years than in the past. **RajieKabli:** In your opinion, do you consider the protest to be a revolution or a rebellion? **YudhvirJaswal:** I won’t call it a rebellion or a revolution. I think these are basic demands of the farmers. Around 86 per cent of the farmers have less than two acres of land. They feel that with the privatization, MSP, and guaranteed procurement would be taken back. This would make them helpless and despondent. So this is neither a rebellion nor a revolution, only their genuine concerns. **RajieKabli:** Are MSP and minimum wage a similar thing?

YudhvirJaswal: Minimum Support Price and minimum wage are two entirely different things. Recently on my radio talk shows, and my TV talk shows as well. I’ve highlighted this point as well. Indian agriculture minister Narendra Tomar has assured that the MSP and guaranteed procurement won’t go away. The mandis, which are run by APMCs, are also ensuring all these things. But the government has to give an additional package while they’re bringing in these private players. I have coined the term MSI or minimum support income. I think the government could offer a package to these farmers in which the government will offer them a minimum support income. When I recently interviewed one of the farmers union leaders and explained the MSI, he agreed to this. Indian govt has done something like this with states like Telangana, Haryana and Orissa. Haryana has some arrangement where they offer 7,000 rupees as an incentive to farmers who diversify the crops. Punjab needs to diversify more as we are living in a world where organic farming is more sustainable. We must have a comprehensive solution even if the three laws are taken back. We have to look at long term solutions on how we can have sustainable farming in India. And I think all parties would agree with me. A system has to be created where farmers are benefited, and their income has to grow. **RajieKabli:** What is the latest arrangement between the farmers’ unions and the government? **YudhvirJaswal:** The issue stands in front of the Supreme Court right now. The Supreme Court has clearly said that they would not intervene with the protest as it’s a democratic right of the farmers to protest. This has been a very peaceful movement, and nobody has been harmed. It has suggested to the government if they could defer the implementation of these farm laws. The Supreme Court proposed to form a committee to mediate between the government and the farmers to resolve the issue. It also expects the Indian government to make this a top priority. **RajieKabli:** What about the violence seen in the videos shared online by people? **YudhvirJaswal:** By and large, the protest has been peaceful. I don’t think there has been any violence. There were some harsh measures, but not from the farmers. Those measures, like tear gas, were by the law enforcement agencies, mainly police. The Haryana government initially decided to block the routes or the highways which go towards Delhi. And that created a bit of a scuffle. The farmers have not hit anybody; they are protesting quietly. Both government and the farm unions leaders are talking in a very healthy and democratic way. They’ve had five rounds of talks till now. **RajieKabli:** How many unions are involved in this? There are 35 to 40 unions involved as of now. But the number is expected to go high as the agitation is evolving in different parts of India. **RajieKabli:** Who are the people who are not on board with the protest? And what is the government’s stance? **YudhvirJaswal:** Many farmers’ unions from all India are on board. The government was initially quite reluctant to even start any discussion. But now, the government representatives are open to talks. Even the agriculture secretary, agriculture minister, and union ministers joined the discussions. The Indian government is ready to make approximately seven amendments. The government is willing to give in writing that they

would ensure MSP, and the farmers could go with their grievances to the courts. But the government does not agree to repeal all three laws completely. **RajieKabli:** Is it accurate that the Indian government pushed all three of the bills through without any deliberation in Parliament in September? **YudhvirJaswal:** There are several perspectives to any story. One of the most significant objections to the laws is that these laws were brought through ordinance and were never debated in the parliament. After the debate in parliament, govt. should have implemented these laws. Opposition leaders criticize that enforcing these laws during this pandemic was not a wise decision. However, the government defends this by saying the reforms were discussed first time in the year 2003. They were discussed during the Congress regime, and a few states, including Punjab, have already reformed a few laws. Out of 29 states, 22 states have already reformed the laws one way or the other. The government is claiming that if you read the 2019 election manifesto of the Congress Party, they had also mentioned these reforms. The government says the states that have implemented the laws have started benefiting from the new laws. **RajieKabli:** If farmers in other states are benefitted, then why are these farmers protesting? **YudhvirJaswal:** After the government went through these ordinances and implemented laws, we haven’t had one full cycle of the crops. So it’s too early to say or too early to reach any conclusion. Also, one size doesn’t fit all. Not all farmers do farming in the same way. **RajieKabli:** Is there an option for farmers to go through an education either in farming or different fields? Do you think farming would be willing for this? **YudhvirJaswal:** I’m sure the farmers would welcome that. It’s not that the farmers are not ready for a different profession or reforms; they are prepared for transition. But the farmers need proper support from the state government and the central government. We need to develop major educational institutes in Punjab to educate them. Since they are dealing with corporates, they have to be trained for diversification. We have to give them minimum income support for this transition. We have to start educating the farmers for better farmer’s practice. The government has to make sure the private players do not make these farmers vulnerable. So if all these reforms are done, and the government makes sure that the private sector is not exploiting these farmers, reforms are more than welcome. And the current system is not at all sustainable. We are depleting our water level, and we are polluting our land. This is not a very sustainable system that we are having right now. Is there anything else that you would like to add? I think the most important thing is that in every sector, reforms are needed. We say that the private sector is welcome. But the government must play a significant role. The reforms are strategically designed in such a way that when there are disruptions, it’s a creative disruption. At the end of the day, it’s for the betterment of an ordinary person. Corporates or private players will always come to make money, and they are not there for charity. The government should watch the interest of a common man, and reforms are welcome. **Watch The Special Program on Channel Y “This Saturday 10AM, 10 PM and Sunday at 10.**

CIBC CLIENTS CAN NOW EARN REWARDS WHEN SENDING FUNDS TO LOVED ONES ABROAD THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

TORONTO: CIBC announced a new payment option for CIBC Global Money Transfers, enabling clients to pay using an eligible CIBC credit card, and to earn cash back or travel rewards during the holiday season. CIBC is the first major Canadian bank to offer this Global Money Transfer payment option, along with the ability to earn rewards. Clients with loved ones overseas or across borders can now send a CIBC Global Money Transfer (GMT) paid for with a CIBC credit card, with no upfront fee and no interest charged on the purchase if the balance is paid in full by each statement due date.[1] Most CIBC personal credit cards are eligible for this service.[2] For a limited time, from now until January 31, 2021, credit card holders can earn rewards on every dollar they spend on a Global Money Transfer. Clients can also continue to send money through this innovative service using their chequing or savings accounts. "2020 has been an unprecedented year, and we want to support our clients who may be providing financial assistance or would like to send monetary gifts to their loved ones around the world" said Diane Ferri, Senior Vice President, Cards, at CIBC. "This new Global Money

Transfer service payment option offers our clients greater flexibility to send funds to friends or family abroad – plus, they're rewarded with promotional cash back or travel points into the new year." CIBC Global Money Transfer, first launched in 2015, is powered by the foreign exchange expertise and technology of CIBC Capital Markets, working in close collaboration with Personal and Business Banking teams to make it easier, faster and affordable for clients to send money overseas. Some of the features of CIBC's Global Money Transfer service include: No transfer fee and service to over 120 countries Competitive exchange rates Online convenience, with the ability to send a GMT through the CIBC Mobile Banking® App or CIBC Online Banking® A transfer limit of up to \$30,000 every 24 hours (\$5,000 if using a credit card). Most transfers will be received by the recipient within one business day For more information about enhancements to the CIBC Global Money Transfer service, and promotional offers, clients can visit cibc.com/gmtrewards.

SIMPLII FINANCIAL LAUNCHES CASH BACK CREDIT CARD REWARDS ON INTERNATIONAL MONEY TRANSFERS, JUST IN TIME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

TORONTO: Simplii Financial™ became the first direct banking brand in Canada to allow clients to pay for Global Money Transfers using their credit card, and earn cash back rewards. Clients can now pay for their Simplii Global Money Transfers using their Simplii Financial Cash Back Visa Card, sending funds easily and securely to more than 120 countries – all without incurring transaction fees or interest charges, provided the credit card balance is paid in full by each statement due date.[3] This new option is the latest in a series of recent payment enhancements Simplii Financial is bringing to clients. The Simplii Financial Global Money Transfer allows clients to send money to more than 120 countries, including the United States, India, Jamaica and the Philippines at competitive, real-time foreign exchange rates through online or mobile banking. Most recipients receive transfers in as little as one business day. The new Simplii Cash Back Visa Card payment option has launched just in time for the holiday season, and credit card holders will earn cash back rewards on every dollar they spend on Simplii Global Money Transfers. "We know that the holidays will be different for many this year, with social distancing measures in place, cancelled trips abroad due to the ongoing global pandemic, and loved ones around the world who may need financial support or would prefer monetary gifts at this time," said Vineet Malhotra, Head, Simplii Financial. "The new Simplii Global Money Transfer payment option is another way we're trying to help clients send money where and when they need to this holiday season and throughout the year."

SCHREINER IMPORES PREMIER TO DO MORE TO HELP ONTARIANS

TORONTO - Mike Schreiner made the following statement this morning regarding the rise in COVID-19 cases: "We are days away from the holiday season. Hospitals are dealing with rising surge capacity, and daily cases are skyrocketing. We need urgent action to prevent more illness and deaths. Today I sent Premier Ford a letter imploring him to act decisively and urgently to help Ontarians weather the worsening pandemic crisis. In my letter I call on the Premier to immediately implement the following key measures: Increase support for small businesses with a direct support model of up to \$15,000 per business in lockdown areas. Make the call now for an extended winter break for schools, so parents and educators can plan. And provide supports for parents who need to take time off or find child care options during that time. Use the extended break to improve ventilation in schools and to reduce class sizes to ensure safe physical distancing when students return to school. Institute paid sick leave. When the Ford government revoked paid sick days in 2018, it forced low-wage employees to choose between their health and their income. Given the current public health crisis, it is now more important than ever to restore paid sick leave so workers can keep themselves and their families safe, without having to choose between health or food. Hire more staff for long term care now and make the pandemic pay increase for PSWs permanent. Elders cannot wait four years to see increased staffing levels and higher standards of care. Reinstate the moratorium on residential evictions in hot spots and implement a rent support program for people who cannot afford rent due to the pandemic. Public health restrictions are putting our most vulnerable at risk of losing their housing. Evicting low income workers and people on ODSP during a pandemic in the winter is simply not acceptable and will only put more stress on our health care system.

COVID-19 VACCINE ADMINISTRATION AT TRILLIUM HEALTH PARTNERS

Mississauga - Today, the Government of Ontario designated Trillium Health Partners (THP) one of the hospitals across the province to administer the COVID-19 vaccine in these initial stages. THP is proud to be playing a key role in the biggest immunization program in a century and the continued fight against COVID-19. A dedicated THP COVID-19 vaccination team is in place, working closely with public health at the local, provincial and federal levels to coordinate distribution with an aim to begin administering the vaccine quickly and safely in the coming weeks. THP will administer the vaccine in phases according to the key populations defined by the provincial and federal governments. THP's expertise and capabilities play an important role in the broader care system in the community and our top priority remains the delivery of safe, high quality care to all our patients. We will participate in the COVID-19 immunization program and will look to our regional and provincial partners to leverage additional resources wherever possible to provide this service to the community.

FORD SHOULD NOT WAIT UNTIL DEC. 26 TO STOP THE SPREAD

TORONTO - Mike Schreiner made the following comment on the recently announced province-wide lockdown: "I am relieved to learn that Premier Ford is finally taking the action that our healthcare professionals have been asking for. My question is why the Premier waited until today to announce the lockdown? The Ontario Hospital Association sounded the alarm over the explosive impact on the healthcare system on December 15th. Businesses need time to plan and an announcement last Friday would have helped stop the spread sooner with an earlier lockdown date.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau convenes the Incident Response Group to discuss the new COVID-19 variant identified in the United Kingdom

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau convened the Incident Response Group to discuss Canada's response to the new variant of COVID-19 identified in the United Kingdom. Minister of Health Patty Hajdu, Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Bill Blair, Minister of Transport Marc Garneau, President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Inter-governmental Affairs Dominic LeBlanc, and Minister of Foreign Affairs François-Philippe Champagne participated in the meeting, along with Chief Public Health Officer of Canada Dr. Theresa Tam and Government of Canada officials. Dr. Tam and Minister Hajdu updated the group on the variant's properties, including its reportedly higher transmissibility. Minister Hajdu, Minister Blair, and Minister Garneau informed the group of measures to be implemented in Canada to give public health officials time to gather further evidence and conduct additional research on the new variant to keep Canadians safe. These include a 72-hour suspension of all commercial and private passenger flights from the United Kingdom effective midnight tonight, and secondary screening of all travellers who arrived in Canada from the United Kingdom in the last day. These new measures complement the robust travel restrictions and border measures that have been in place since March 2020, notably mandatory quarantine measures that require travellers to quarantine or isolate for 14 days immediately upon entry to Canada. Minister Champagne discussed similar measures being taken by other countries in response to the new variant, noting bans on flights from the United Kingdom in several European Union countries. The Prime Minister and ministers will continue to work directly with our allies and partners as part of a robust global effort to stop COVID-19 and address its devastating health, social, and economic impacts on people across the world.

CONSULATE GENERAL OF INDIA

Consulate General of India, Toronto has issued more than 5000 Life Certificates since October, 2020 to the pensioners from BLS Brampton office, its own premises in Toronto (365 Bloor St E #700, Toronto, ON M4W 3L4) and at the Consular Camps organized at various places under its Consular Jurisdiction. Please note that Government of India vide it's OM No. 18/1/2020-P&PW(H)-Vol-III-6786 dated 23 November, 2020 has further extended the period for submission of Life Certificate by Central Government pensioners till February 28, 2021. Applicants who still need their Life Certificate can get it in the following ways: LIFE CERTIFICATE IN PERSON AT CONSULATE - Life Certificates can also be taken in person from the Consulate for which prior appointment is required to be taken from Consulate by writing at – reception.toronto@mea.gov.in. Applicants will be informed by email of a date and time to visit the Consulate to get the Life Certificate issued. The documents required are duly filled in updated application form (click here) in duplicate and a copy of passport. Applicants will be required to bring these documents in person to the Consulate. Life Certificate will be issued on the spot. LIFE CERTIFICATE BY POSTAL MEANS - The Life Certificate requests may be sent by Post/Courier to the Consulate (365 Bloor St E #700, Toronto, ON M4W 3L4). The applicants can send their application in a sealed envelope, duly filled in application forms (click here) in duplicate along with copy of the passport, with a self addressed pre-paid envelope of Canada Post or any courier company to facilitate return of the serviced document. For postal applications, applicants are requested to provide local whatsapp number for video call for verification purpose. Life Certificate will be issued only after verification of the applicant through video call.

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DELHI: FIVE PASSENGERS FROM UK TEST COVID-19 POSITIVE AMID CONCERNS OVER NEW CORONAVIRUS STRAIN

Amid rising concerns over the discovery of a new strain of coronavirus in the UK, five out of 266 passengers and crew members of a London to Delhi flight have tested positive for coronavirus, an official said on Tuesday. "Five out of 266 passengers and crew members of a flight which arrived at Delhi airport from London last night have tested positive for COVID-19. Their samples have been sent to NCDC for research and they have been sent to the care centre," said a Nodal officer for COVID-19. This comes as flight services from the UK to India have been suspended till December 31 over the spread of a new strain of coronavirus in London and England.

Passengers arriving from the UK in Punjab were seen waiting in a long queue on Tuesday at the Amritsar airport to get themselves tested for COVID-19 in the wake of the new virus coronavirus strain. Scores of people waited outside Amritsar airport to receive their relatives who came from a flight from London. "Authorities are asking passengers to undergo COVID-19 testing even if they were tested just before boarding the flight. They should be allowed to go home," said a relative of one of the passengers.

Deepak Bhatia, Sub-Divisional Magistrate (Ajnala) said that the people arriving from London need to undergo an RT-PCR test which may take hours due to which the passengers will have to stay at the airport. Furthermore, scores of passengers arriving from the UK in Mumbai on Tuesday morning have been sent for institutional quarantine in the wake of the new virus strain. On December 20, Prime Minister Boris Johnson had informed the public that a new variant of the COVID-19 virus has been found in the UK. "Given the early evidence we have on this new variant of the virus, and the potential risk it poses, it is with a heavy heart that I must tell you we cannot continue with Christmas as planned," he had tweeted.



DROPOUT OF MUSLIM GIRL STUDENTS REDUCED, GOVT CONCERNED ABOUT THEIR EDUCATION, EMPOWERMENT: PM MODI



Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Tuesday that his government was committed to ushering in development in the country without any discrimination on the basis of religion. "I assure that nobody will be left out and not discriminated against on religious lines. Everyone will move forward by enjoying the Fundamental Rights given in the Constitution," Modi said while addressing through videoconference the centenary celebrations of the Aligarh Muslim University in Aligarh in Uttar Pradesh. He also said that the dropout rate of Muslim girl students has reduced due to government policies, adding that the Centre is deeply concerned about their education and empowerment. "School dropout rate among Muslim girls was more than 70 per cent and this situation persisted for 70 years. In these circumstances, the government started Swachh Bharat Mission, built toilets in villages and toilets for school-going girls. Now the dropout rate from 70 per cent has fallen to nearly 30 per cent. The Central government is continuously working to reduce their dropout rates," he said speaking at the centenary celebrations of Aligarh Muslim University on Tuesday. "At AMU, the number of female students increased to 35 per cent. I want to congratulate you. Sarkaar ka Muslim betiyon ke shiksha aur shashaktikaran pe bahut dhyaan hai (The government is deeply concerned about education and empowerment of Muslim daughters). In the last six years, scholarships have been provided by the government to around 1 crore Muslim daughters," he added.

CM Adityanath didn't trust police will do their job well: UP minister on Hathras case

A minister in the cabinet of Uttar Pradesh (UP) Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath came out to indicate that the state police did not do a proper job in the case of the gang-rape and murder of a 20-year-old Dalit woman in Hathras. The minister's remarks come a few days after the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) filed a charge sheet against the four accused of the crime. The UP Minister of State for Labour, Sunil Bharala, said that the state government was always standing with the family.

NDTV quoted Bharala as saying, "Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had decided the CBI should take over the case. He also did not trust that police will do their job well. It's not like all police officers are good. Saare police officers doodh ke dhule huye nahin hai (All police officers are not as pure as a saint)... Right from Day 1 Yogi Adityanath ji has been with the family." The CBI charged the four accused last week of gang-rape and murder as well as invoked charges under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act against them. The 20-year-old Dalit woman was raped by four men of a so-called upper caste on September 14 in a village in Hathras. The victim later died of her injuries at a Delhi hospital. The police cremated her against her family's wishes allegedly late night on September 30. The UP police had come under scrutiny for its handling of the sensitive case, especially on its action of cremating the victim in this manner. It triggered protests among various groups across the country. The police countered that the cremation was carried out according to her family's wishes.

DELHI'S ECONOMY SUFFERED THE MOST DUE TO SEVERE AIR POLLUTION LAST YEAR: LANCET STUDY

Delhi suffered the highest per-capita economic loss due to air pollution last year in India, according to a study published in peer-reviewed medical journal Lancet on Tuesday. The economic loss due to lost output from premature deaths and illness attributable to air pollution (outdoor and household) as a percentage of state GDP was 1.08% in Delhi. The highest loss to GDP was recorded by Uttar Pradesh at 2.15% followed by Bihar at 1.95% and Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan lost 1.70% each. When it comes to impact of outdoor air pollution alone on state GDP, Delhi recorded a loss of 1.06% to its GDP. The highest loss to GDP was recorded by Uttar Pradesh at 1.34% followed by Punjab at 1.22%. The paper has highlighted that India is bearing massive losses to its GDP and productivity due to health impacts of air pollution. Overall deaths and disease due to air pollution is linked to loss of 1.36% of India's GDP according to the paper. Delhi's per-capita GDP loss was to the tune of \$62 followed by neighbouring Haryana (\$53.8). In 2019, 1.67 million deaths in India were attributable to air pollution. They accounted for 17-8% of the total deaths. Between 1990 and 2019, the death rate per 100,000 population has increased by 115.3% due to exposure to high outdoor air pollution levels. The death rate due to exposure to household air pollution has decreased by 64.2% due to a reduction in the use of solid fuels.

2021

Happy New Year

Stay well, stay safe!

Deepak Anand, MPP

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'Is there secularism in India?': Mamata Banerjee hits out at BJP, demands national holiday on Christmas



THE NEW VARIANT WAS REPORTEDLY DISCOVERED IN THE EASTERN CAPE AND ALSO AFFECTS KWAZULU-NATAL AND THE WESTERN CAPE.

Hitting out at the BJP-led central government, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday questioned Centre as to why Christmas is not declared as a "national holiday".

"Last year and earlier also I said, why Jesus Christ's birthday will not be declared as a national holiday? You tell me it was there earlier. Why has the BJP government withdrawn that? Everybody has sentiments. What harm have Christians done? This festival is celebrated throughout the world. This time yes there are some problems due to COVID-19 pandemic. We have to wear masks and maintain social distancing," Banerjee said while speaking at a Christmas carnival at Allen Park in Park Street area. Christmas is a gazetted holiday, as per the National Portal of India. The Trinamool Congress supremo also criticised and accused Centre of pursuing "politics of hatred".

"Is there secularism in India? I am sorry to say, a typical religious hatred politics is going on. I want to condemn this today," she said.

Stating that Christmas is a festival for all, Banerjee said "In West Bengal, we celebrate Christmas, Durga Puja and Eid with equal gusto."

Continuing her attack against BJP, she said "We all love and respect our Constitution but the government in Delhi has no respect for constitutional norms and values."

After Union Home Minister Amit Shah had earlier accused the TMC-led West Bengal government of corruption and anarchy during his two-day tour of the state over the weekend, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said he was telling lies. "Amit Shah has spoken lies. He claimed our state is zero in industries but we are Number

1 in the MSME sector. He claimed we cannot build rural roads but we are also Number 1 in that. This is based on the Government of India's data," Banerjee said during a press conference earlier in the day. She added the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is "cheatingbaaz (cheat)". "It does not suit the home minister to tell lies just for political mileage. For politics, they can do and say anything." Unity is the strength of Bengal and the country, Banerjee said and gave a call for fostering bonds among communities on the occasion of Christmas.

AMU has helped strengthen India's ties with other countries: PM Modi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Tuesday Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) has contributed towards strengthening India's relations with other countries during the 100 years of its existence. Research done at AMU on various languages and Islamic literature has given new energy to India's cultural relations with the Islamic world, the Prime Minister said while speaking at the varsity's centenary celebrations. "In the last 100 years, AMU has also worked to strengthen India's relations with many countries of the world. The research done here on Urdu, Arabic and Persian languages, research on Islamic literature, gives new energy to India's cultural relations with the entire Islamic world," PM Modi during his virtual address.

HOW READING BOOKS, TEACHING SLUM KIDS IS KEEPING PROTESTING FARMERS OCCUPIED



With the farmers' at Delhi borders brazing freezing cold to force to protest against the government's farm laws, they have also discovered new ways to keep them occupied. The farmers, who have been camping at the borders for close to a month now, are now indulged in reading new books as well as other activities like teaching underprivileged children while continuing the protest.

At the Singhu border where thousands of agitators are present, several books can be seen, including biographies of revolutionaries like Bhagat Singh, Che Guevara and Vladimir Lenin in English, Hindi and Punjabi as well. Books on farmers' distress, Punjab's rich history and on the teachings of Sikh Gurus who stood for national integration, peace, brotherhood and communal harmony are also present.

Days ago, a library-cum-cultural centre was started at the protest site with an aim to provide books and newspapers for youth and also teach students from nearby slums. This library also becomes a place to discuss news and current events. In the evenings, the farmers use this tent to recreate a tradition called 'Sanjhi Sath' in which the villagers gather and listen to their elders' advice.

There are volunteers, who have taken up the responsibility of imparting education to the slum students, who are unable to go to school due to the COVID-19 crisis.

In one such case, a group of farmers from Punjab's Anandpur Sahib started an 'informal school' in a makeshift tent for local slum children at the Singhu border on Monday. "Everything here is "sewa". We saw so many children from neighbouring slums roaming around for food, and thought why not also help them keep engaged in a constructive way," PTI quoted Satnam Singh, a volunteer, as saying. While there is one big makeshift-library, there are others, run by volunteers who are happily sharing the limited number of books they have. Storybooks have been made available to children in Hindi as the local children speak the language. "The first day we had to encourage them to come and study here by giving them fruit juice and snacks, but over the last two days, they have been coming on their own, and have brought their friends too," Satnam Singh told PTI.




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Warmest wishes for a healthy and safe holiday season. Wishing you and your family a Happy New Year.



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India may start vaccinating people against COVID-19 in January 2021, says Health Minister



IN THE UPCOMING SIX TO SEVEN MONTHS, INDIA WILL HAVE THE CAPACITY TO INOCULATE ABOUT 30 CRORE PEOPLE, SAID UNION HEALTH MINISTER HARSH VARDHAN.

India may begin vaccinating people against COVID-19 in January and the government's first priority has been the safety and efficacy of the vaccine, Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan has said. "I personally feel may be in January in any stage or any week, there can be a time when we can be in a position to give first COVID vaccine shot to people of India" Harsh Vardhan told ANI. He was asked about India's vaccination drive against coronavirus. The minister said that the vaccines that have applied for emergency use authorization are being analysed by the regulator. "India is not less than any country when it comes to COVID-19 vaccine and research. Our first priority has been the safety and efficacy of the vaccine. We do not want any compromise on that. Our regulators are analysing them with seriousness," he said. The minister had said on Saturday that the country's scientists and health experts have worked on the development of an indigenous vaccine and in the upcoming six to seven months India will have the capacity to inoculate about 30 crore people. "Our scientists and health experts have worked on the development of a vaccine by genome sequencing and isolation of the coronavirus and developed an indigenous vaccine. In 6-7 months, we will have the capacity to inoculate about 30 crore people" he had said addressing the 22nd Group of Ministers (GoM) meeting on COVID-19. There are six COVID-19 vaccine candidates in different clinical trial

stages in India including Covishield, Covaxin, ZyCoV-D, Sputnik V, NVX-CoV2373 and recombinant protein antigen-based vaccine. Besides this, three COVID-19 vaccine candidates are in the pre-clinical stage of which one of the coronavirus vaccine candidates is in the pre-development stage being researched by Aurobindo Pharma, Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said. "Six vaccines are in the clinical trial stage. And there are three vaccines in the pre-clinical stage. Some of them may get licensed in the coming weeks but we cannot foretell at this moment of time because licensing is the domain of the national regulator the Drugs Controller General of India," Bhushan had said. "These vaccines are of two to three doses. Even after vaccination, COVID-19 precautions must be followed as advised by the scientists," he noted. Referring to Covaxin, being manufactured by Bharat Biotech International Limited, Hyderabad in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), he said it is in phase 3 trials and is on an inactivated virus platform. The manufacturers have applied for emergency use authorisation. Earlier this month the United Kingdom became the first country in the world to authorise the use of Pfizer and BioNTech for emergency purposes. On December 2, the UK became the first country in the world to authorise the use of Pfizer and BioNTech for emergency purposes, thus, paving way for the delivery of the vaccines.

US PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP CONFERS LEGION OF MERIT ON PM MODI



United States' President Donald Trump has conferred the Legion of Merit, one of the highest military honours of the US, on Prime Minister Narendra Modi for "exceptionally meritorious service" as the leader of India. The Legion of Merit, Degree Chief Commander, was bestowed on Modi on behalf of Trump on Monday. The medal is rarely awarded and can only be conferred by the US President. It is usually given to heads of state or heads of government. The award was received on behalf of the Prime Minister by India's ambassador to the US, Taranjit Singh Sandhu. At the same ceremony on Monday, the Legion of Merit, Degree Chief Commander, was also awarded to Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison and former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. Trump had earlier awarded the Legion of Merit, Degree Chief Commander, to Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Amir of Kuwait on September 18. Before that, the medal was last awarded in 1991.

PRIYANKA GANDHI WRITES TO YOGI ADITYANATH OVER COW DEATHS IN UP SHELTER HOME

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi on Monday raised concerns over the "horrific" conditions of cows in Uttar Pradesh and asked chief minister Yogi Adityanath to take a cue from Chhattisgarh's 'Godhan Nyay Yojana' on their protection. "The UP government may probably take inspiration from the scheme and we all can serve cows. We can save the cows from being forced to live and die in such horrific conditions and can also help our farmers," said Priyanka in the letter that the state party released to the media on Monday. Drawing attention towards the death of cows in a cow shelter home in Lalitpur, Priyanka Gandhi said the pictures suggest that the cows may have died due to hunger. "You talked about protecting cows while assuming power. Despite your announcements in this regard, efforts of your government have failed. The corrupt officers and those running cow shelters are indulging in corruption and no one knows how many cows are dying for lack of fodder and water," said Gandhi. The Congress leader detailed how the cow shelters are becoming self-reliant in Chhattisgarh.



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After UK, countries suspend flights from South Africa over reports of new coronavirus strain



THE NEW VARIANT WAS REPORTEDLY DISCOVERED IN THE EASTERN CAPE AND ALSO AFFECTS KWAZULU-NATAL AND THE WESTERN CAPE.

At least five countries have suspended flights from South Africa after a coronavirus variant was recently discovered in the country. Germany, Turkey, Israel, Switzerland and Saudi Arabia are among the countries that have announced the banning of such flights to prevent the spread of a variant of the SARS-COV-2 virus currently termed 501.V2 Variant. The ban was coming into effect on Monday in most of these countries. Germany was one of the first nations to announce the ban. "Because of the reported coronavirus mutation, the federal government intends to restrict travel options between Germany and Great Britain and South Africa," said Government Spokesperson Martina Fietz. Israel also banned the flights on Sunday, saying that its citizens returning from South Africa would be required to undergo a 30-day mandatory quarantine on their return. The new variant was reportedly discovered in the Eastern Cape and also affects Kwazulu-Natal and the Western Cape. Health Minister Zweli Mkhize said his department has been observing a huge number of young people with no illness testing positive lately. "The evidence that has been collated, therefore, strongly suggests that the current second wave we are experiencing is being driven by this new variant," he said. On Monday, India suspended all flights originating from UK till December 31 and also made it mandatory for travellers arriving from UK in transit flights to undergo RT-PCR test. On December 19, UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson had announced that the

newly-identified strain of the virus may be up to 70 per cent more transmissible. According to Health Secretary Matt Hancock, the new variant was "out of control". A spike in COVID-19 infections has forced the UK to enforce a new stringent, stay-at-home lockdown. Under the new lockdown rules, non-essential shops and businesses will be closed. Although Johnson and his scientific advisors believe vaccines will still be effective, and the new strain is not more deadly or more serious in terms of the illness caused, he said on Saturday the government had to take urgent action. The number of cases in England has soared in the last two weeks because of the virus variant.

US: Pompeo urges countries to hold China accountable for COVID-19 virus; cites India as an example

US Secretary of State Michael Pompeo on Monday (local time) lambasted Beijing for covering up the Coronavirus outbreak in China saying that the US and the world is beginning to "build up its efforts to push back" and hold China accountable. Pompeo in an interview with Rob Schmitt of Wake Up America on Newsmax on Monday cited India as an example of pushing back Chinese products by banning Chinese apps as well.

"We have begun to do that already, and you can, in fact, see the world beginning to build up its efforts to push back and hold accountable China as well. If you watch what Australia's doing and other countries - you see what India is doing," Pompeo said. "The world understands the simple fact that this virus, this Wuhan virus, came from China and that the Chinese Communist Party covered up what they knew about the risk associated with this virus," he added. The Secretary of State further attacked Beijing for allowing people to travel internationally when they should not have done so and further they should have called for a collective response by other countries. "They should have alerted the world to this. And as a result, we've now had a million-plus people killed around the world, enormous economic devastation. The Chinese Communist Party bears direct responsibility for this, and the world needs a collective response to it," Pompeo stated. Pompeo has repeatedly hit out at Beijing for its handling of COVID-19 stating that the CCP knew how virulent COVID-19 was. Michael Pompeo also that Hong Kong is becoming just another Chinese-run communist city, adding that the United States has challenged the imprisonment of Hong Kong media tycoon Jimmy Lai under the National Security Law.

UNDERSTAND INDIA'S TAKE ON INDO-PACIFIC BUT QUAD LACKS INCLUSIVITY: RUSSIA



In the backdrop of Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov raising questions over the Indo-Pacific and the Quad, top Russian diplomats in Delhi have said that Moscow did understand "India's national concept on Indo pacific," but sees the Quad lacking in inclusivity. Russian Envoy Nikolay R. Kudashev said, "As far as the Indian ocean initiative raised by PM Modi, we have no problem with [the] Indian vision." They offered a unifying agenda and a concept of a larger Eurasian partnership, which should bring the ends together of the Russian vision, the Chinese vision, and the Indian vision, Kudashev said. Recently, during his remarks at the general meeting of the Russian International Affairs Council, Russian FM Lavrov also mentioned the Indo-Pacific and the Quad, terming them anti-China. While China sees the Indo-Pacific and the Quad suspiciously, Moscow is not keen on it either, given that it was backed by Washington and the West. Russian Deputy Envoy Roman N. Babushkin said that while they understood and recognised the Indian concept for the Indo-Pacific, it should not be forgotten that there was no unified vision for the Indo-Pacific at present because many countries promoted their own visions for the region. Calling the mechanism "non-inclusive" and sharing "apprehensions about the intentions," Roman explained that it threatened to jeopardise regional cooperation. The Quad will be detrimental to the inclusive dialogue to the region, he said. The Indo-Russian ties are celebrated and the two countries have been close historically. Both PM Modi and President Putin spoke four times this year and have had annual summits that alternate between the two countries. Earlier this year, Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar had visited Russia in the middle of the pandemic to take part in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation's defence and foreign ministers meet. Asked about the ties between India and China, the Russian envoy said, "As a friend to both India and China, we would welcome enhanced dialogue between Delhi and Beijing." "This is the key in reaching progress in the ties...and regional security and stability," he added.

China plans to use possible COVID-19 vaccine as political tool, China's vaccine diplomacy reveals

In the post-COVID-19 era, Chinese President Xi Jinping has recently announced that the COVID-19 vaccine being developed by China will become a 'global public good'. Chinese officials have begun to use a possible vaccine for the pandemic as a political tool and are thus promising early access to the vaccine to poor and developing countries across Asia, Africa, Latin America, and other areas of the world. It has become abundantly clear that China's recent global health work is all an attempt by Beijing to control the narrative surrounding the origins and handling of the coronavirus. After appearing in the Chinese city of Wuhan late in December last year, the virus was dubbed as the 'China virus' by many heads of states including US President Donald Trump. China since then has received a lot of criticism from other nations for its inefficient handling of the outbreak, leading to the virus spreading to other parts of the world, as well as for withholding critical information regarding the virus from the world-leading to greater devastation. China has been accused of silencing individuals like Doctor Li Wenliang tried to warn the world of a deadly new cluster of viral infections. The incident of Dr Li's mistreatment at the hands of Chinese authorities has made him a hero to many Chinese. The silencing of Dr Li is just one of the reputational harms done by the COVID-19 virus. China also entered into a diplomatic stand-off with Australia after the country demanded an independent investigation into the origins of the virus. This seemingly understandable demand perturbed and angered China to no end and China even threatened trade sanctions against Australia for hinting that it somehow had a hand in creating and spreading the virus.



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merry Christmas
&
HAPPY NEW YEAR

NEW STRAIN OF COVID-19 WREAKS HAVOC IN UK, FRESH LOCKDOWN MEASURES IMPLEMENTED

CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

A new Tier 4 level has been added to the current three-tier lockdown system to control the infection rate. Reportedly, this is a new mutation of the deadly virus. In a blow to the residents of the UK, Jhonson announced that the planned five-day 'Christmas bubble' of relaxed rules stands cancelled. "It is with a very heavy heart I must tell you we cannot continue with Christmas as planned," Johnson stated at a briefing from 10 Downing Street on Saturday evening. "There's no evidence to suggest it is more lethal or causes more severe illness, equally there's no evidence to suggest the vaccine will be any less effective against the new variant." He added. Although Johnson and his scientific advisors believe vaccines will still be effective, and the new strain is not more deadly or more serious in terms of the illness caused, he said on Saturday the government had to take urgent action. The number of cases in England has soared in the last two weeks

because of the virus variant. Johnson tore up plans to allow three households to mix indoors for five days over the festive period, and said London and southeast England, which are currently in the highest level of a three-tier system of rules, would now be placed in a new Tier 4 level, similar to those of a recent national lockdown. "It is with a very heavy heart I must tell you we cannot continue with Christmas as planned," Johnson told a news conference. "I sincerely believe there is no alternative open to me." People in Tier 4 - 16.4 million and about a third of the population of England - will be required to stay at home except for essential reasons such as work, and non-essential retail will close, as will indoor leisure and entertainment. Social mixing will be limited to meeting one other person in an outdoor space.



US FDA advisory panel sets stage for Moderna vaccine authorisation



A panel of outside advisers to the US Food and Drug Administration on Thursday overwhelmingly endorsed the emergency use of Moderna Inc's coronavirus vaccine, virtually assuring a second option for protecting against COVID-19 for a pandemic ravaged nation. The committee voted 20-0 with one abstention that the benefits of the vaccine outweigh its risks in people aged 18 and older, one week after the same panel backed a similar vaccine from Pfizer Inc and German partner BioNTech SE, leading to an FDA emergency use authorization (EUA) a day later. The FDA is expected to grant the EUA as early as late Thursday or Friday, providing another ray of hope to a nation that has lost more than 300,000 lives to COVID-19 - including a one-day high of 3,580 deaths on Wednesday - while record numbers of patients threaten to overwhelm US hospitals and healthcare workers.

Although we must stay apart from loved ones and friends this Christmas, I hope the true meaning of this season lives in your hearts. Find the hope and the joy and stay healthy and safe.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



Pat

Pat Saito
Councillor for Ward 9, Mississauga
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Merry Christmas
&
A Happy New Year



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