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PM TRUDEAU FRUSTRATED WITH SLOW VACCINE ROLL OUT BY THE PROVINCES. ONTARIO PREMIER DOUG FORD PLEDGES TO PICK UP THE PACE ON VACCINE ROLL OUT. LONG TERM RESIDENTS, WORKERS & CARE GIVERS IN TORONTO, PEEL, YORK AND WINDSOR-ESSEX WOULD BE VACCINATED BY JANUARY 2021.

| DETAILS INSIDE

INDIA READY TO ROLL OUT COVID VACCINE BY JANUARY 13TH

NEW DELHI: The Union Health Ministry on Tuesday announced that the government is prepared to roll out Covid vaccines within 10 days of granting emergency use authorisation. "Based on the feedback of dry-run, the government is ready to introduce Covid-19 vaccine within 10 days from date of emergency use authorization," said Rajesh Bhushan, health secretary in the weekly press briefing on coronavirus response. Considering that Covishield by Serum Institute of India and Covaxin by Bharat Biotech had received formal accelerated approvals by the drug controller general in India on January 3, this means that the first vaccine shots could be given around January 13. In the first phase, the government is planning to inoculate 1 crore healthcare workers, 2 crore frontline workers in various essential services followed by about 27 crore people who are above 50 or have serious comorbidities. In the briefing, Bhushan also spelt out the vaccine delivery management plan using CoWin platform, specially designed for the purpose. "There are 4 primary vaccine stores called GMSD located in Karnal, Mumbai, Chennai, and Kolkata and there are 37 vaccine stores in the country. They store vaccines in bulk and distribute further," he said.

informed Bhushan in a press briefing on Tuesday. The facility including the storage of the vaccine with digital temperature trackers has been in use in India for over a decade, he said. Automated session allocation, SMS to be sent in 12 languages, 24x7 helpline, chatbox with pattern recognition to help navigate the portal, digital locker for integrated data retrieval and storing of the vaccines, QR code certificate are some of the salient features of the CoWIN system, as per the details shared. The official also clarified that healthcare and frontline workers will not need to register themselves as beneficiaries as their data has been pre-populated on the CoWIN platform in a bulk manner. Meanwhile justifying the accelerated approvals granted to the two vaccines in India, both ICMR director General Balram Bhargava and Niti Aayog member (health) V K Paul said that they should be seen in the context in which the permission has been issued. "The safety, immunogenicity, and efficacy data are required for approval of any vaccine - in a non-emergency situation. In the existing pandemic situation, due to high mortality and lack of known treatments is considered by the subject expert committee for accelerated approval," said Bhargava.

ISSUE WILL BE RESOLVED SOON: PUNJAB BJP LEADERS AFTER 2-HOUR MEET WITH PM



NEW DELHI: BJP leaders from Punjab today met Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Delhi amid protests by farmers at Delhi's borders against the Centre's three new farm laws for nearly six weeks. BJP leaders Surjit Kumar Jyani, who is also a former Punjab minister, and Harjit Singh Grewal met Prime Minister Modi at his residence.

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A NEW YEAR'S TAX REDUCTION HELPS STRENGTHEN SENIORS' FINANCIAL SECURITY

BRAMPTON: Ms. Ruby Sahota, Member of Parliament for Brampton North joins Canadians in ringing-in the New Year with another tax reduction from the Federal Liberal Government. This is another important step forward for the middle class and those working hard to join it—and for seniors' financial security.



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NARENDRA MODI 'EARNED AND ACHIEVED' PRIME MINISTERSHIP: PRANAB MUKHERJEE IN MEMOIR

NEW DELHI: The decisive mandate the BJP got in two consecutive general elections in 2014 and 2019 indicated voters' preference for political stability, according to late former president Pranab Mukherjee, who said Narendra Modi "earned and achieved" the prime ministership. Mukherjee also said in his memoir that Narendra Modi became Prime Minister "through popular choice" unlike Manmohan Singh "who was offered the post by Sonia Gandhi".

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24 YEAR OLD GARRY KANG SHOT DEAD IN SURREY, BC



KANWAR DHANJAL GETS FEATURED AMONG RBC TOP 25 CANADIAN IMMIGRANTS AWARDS WINNERS

POOJA LUTHRA

Dreams do come true if one works diligently and is given an equal opportunity. This phrase comes true today for Kanwar Dhanjal as he secures a position in the list of RBC's Top 25 Canadian Immigrants Awards winners. Carrying the baggage of responsibilities as a highly experienced technocrat from India, Kanwar Dhanjal arrived in Canada in 2007 with a spirit full of hopes. After a year of struggle and hard work, he started Just Instruments Inc., an ISO 9001:2015 certified Canadian business specializing in instruments' calibration, sales, repairs and installation.

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MP KAMAL KHERA RESIGNS FROM PARLIAMENTARY ROLE AFTER TRAVELLING TO U.S.

POOJA LUTHRA

Kamal Khera, Member of Parliament for Brampton West, resigns from her parliamentary role after declaring she had flown to Seattle over the holidays to attend a small family memorial. In a statement posted on social media, Khera said that she lost her father in September, followed by her uncle's death a few weeks later. A small memorial was attended by less than 10 people in Seattle, Washington.

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Y MEDIA WISHES 40th MARRIAGE ANNIVERSARY TO RAM KHULLAR & RANI KHULLAR.

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SUPPORTERS OF US PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP GATHER IN WASHINGTON. (REUTERS PHOTO)

PRIME MINISTER JUSTIN TRUDEAU SPEAKS WITH PRIME MINISTER BORIS JOHNSON OF THE UNITED KINGDOM



FILE PHOTO

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau spoke with Prime Minister Boris Johnson of the United Kingdom. Prime Minister Trudeau and Prime Minister Johnson discussed respective efforts in Canada and the United Kingdom to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, including measures to protect the health and safety of their citizens and to support businesses and workers. They spoke about the priority of rolling out safe and effective vaccines that will save lives. The two leaders looked forward to working together during the United Kingdom's 2021 G7 Presidency to advance global responses

to the pandemic, to promote gender equality, to protect human rights, and to fight climate change. They discussed their shared goal of ambitious progress at the COP26 climate conference the United Kingdom will host in November in partnership with Italy. Prime Minister Trudeau and Prime Minister Johnson welcomed the signing of the Canada-United Kingdom Trade Continuity Agreement this past December, which will benefit many workers and businesses, and emphasized the deep and strong partnership between Canada and the United Kingdom.

NARENDRA MODI 'EARNED AND ACHIEVED' PRIME MINISTERSHIP: PRANAB MUKHERJEE IN MEMOIR

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Every general election has its "importance because the issues that are debated during the polls reflect the various views and perceptions of the electorate", Mukherjee wrote in his memoir "The Presidential Years, 2012-2017" which he completed before his death last year. "... The 2014 verdict was historic for two reasons. First, after three decades, a contesting political party received a decisive mandate instead of a fractured one," he wrote. The second reason, he said, is that the BJP emerged with a simple majority on its own in the Lok Sabha for the first time and was thus able to form the government, though it still did so by co-opting its allies. "But the real winner was the electorate that came out in large numbers and voted decisively, thus indicating its preference for political stability, which it believed would result in development-oriented politics," the former Congress stalwart and Union minister wrote in the book, which was released on Tuesday. Mukherjee said he was also of the belief that people were dejected with coalitions and the behaviour of political parties changing sides for parochial gains. "Coalitions are often formed with the only common agenda of blocking a particular party or individual from coming to power." Comparing Modi with Singh, Mukherjee said the route to prime ministership for the two prime ministers he worked with was very different. Mukherjee, who was the president from July 25, 2012 to July 25, 2017, had worked with both the prime ministers during his tenure. "Dr Singh was offered the post by Sonia Gandhi; she had been chosen as the prime ministerial candidate by the Congress Parliamentary Party and other constituents of the UPA, but she declined the offer...", he wrote. "Modi, on the other hand, became PM through popular choice after leading the BJP to a historic victory in 2014. He is a politician to the core and had been named the BJP's prime ministerial candidate as the party went into campaign mode. He was then Gujarat's CM and had built an image that seemed to click with the masses. He has earned and achieved the prime ministership," he added. Mukherjee wrote he had very cordial relations with Prime Minister Modi during his tenure. "However, I did not hesitate to give my advice on matters of policy during our meetings. There were several occasions when he echoed concerns

that I had voiced. I also believe that he has managed to grasp the nuances of foreign policy quickly," the book said. Mukherjee's approach to maintaining cordial relations with Modi was rooted in the fact that "I believe in the parliamentary form of government and its principle". On the Congress's performance in the face of Modi's surge in 2014, he wrote, "... There is no escaping the fact that the Congress had failed miserably to fulfil people's expectations and aspirations. In fact, after the campaign, when all the formalities were complete, several important Congress leaders and ministers met me at Rashtrapati Bhavan for various reasons. Interestingly, none of them expected a clear majority for either the Congress or the UPA combine." Talking about his advice for decisive mandate in upcoming elections in his Republic Day address in 2014, Mukherjee remarked tongue-in-cheek in his book, published by Rupa Publications, "Of course, people may say that the voters responded to my advice and gave a conclusive mandate in favour of PM Modi to form a government on his own." Mukherjee also wrote that he wasn't sure of the numbers and massive mandate of the BJP before 2014 elections but was impressed seeing the planning and hard work of Modi. "Only Piyush Goyal, the then national treasurer of the party and now a cabinet minister, was confident that the BJP would get no less than 265 seats, and that the number could go up to 280. I didn't and still don't know the reasons for his optimism. However, I took him seriously when he gave me Modi's detailed electioneering schedule, which was not only gruelling but also painstaking," he said. Mukherjee also appreciated Modi for the quick grasp of the nuances of foreign policy. "When Narendra Modi took over as PM, he had absolutely no experience in foreign affairs. As the CM of Gujarat, he had visited some countries, but those visits were limited to engaging for the good of his state, and had little to do with domestic or global foreign policies. Foreign policy was, therefore, a truly uncharted territory for him," he wrote. "But he did what no PM had attempted before: invite the heads of government/state of SAARC nations to his oath-taking ceremony in 2014 - and this included Pakistan's then PM, Nawaz Sharif. His out-of-the-box initiative took several foreign policy veterans by surprise."

ISSUE WILL BE RESOLVED SOON: PUNJAB BJP LEADERS AFTER 2-HOUR MEET WITH PM



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Surjit Jyani was chairing the BJP's Kisan Coordination Committee for interacting with farmers in Punjab last year on the three farm bills which at that time had not been passed by the parliament. Harjit Grewal was also a member of the committee. The prime minister understands Punjab very well and is concerned about farmers, the BJP leaders said after a nearly two-hour meeting with PM Modi. "PM Modi knows a lot... all will be resolved and something good will happen. I cannot disclose what transpired in the meeting but something good will happen... when something is being conceived there are fears that it might get miscarriage," Mr Grewal told news agency PTI after the meeting. The prime minister understands Punjab very well, he is looking after the party's work and has travelled across the state, he said, adding that all issues related to Punjab were discussed in the meeting. Surjit Jyani underlined that Prime Minister Modi is concerned about farmers and said the government is always ready to do something in the interest of farmers, but "Maoists have entered the (farmers') movement and are not letting this issue (on farm laws) get resolved". "Prime Minister Modi is a visionary and is concerned about farmers... Maoist elements have entered the farmers' movement and are not letting the issue get resolved," he said. When asked about the farm laws, Mr Jyani said, "Farmer unions should not be adamant about their demand for repealing the laws. The government has always been ready to do everything in the interest of farmers." He also said this movement is leaderless and therefore, it becomes difficult to hold a dialogue with them. The farmers' union should elect one or more leaders to negotiate with the government, Mr Jyani suggested. The meeting between the BJP leaders and PM Modi came a day after another round of talks between the government and agitating farmers remained inconclusive. The next round of talks is on January 8.

A NEW YEAR'S TAX REDUCTION HELPS STRENGTHEN SENIORS' FINANCIAL SECURITY

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When the Federal Liberal Government's increases to the Basic Personal Amount are fully implemented in 2023, 4.3 million seniors will benefit, including 465,000 whose federal income tax will be reduced to zero. Every year, singles will save close to \$300 and couples will save nearly \$600. These savings will help seniors with everyday expenses, like groceries, hydro and deliveries. It's part of the Liberal government delivering on their plan to make life more affordable for seniors. That work started in 2016, when the first act of our new government was to pass the Middle Class Tax Cut to reduce personal income taxes. This saved affected Canadians an average of \$330 a year for singles and \$540 a year for couples. Seniors depend on strong public pensions, and our government is committed to improving them. We reversed the previous Conservative government's increase to the age of eligibility for Old Age Security (OAS) and the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS), restoring it to 65 years from 67 years. That put thousands of dollars back into the pockets of new seniors. To help low-income seniors, we increased the GIS by \$947. And to help those low-income working seniors keep more of their benefits, we increased the GIS earnings exemption so they can earn up to \$5,000 without any reduction in benefits and get a partial exemption for their next \$10,000 in income. To help seniors with extra expenses of the pandemic, we made one-time payments to seniors in April through the GST Credit and July through OAS. Together, they are worth over \$1500 for a low-income couple, all tax-free. We also worked together with provinces and territories to increase the Canada Pension Plan's maximum yearly benefit for future retirees by about 50 percent, meaningfully reducing the risk of not saving enough for retirement. The Quebec Pension Plan mirrored these improvements. Our policies are showing positive results: 25 percent fewer seniors live in poverty than when we took office in 2015. As seniors age, they are more likely to outlive their savings, have disabilities, be unable to work and be widowed—all while their health care costs are rising. To help address these pressures on older seniors' quality of life, the Liberal government has reaffirmed our commitment to increasing Old Age Security by 10 percent once a senior turns 75. Taken together, our government's ambitious and progressive measures are making a real difference in seniors' financial security—however, there is more work to do. Canadian seniors can always count on Liberals to listen, understand their needs and work hard to deliver for them.



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DONALD TRUMP SIGNS ORDER BANNING TRANSACTIONS WITH 8 CHINESE APPS



Before US President-elect Joe Biden takes office this month, President Donald Trump on Tuesday signed an executive order banning transactions with eight Chinese software applications, including Ant Group's Alipay that is resulting in escalating tensions with Beijing. "The following actions shall be prohibited beginning 45 days after the date of this order, to the extent permitted under applicable law: any transaction by any person, or with respect to any property, subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, with persons that develop or control the following Chinese connected software applications, or with their subsidiaries, as those transactions and persons are identified by the Secretary of Commerce (Secretary) under subsection (e) of this section: Alipay, CamScanner, QQ Wallet, SHAREit, Tencent QQ, VMate, WeChat Pay, and WPS Office," the order said on Tuesday. Trump in his executive order said that the "pace and pervasiveness" of the spread in the United States of certain connected mobile and desktop applications and other software developed or controlled by persons in the People's Republic of China, to include Hong Kong and Macau (China), continue to threaten the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States. "At this time, action must be taken to address the threat posed by these Chinese connected software applications," he added. The order stated that by accessing personal electronic devices Chinese connected software applications can access and capture vast swaths of information from users, including sensitive personally identifiable information and private information. "This data collection threatens to provide the Government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Chinese Communist Party

(CCP) with access to Americans' personal and proprietary information--which would permit China to track the locations of Federal employees and contractors, and build dossiers of personal information," the order read.

The outgoing President stated that "the continuing activity of the PRC and the CCP" to steal or otherwise obtain United States persons' data makes clear that there is an intent to use bulk data collection to advance China's economic and national security agenda.

The order also mentioned India's efforts to curb the threat posed by Chinese apps to ban all such apps that were made by Chinese developers. "In fact, the Government of India has banned the use of more than 200 Chinese connected software applications throughout the country; in a statement, India's Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology asserted that the applications were "stealing and surreptitiously transmitting users' data in an unauthorized manner to servers which have locations outside India'," the order stated. The order released by the White House names "Alipay, CamScanner, QQ Wallet, SHAREit, Tencent QQ, VMate, WeChat Pay, and WPS Office. US Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross on President Trump's Executive Order said, "Consistent with the authorities designated to the Secretary of Commerce from the President, I have directed my Department to begin implementing the E.O.(Executive Order) 's directives, including identifying prohibited transactions related to certain Chinese connected software applications." He added, "stand with President Trump's commitment to protecting the privacy and security of Americans from threats posed by the Chinese Communist Party, and the Department of Commerce will leverage the authorities of the E.O. to continue our mission to secure the nation, the economy, and the people of the United States." National Security Advisor Robert O'Brien on the Executive Order Addressing Chinese Software Applications said that China's Military-Civil Fusion strategy explicitly aims to co-opt or coerce civilian enterprises into assisting the People's Liberation Army. He added, "This executive order tasks the Secretary of Commerce to identify prohibited transactions involving eight Chinese software applications, including payment services; directs the Secretary of Commerce to identify and take appropriate action against other software applications; and develops a program to control the export of exploitable United States user data to foreign adversaries." Under the Trump administration, ties between the two countries had deteriorated over issues such as human rights violations in Xinjiang, encroachment on the special status of Hong Kong, accusations of unfair trade practices by Beijing, lack of transparency concerning the pandemic and China's military aggression in various parts of the world.

WHO CHIEF 'VERY DISAPPOINTED' WITH CHINA OVER DELAYED ACCESS TO VIRUS INVESTIGATION TEAM

The head of the World Health Organization said on Tuesday he was "very disappointed" that China has still not authorised the entry of a team of international experts to examine the origins of the coronavirus.

The 10-strong team had been due to set off in early January as part of a long-awaited mission to probe early cases of the coronavirus, first reported over a year ago in China's Wuhan.

"Over the past 24 hours, members of the international scientific team on COVID-19 virus origins began traveling from their home countries to China. Today we learned that Chinese officials have not yet finalised the necessary permissions for the team's arrival in China," WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told an online news conference in Geneva.

"I have been in contact with senior Chinese officials and I have once again made it clear the mission is a priority for the WHO," he said of the trip he said was developed with Beijing.

Tedros said that the global health body is eager to get the mission underway "as soon as possible"

The mission was due to be led by Peter Ben Embarek, WHO's top expert on animal diseases that cross the species barrier, who went to China on a preliminary mission last July.

Two members of the international team had already set out on their journey to China. One has now turned back and the other is in transit in a third country, emergencies chief Mike Ryan said. However, he added: "We trust and hope that is just a logistic and bureaucratic issue that can be resolved very quickly."

Ahead of the trip, Beijing has been seeking to shape the narrative about when and where the pandemic began, with senior diplomat Wang Yi saying "more and more studies" showed that it emerged in multiple regions. Ryan has previously called this "highly speculative". China has dismissed criticism of its handling of early cases that emerged in late 2019, although some including US President Donald Trump has questioned Beijing's actions during the



outbreak. Trump has often called it the 'ChinaVirus' and has repeatedly called for the Chinese government to be held accountable for "this plague".

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has also slammed the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) for continuing to spread disinformation regarding Covid-19, and obstructing the investigation of the World Health Organization (WHO) in finding out the origin and spread of the virus.

Sino-Australian relations have been in a downward spiral since April, when Canberra infuriated Beijing by proposing an independent international inquiry into the origins of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Citizen journalist Zhang Zhan, who was detained in May for her live stream reporting from Wuhan over COVID-19, has been sentenced to four years of imprisonment in late December, Hong Kong Free Press (HKFP) reported. She has been convicted of "picking quarrels and provoking trouble" for her reporting in the chaotic initial stages of the outbreak.

Washington, which has announced plans to leave the WHO, has called for a "transparent" investigation and criticised its terms under which Chinese experts conducted the first phase of research.

Shashi Tharoor suggests cancelling Republic Day festivities, says crowds during COVID-19 will be irresponsible



Congress leader Shashi Tharoor has suggested cancelling the Republic Day festivities amid the COVID-19 pandemic close on the heels of Prime Minister Boris Johnson calling off his India visit due to the the coronavirus situation in the UK. Tharoor said that crowds to cheer the parade as usual would be 'irresponsible'. Johnson, who was scheduled to attend the Republic Day celebrations in New Delhi as chief guest, has cancelled his visit to India later this month due to the growing health crisis created by the new coronavirus variant in the UK. "Now that @BorisJohnson's visit to India this month has been cancelled due to the COVID Second Wave, & we don't have a Chief Guest on Republic Day, why not go one step farther & cancel the festivities altogether?" Mr Tharoor asked on Twitter on Tuesday night. "Getting crowds to cheer the parade as usual would be irresponsible," he said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had a telephonic conversation with his UK counterpart Johnson on Tuesday, during which the British leader reiterated his thanks for India's invitation for him as the chief guest of the Republic Day celebrations, but regretted his inability to attend.

"In light of the national lockdown announced last night, and the speed at which the new coronavirus variant is spreading, the Prime Minister said that it was important for him to remain in the UK so he can focus on the domestic response to the virus," the statement from UK Prime Minister's office read.

"The leaders underlined their shared commitment to the bilateral relationship, and to continuing to build on the close collaboration between our countries -- including in response to the pandemic," it added.

Johnson's government has announced a complete lockdown for England's 56 million people, which could last until mid-February. The measures were taken amid a huge spurt in coronavirus cases which saw 80,000 fresh infections on one day in the end of December.

GOVT TO VACCINATE PEOPLE GOING ON HAJ PILGRIMAGE FROM INDIA, SAYS UNION MINISTER NAQVI



MUMBAI: Union Minister for Minority Affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi on Tuesday said that the government is making arrangements to administer the coronavirus vaccine to pilgrims going on Haj. He was speaking at a meeting of the Haj Committee of India officials and Haj Group organisers at Haj House in Mumbai.

"Today discussed various issues concerned to Haj 2021 with Haj Committee of India officials and Haj Group Organisers at Haj House in Mumbai. Arrangements are being made to give Corona vaccine to all the people who will go to perform Haj from India," the Union Minister informed via Twitter.

The last date for submission of forms for Haj 2021 has been extended till January 10, 2021.

Last month, during a meeting with the Haj Committee here to discuss the preparations and registrations for Haj 2021, Naqvi lauded the committee for making the registration process "100 per cent" digital, in turn making India the "first country" to do so. In another tweet, the Union Minister on Tuesday slammed the Opposition for raising questions on the measure taken by the Centre to combat the coronavirus pandemic.

"Those people who earlier raised questions on welfare measures taken by Narendra Modi government during the corona crisis, are now trying to create confusion on the Corona vaccines which have been developed by hard-working scientists of our country," he said in a subsequent tweet. "...Some failed and frustrated political players`, who are unable to convince the people, are trying to confuse by using Corona vaccine as confusion rexine." Last week, Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) announced "restricted emergency use" for two COVID-19 vaccine candidates -- Bharat Biotech's COVAXIN and Serum Institute of India's Covishield.

THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO IMPROVEMENT, SAYS CJI BOBDE ON FARMERS' PROTEST

The Supreme Court (SC) on Wednesday (January 6) expressed concern over the on-going farmers protest against the recently enacted three farm laws at various Delhi borders. A bench headed by Chief Justice S.A. Bobde told Solicitor General (SG) Tushar Mehta and Attorney General (AG) KK Venugopal, representing the Centre, "There is absolutely no improvement in the situation."

Mehta submitted that the Centre is in discussion with the farmers to resolve their issues with the laws and since healthy talks are going on between the farmers and Centre, it would not be advisable to take up the matters immediately. The AG said filing of response by the Centre may close avenues of negotiations underway between the farmers and Centre.

Venugopal added that there is a possibility that parties involved in discussion may come to a conclusion in the near future. The bench also comprising Justices AS Bopanna and V. Ramasubramanian agreed with AG and SG submissions, and said if it is told on Monday (January 11) that discussions are still underway, then it would adjourn the hearing. "We understand the situation. We want to encourage the talks. We will keep matter on Monday and will adjourn if you say so," said the Chief Justice.

The farmers' protest against the three farm laws has been going on for more than a month. The observations from the top court came during the hearing on a petition filed by advocate ML Sharma who challenged a 1954 amendment to the Constitution for putting agriculture in the concurrent list, which permitted the Centre to enact the farm laws. The top court issued notice on Sharma's plea. With concerns that farm laws would weaken the MSP and mandi systems and leave the farmers at the mercy of big corporates, farmers have been protesting at different borders of the national capital for over a month against the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020, the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020, and the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020.



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PROVINCE HONOURING THE EXCEPTIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS OF 47 ONTARIANS

THE ORDER OF ONTARIO IS THE PROVINCE’S HIGHEST HONOUR

TORONTO — The Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario and Chancellor of the Order of Ontario, announced 47 new appointments to the Order of Ontario, the province's highest honour, for 2019 and 2020. The Order of Ontario honours individuals whose exceptional achievements have left a lasting legacy in the province, in Canada, and beyond. Members of the Order of Ontario come from all walks of life, represent diverse fields of endeavour, and have played an important role in shaping the province. The 2020 Appointees to the Order of Ontario are:

Daniel Allen
Joseph Raymond Buncic
Michael DeGasperis
Raymond Desjardins
Ernest Eves
Hershell Ezrin
Carlo Fidani
Karen Goldenberg
Michael D. Harris
Ellis Jacob
Jing Jiang
Shana Kelley
André Lapierre

Dale Lastman
André M. Levesque
Peter Liu
Hazel McCallion
Arden McGregor
Janet McKelvy
George McLean
Hon. Rosemary Moodie
Hon. Robert. W. Runciman
Marilyn Sonley
Ahmad Reza Tabrizi
Hon. Karen Weiler
The 2019 Appointees to the Order of Ontario are:
Melanie Adrian
Roland "Roly" Armitage
Allan Carswell
Helen Ching-Kircher
John Colangeli
Nancy Coldham
Sean Conway
Clare Copeland
Barbara Croall
Lisa Farano
Geoff Fernie
Allan Fox
John Freund
Susan Hay
John Jennings
Marlys Koschinsky
James W. Leech
Audrey Loeb

Dani Reiss
Janis Rotman
Linda Silver Dranoff
Joan Sutton Straus
"As Chancellor of the Order of Ontario, it is with great pride that I congratulate the 2019 and 2020 Order of Ontario appointees," said Her Honour, Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario. "The announcement on January 1 is special. New Year's Day is a day for reflection, rejuvenation, and re-setting of goals and priorities. We have seen the best of Ontarians this year, and many of these new appointees are being honoured for a lifetime of service to this province, laying the groundwork of resilience and community that each one of us was called to act upon in this historic global pandemic. Let these appointees inspire you and encourage you to honour those around you by nominating them to be recognized by the province. We have much to be proud of."
"The Ontario government is proud to recognize and congratulate the 2019 and 2020 Order of Ontario appointees," said Lisa MacLeod, Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tour-

ism and Culture Industries. "These exceptional individuals inspire us and represent the very best of our great province. I ask all Ontarians to join me in honouring them and celebrating their accomplishments."
The Lieutenant Governor will bestow the honour upon the newest appointees during an investiture ceremony at Queen's Park, at a point in time in the future, when the Chief Medical Officer of Health deems gatherings possible once again in the province.
QUICK FACTS
798 people have been appointed to the Order of Ontario since its establishment in 1986. Appointments to the Order are made on the recommendation of an independent advisory council based on merit of accomplishments of nominees put forward by the public. The nomination deadline is March 31 each year. You can nominate a resident or former long-term resident of Ontario for the 2021 Order of Ontario here. Full list of 2019 and 2020 Order of Ontario appointments.

Kanwar Dhanjal gets featured among RBC Top 25 Canadian Immigrants Awards winners

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Dhanjal said in an email interview, he had been "successfully running the company in the sector of instrumentation, and it has obtained a growth rate of 15 to 18 per cent every year."
He said he aims to "provide state of the art control and automation solutions with honesty, integrity and creativity."
His vision is to be the first choice of the industrial calibration service provider for level, flow, temperature, pressure and weighing instruments.
Dhanjal also dedicates his time to various causes, boards and committees. He is not only the CEO of Just Instruments Inc. but also Director of Brampton Board of Trade.
He is associated with the Indo-Canada Chamber of Commerce (ICCC), serving as its 29th president in 2017–2018.
Dhanjal is a recipient of many awards. He won the "Influential Technocrat" award in 2019 by IMEC, Canada, and recently in 2020, he was recognized by the Lahore Chamber of Commerce in Pakistan.
His recognition in the 12th annual RCB Top 25 Canadian Immigrant Awards is widely accoladed, and he feels immensely proud of this national-level achievement.



MP KAMAL KHERA RESIGNS FROM PARLIAMENTARY ROLE AFTER TRAVELLING TO U.S.

CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

It was arranged for those who could not attend the funeral, she said.
Khera returned to Canada on Dec. 31. and on Jan. 3, she tweets her visit was "deemed essential" but said she is leaving her parliamentary secretary role to ensure her choices "do not distract from the important work of our government."
PM Justin Trudeau also expressed his dissatisfaction and assured Canadians the right action is taken. "I was disappointed to find out [about] two of our caucus members who travelled and [that is] why there were consequences in them resigning from their committee roles," he said during the press conference.
Apart from Khera, Pierrefontons—Dollard MP Sameer Zuberi also stepped down from multiple committee roles.
Khera was the first member of Parliament to announce she had tested positive for Canada's coronavirus in March. After recovering, she volunteered in a nursing home badly hit by the pandemic as a trained nurse.



New study shows cultural safety differences affect perception of Palliative Care in South Asian populations

BRAMPTON: When dealing with a life-limiting illness, palliative care can improve the quality of life for patients and families. However, for many people, the fear of "end of life" care prevents them from exploring it. A recent study from William Osler Health System (Osler) and McMaster University examined awareness of palliative care in the South Asian community and found that culture plays a critical role in the perception of palliative care. This perception, in turn, affects whether or not patients will be open to receiving it.

Funded by a McMaster University, Department of Family Medicine, Pilot Research Project Funding Grant, the observational study is one of the few person-centered palliative care studies focused on the South Asian community outside India. The results showed that seventy per cent of participants in the study had a lack of understanding of palliative care and forty-four per cent thought that palliative care went against their values and beliefs.

At the same time, many of the participants agreed that when facing a life-limiting illness, they wanted to ensure that they or their family members had a better quality of life and alleviated suffering – which is what the palliative care paradigm provides.

"This research is an essential first step in understanding how the South Asian community perceives what it's like to deal with a serious illness and their fears about palliative care," said Dr. Naheed Dosani, Palliative Care physician, William Osler Health System. "Too often in health care a one size fits all approach is used in communities with diverse populations. This study illustrates how creating customized approaches focusing on the needs of the local community will allow us to provide more effective palliative care."

Recent Ontario research also indicates that immigrants of South Asian origin are at a higher risk of aggressive end-of-life care that is often contrary to their wishes. There is a strong likelihood that perceptions of palliative care within the South Asian populations are contributing to this. "Being aware of cultural differences is an important part of working with patients," said Dr. Martin Chasen, Medical Director of Supportive and Palliative Care, William Osler Health System. "This study is a key part of Osler's mandate to strengthen our expertise in treating diverse populations and to ensure all our patients have access to safe, compassionate, quality care."

Other key findings in the study showed that participants had differing attitudes when it came to talking about death – ranging from discomfort to frank acceptance. Participants also acknowledged the key role of the family in providing care. While the study showed education is necessary to change common perceptions of palliative care, cultural values, faith, and spiritual beliefs didn't necessarily pose a barrier to participants accepting palliative care services.

"Insights from this study will have implications on the development and implementation of culturally competent palliative care services for health care professionals," said Dr. David Price, Chair and Professor, McMaster University Department of Family Medicine. "The term 'palliative care' can mean so many things and this research illustrates the importance of taking into account cultural differences when recommending care in diverse populations." The study was conducted out of Brampton Civic Hospital, where the surrounding community per capita population of South Asian immigrants and peoples of descent is seventy per cent. "I always thought palliative care was focused on end-of-life care," said Tejinder Cheema, the daughter of an Osler palliative care patient. "However, after speaking with the team at Brampton Civic and learning that palliative care is focused on managing symptoms and improving quality of life, I was happy to include it in my mother's treatment plan." Published in the BMC Palliative Care journal in September 2020, Perceptions of palliative care in a South Asian community: findings from an observational study, the study explores how differing cultural and social norms and religious affiliations impact perceptions of palliative care within the South Asian community.



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ONTARIO LAUNCHES INNOVATIVE TESTING PROGRAM AT PEARSON AIRPORT

NEW FREE AND VOLUNTARY PILOT PROGRAM WILL SUPPORT EARLY DETECTION OF COVID-19

TORONTO — The Ontario government is launching a new innovative, voluntary and free border testing pilot program at Toronto Pearson International Airport for eligible international travellers returning to Ontario to help quickly identify and stop the spread of COVID-19 in the province.

Details were provided today at Pearson airport by Premier Doug Ford, Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health, and Solicitor General Sylvia Jones.

"With over 60,000 international passengers coming into Pearson airport every week, we can't take any unnecessary risks," said Premier Ford. "That's why we're putting in place this new pilot program to help stop the spread of COVID-19 and respond to new threats like the recent strain of the virus we're seeing in an alarming number of countries without the same travel restrictions as the U.K. The test will be free for eligible travellers and I encourage everyone to take the test to protect yourselves and your loved ones."

Recognizing the increased risk that inbound international travellers may pose, including the potential to spread the new UK COVID-19 variant, the government is fulfilling its commitment to quickly implement airport testing to help contain this deadly virus. Beginning today, the province, in partnership with the Greater Toronto Airports Authority, will offer free and voluntary COVID-19 testing for international travellers arriving and staying in the province for at least 14 days.

"We are working closely with our industry partners to proceed on our commitment to implement testing at Pearson airport to help keep people safe and stop the spread of COVID-19 in our communities," said Minister Elliott. "This airport testing pilot will test, trace and help isolate COVID-19 cases early and is a great step forward in protect-

ing our borders."

Eligible travellers will be able pre-register for the program or proceed to get tested when they arrive at the airport. Those choosing to participate in the pilot will receive a free, self-collected lab-based polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test and be supervised by a health care provider either in-person or by video as the traveller self-administers the test. Switch Health, a health service provider, will provide the monitored self-swabbing tests in a convenient and dedicated space in the airport. Switch Health has been delivering testing services in the Windsor-Leamington area and Peel Region, and can support the needed volumes and timing requirements for the testing pilot.

Test results will be reported into Ontario's Lab Information System within 48 hours and local public health units will follow up on all positive tests. All international travellers will continue to be required to follow the federal requirement for a mandatory 14-day quarantine after arriving or returning to Canada, regardless if they have a negative or positive test.

"This pilot program is another critical element in our government's efforts to put in place the measures needed to keep Ontarians safe from the COVID-19 pandemic," said Solicitor General Sylvia Jones. "Introducing testing at Toronto's Pearson International Airport will help stop the transmission of the virus and support the development of a longer-term testing strategy needed for international travel. We remain steadfast in our commitment to doing what is needed to protect the health and safety of Ontarians."

This program is in addition to the new Government of Canada pre-departure requirement for travellers bound to Canada to demonstrate proof of negative COVID-19 results from a test taken within three days prior to departure. The province continues to work with the federal government to explore the next stage of the pilot, including a proposed

modified quarantine period for participants who test negative.

With the confirmation of cases of the COVID-19 UK Variant stemming from inbound international travel, the province continues to be in constant contact with the Public Health Agency of Canada and other jurisdictions to monitor the developing situation related to the COVID-19 UK Variant and ensure coordinated, effective and shared efforts to protect and safeguard the public.

QUICK FACTS

Inbound international travellers can register to participate in the program at torontopearson.com/testing. Registration can be done in advance of arrival at the airport or upon arrival at Toronto Pearson airport.

Individuals requesting a COVID-19 test for outbound international travel clearance are not eligible for a publicly funded COVID-19 test in Ontario.

Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health strongly advises that travel out of the province should be limited to essential purposes only.

Ontario has completed over eight million COVID-19 tests to date, more tests than all Canadian provinces and territories combined.

Testing is available by appointment for those within provincial testing guidance at assessment centres, participating pharmacies and specimen collection centres. Please visit Ontario.ca/covidtest to find a testing location and for eligibility criteria to be tested.

As of December 26, 2020 at 12:01 a.m., a provincewide shutdown is in effect for a period of 14 days in Northern Ontario and a period of 28 days in Southern Ontario to stop the spread of COVID-19.

To help everyone stay safe, download the COVID Alert app. It is free to use and is available from the Apple and Google Play app stores. This app lets users know if they may have been exposed to the others who are infected with the virus.

ONTARIO SUPPORTING FORESTRY JOBS AND WORKER SAFETY

TORONTO — The Ontario government is investing \$5.3 million, provided through the federal Forest Sector Safety Measures Fund, to help small and medium sized forest sector businesses offset the cost of COVID-19 safety measures. The funding will be used for initiatives such as setting up sanitizing stations, providing enhanced cleaning, additional worker training, measures to increase physical distancing, and to purchase personal protective equipment. "Our government is committed to the ongoing economic recovery and growth of the forestry industry," said John Yakabuski, Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. "This funding will help businesses within this crucial sector overcome the economic challenges they face, ensuring they can continue to keep their doors open, while protecting workers and the communities where they live." "Protecting workers in our forest sector was one of the federal government's early commitments during the pan-

demic. We said we would be there for Canadians through COVID-19 and we are delivering," said the Honourable Seamus O'Regan, Canada's Minister of Natural Resources. Both levels of government deemed the forestry industry an essential sector due to its vital role in supplying essential forest products for hygiene, medical supplies, food packaging and shipping materials.

Providing a financial investment through the Forest Sector Safety Measures Fund further supports the province's Sustainable Growth: Ontario's Forest Sector Strategy. Ontario's strategy will create jobs and encourage economic growth in the forestry industry, supporting the Indigenous, northern and rural communities that depend on the sector. It will also ensure the province's forests are managed sustainably for generations to come. For information on program eligibility and timelines, please visit ontario.ca/forestsafetyfund

QUICK FACTS

On July 10, 2020, the federal government announced the Forest Sector Safety Measures Fund, which is providing up to \$30 million to offset costs of COVID-19 health and safety measures for small and medium businesses in the forest sector. Ontario has more than 1,900 small and medium sized businesses in the forest sector, directly employing close to 35,000 people.

Earlier this year, the province provided immediate COVID-19 relief measures to the forestry industry, including deferring stumpage revenue collection for six months, making \$3.5 million available to protect tree plant workers, expediting the forestry roads funding program, and revising the forest manuals and independent forest audits to modernize and streamline requirements and provide time savings for businesses.

PRIME MINISTER'S REMARKS UPDATING CANADIANS ON THE COVID-19 SITUATION, VACCINES, AND TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Hello everyone. Happy New Year

As we begin this new year, I know a lot of people are wondering what to expect in 2021.

Although the pandemic is far from over, I want to start today by telling you that we have reasons to be optimistic.

Two safe and effective vaccines have been approved in Canada and we have started receiving doses of those vaccines over the past few weeks.

Our government already delivered nearly half a million doses to the provinces and territories.

And those efforts are continuing.

We're on track to have well over a million vaccine doses from Pfizer and Moderna by the end of January.

And by September, we'll have enough doses to vaccinate every Canadian who wants a shot.

The vaccines will allow us to protect people and save lives.

That's why it's essential that the provinces and territories conduct their immunization campaigns as quickly as possible.

The federal government is covering the cost of the vaccines and the supplies needed to administer them.

And we are coordinating the logistics of deploying vaccines all across the country through the National Operations Centre, which is supported by the Canadian Armed Forces.

This pandemic will end. We will get through this.

Better days are on the horizon, but to get there, we need to keep holding on. I've said it before and I'll say it again: now is not the time to vacation abroad. We must stay the course.

Let me also be very clear about the Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit.

This program was created to give people sick leave if they needed it and otherwise wouldn't have one from their employer.

It exists, for example, for the grocery store employee who needs to isolate because he's been in contact with a colleague who has tested positive, or if he himself has symptoms.

The employee therefore does not have to choose between losing his income and isolating to protect others.

The goal has never been to send a cheque to those who decide to go on a trip, against public health advice.

My message to those who have gone south is clear

You will not be entitled to this benefit.

It's not there to pay for someone's post-vacation quarantine.

To those who were angry after reading the news this weekend, I share your indignation.

We are correcting the situation quickly.

I know you have made a lot of sacrifices over the past few months and the bottom line is that anyone who travelled for non-essential reasons will not be able to access the sickness benefit.

We'll have more details soon.

We have been telling Canadians since March to avoid all non-essential travel. We will continue hammering this message on all platforms. And there is a mandatory quarantine for anyone returning to the country, no exceptions, with very severe legal consequences if it is not respected.

Canada has long had some of the strongest travel measures in the world. Since March, these rules have helped save lives.

It's important, to protect our loved ones and health care workers, and to ensure that our hospitals are not overwhelmed.

As new strains of COVID-19 emerge, as cases skyrocket in countless coun-

tries, this is the time to double down on keeping you and your family safe.

Starting Thursday, to be eligible to return to Canada, travellers must have a negative COVID-19 test before boarding their flight.

This is in addition to the long-standing mandatory two-week quarantine once people arrive.

Officials are reviewing travellers' isolation plans.

And if the plan is not up to par, the travellers will have to quarantine in a federal facility.

Earlier today, I also spoke with President Ramaphosa of South Africa, including about our work together on fighting COVID-19 and the global response to this pandemic.

Canada and South Africa have long worked as partners to keep our citizens safe, and build a healthier, brighter future for everyone.

As we face this pandemic, we will continue to stand together.

This includes on fighting the virus and on ensuring that no one gets left behind as we rebuild.

On public health in particular, Canada is taking the steps needed to protect Canadians and stop the spread of COVID-19.

We've put in place additional screening and enhanced measures to respond to new challenges wherever they occur around the world.

We've been very clear.

No one should be vacationing abroad right now.

But if you still decide to travel at your own risk, you will need to show a negative COVID-19 test before you return, and you must self-isolate for two weeks when you get back.

You need to take this seriously.

Not following the rules could mean real consequences, including fines and prison time.

So many people gave up so much more than just a vacation over the holidays. There's a reason so many Canadians made those tough but responsible decisions.

There's a reason so many Canadians did their part.

It was for the people around them.

For the senior that is better protected.

For the frontline worker who is safer on the job.

For the small business owner who could look with more confidence to re-opening. We can't let the sacrifices we've made over the holidays—and over the last 10 months—go to waste.

This afternoon, I'll be speaking with local business owners in B.C. and P.E.I. who are working hard to keep employees on the payroll.

Later, I'll also have a chance to drop in on a virtual classroom with students in Edmonton. As a former teacher, these classroom meetings are among my favourites. Our kids are doing an incredible job of not just adapting, but also looking out for each other. So to all the kids doing virtual school this year, and with a lot of you starting up this week—you're doing great. Keep it up.

And remember, even as you're trying to figure out how to get virtual school going, this is tough for your parents, too.

So maybe give them an extra hug at the end of the day, and you know maybe for once do the dishes without being prompted or asked to it.

We're all in this together and the more we can help each other out, the better we're going to make it through this.

Right across the country, people of every age are doing their part.

Now is not the time to give up.

With rising cases, many provinces that have already made tough decisions will have to continue doing so, whether with local restrictions or province-wide shutdowns.

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Ontario Accelerates COVID-19 Vaccinations for Long-Term Care Homes in Priority Regions

All residents and workers to be vaccinated by third week of January

TORONTO — The Ontario government is continuing the rollout of Phase One of its vaccine implementation plan by ensuring that all residents, health care workers and essential caregivers at long-term care homes in the priority regions of Toronto, Peel, York and Windsor-Essex receive a COVID-19 vaccination by January 21, 2021.

The government's vaccine rollout is well underway since launching in December. Frontline health care workers who participated in the successful Pfizer pilot program in Toronto and Ottawa are receiving their second doses this week. To date, 44 vaccine sites have been established. Over 50,000 people have been administered the Pfizer vaccine, including over 26,000 vaccinations administered to health care workers in long-term care homes and retirement homes, over 20,000 vaccinations administered to health care workers and nearly 1,000 vaccinations administered to residents.

Nearly 3,000 doses of the Moderna vaccine were administered to 24 long-term care homes between December 31, 2020 and January 3rd, 2021. Over 4,000 doses to 26 long-term care homes of the Moderna vaccine are planned to be administered between January 4 and January 6. An estimated 2 million vaccine doses are expected to arrive throughout the winter during Phase One of the province's vaccine implementation plan.

"Ontario continues to make important progress in quickly and safely vaccinating our frontline health care workers, our most vulnerable and those at greatest risk, and we continue to administer doses to thousands of Ontarians across the province," said Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health. "Our Vaccination Distribution Task Force, led by General Rick Hillier, has put a plan in place to get these doses distributed and administered as quickly as possible and that plan is working."

On December 30th, Ontario received nearly 53,000 doses of the Moderna vaccine from the federal government. This first, small shipment is being used for a pilot in Toronto, York, Peel and Windsor-Essex to vaccinate residents at long-term care homes and high-risk retirement homes, with the vaccine being administered at select long-term care homes within a day of receiving the shipment.

As the rollout of COVID-19 vaccines continues, the Ontario government is investing an additional \$398 million during the second wave to reduce the risk of the virus from entering long-term care homes from the community. The new funding will help homes adhere to enhanced staff and visitor testing requirements and continue to improve COVID-19 prevention and containment. The new investment brings Ontario's total funding

to protect long-term care homes since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic to \$1.38 billion.

"We continue to do everything we can to help stop the spread of this virus and protect our most vulnerable, as well as the staff who have been working tirelessly to keep residents safe," said Dr. Merrilee Fullerton, Minister of Long-Term Care. "While we rollout the vaccine as quickly as possible, we are also providing additional support to help homes detect any cases early so that the virus can be contained."

"Ontario continues to follow the expert advice and recommendations of the COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Task Force in order to ensure the timely, effective and ethical execution of Ontario's immunization program," said Solicitor General Sylvia Jones. "This investment, along with prioritizing long-term care homes in areas with high rates of COVID-19, will help protect our most vulnerable residents and keep Ontarians safe."

"We are getting the vaccine to those who need it most as quickly as possible," said General Rick Hillier (retired). "Every vaccination has the potential to save a life. Our focus is on getting the vaccines to the most vulnerable, as well as to the outstanding men and women who serve and care for our long-term care residents."

As part of Phase One, Ontario will continue to focus on vaccinating vulnerable populations, and those who care for them, as more vaccines become available. As the vaccination rollout continues, it remains critically important that all Ontarians continue following public health advice to protect our communities and most vulnerable populations, and to stop the spread of COVID-19.

QUICK FACTS

On December 9, 2020, Health Canada approved the first COVID-19 vaccine in Canada, manufactured by Pfizer-BioNTech, and on December 23, 2020 approved the COVID-19 vaccine manufactured by Moderna. Health Canada approved the vaccines after independent and thorough scientific reviews for safety, effectiveness and quality. Health Canada will continue to monitor the safety and effectiveness of the vaccine.

Ontario received 95,000 doses of the Pfizer vaccine by December 21, with regular weekly shipments of Pfizer vaccine expected starting January 2021. Additional delivery sites will be offering the vaccine to the key populations by the end of January.

To help everyone stay safe, download the COVID Alert app. It is free to use and is available from the Apple and Google Play app stores. This app lets users know if they may have been exposed to the virus.

INVESTIGATORS DELIVER SWIFT ARRESTS IN COURIER CARJACKING

REGION OF PEEL – Investigators from the Central Robbery Bureau, with assistance from officers from 22 Division and ESS, have arrested three men for the carjacking of a delivery driver in the City of Brampton.

On Wednesday, December 30, 2020, just after 5:00 p.m., police attended the area of Elmstead Court and Timberlane Drive after receiving a call from a man reporting his vehicle was stolen following an assault.

The victim reported that he was delivering packages when he was accosted by a man and punched. Following the assault, the man entered the victim's vehicle and attempted to steal it. In an effort to prevent the theft, the victim grabbed onto the vehicle and was dragged almost 800 meters before losing his grip. The victim sustained serious but non-life threatening injuries. He was treated at a local hospital and later released.

As a result of the diligent and resourceful actions by investigators the vehicle was located several hours later in the Mississauga area. An effective arrest was initiated with the assistance of ESS officers and three men were arrested without incident. A large portion of the packages contained in the car for delivery have been recovered and will make it to their intended destinations.

The following men face charges in relation to the incident: Jaideep Singh, a 22-year-old man from Brampton, is charged with Robbery, Dangerous Operation of a Motor Vehicle and Fail to Comply with a Release Order

Gurdeep Singh, a 28-year-old man from Mississauga is charged with Possession of Property Obtained by Crime and Fail to Comply with a Release Order

Rupinder Brar, a 42-year-old man from Brampton is charged with Possession of Property Obtained by Crime and Breach of Probation.

All three men were held in custody and will be attending the Ontario Court of Justice in the City of Brampton on Thursday, December 31, 2020 for a bail hearing.

Peel Regional Police would like to remind the public that if someone attempts to take your property, we recommend that you do not resist. Instead, head to a safe location and immediately call the police. Defend yourself only in the event that you are being physically assaulted.

Anyone with information regarding this incident is asked to contact investigators from the Central Robbery Bureau at (905)453-2121 ext. 3410. Information may also be left anonymously by calling Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477), or by visiting www.peelcrimestoppers.ca

Ontario Supporting Home-Based Food Businesses During COVID-19

GOVERNMENT PROVIDING ENTREPRENEURS WITH A NEW "HOW TO" GUIDE

TORONTO — The Ontario government is supporting home-based food businesses by providing a guide on how to start a home-based food business, which includes an overview of public health requirements that need to be followed as a food operator. To further support these entrepreneurs, the government has also made regulatory changes to allow more flexibility to sell low-risk, home-prepared foods. These supports are part of the government's continued efforts to help small, independent businesses succeed and contribute to Ontario communities during COVID-19.

"For many local entrepreneurs, they start with a love of food and a cherished family recipe, whether it's grandma's apple pie or that new take on homegrown pickles, jams and preserves, and try and turn their passion into a successful business," said Prabmeet Sarkaria, Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction. "Our government applauds them for their vision and effort and we are doing everything we can to help them seize new opportunities without compromising Ontario's high standards for food safety."

Low-risk foods are considered non-hazardous and do not require refrigeration. They include items such as baked goods, pickles,

jams and preserves, chocolates, hard candies and brittles, fudge and toffees, granola, trail mix, nuts and seeds, and coffee beans and tea leaves.

"Starting a home-based food business is an excellent opportunity for people across Ontario to share their culinary creativity, build a business for themselves and be part of the province's agri-food sector," said Ernie Hardeman, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. "Our government is committed to encouraging this growing part of the economy and to support all the good things that are grown and produced right here in Ontario."

QUICK FACTS

All food premises, including home-based food businesses, must adhere to requirements under the Health Protection and Promotion Act (HPPA) and the Food Premises Regulation, as well as periodic inspections by their local public health unit.

Home-based food businesses that prepare only low-risk foods are exempt from certain regulatory requirements, such as specified handwashing stations in food premises, compliance with commercial dishwashing requirements and food handling training certification.

See Ontario's guide on how to start a home-based food business.

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FARMERS' AGITATION: TALKS WITH CENTRE INCONCLUSIVE; NEXT MEETING ON JANUARY 8



NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR, PIYUSH GOYAL AND SOM PARKASH AND REPRESENTATIVES OF FARMERS OBSERVED A TWO-MINUTE SILENCE FOR FARMERS WHO DIED DURING PROTESTS.

The seventh round of talks between protesting farmers' unions and three central ministers ended inconclusively on Monday as the former insisted on the repeal of the three contentious farm laws right from the beginning, even as the government listed various benefits from the Acts. The next meeting will take place on January 8, farmer leaders said.

Union Minister Som Prakash met them during the lunch. Union Ministers Narendra Singh Tomar, Piyush Goyal and Som Parkash along with government officials and representatives of farmers observed a two-minute silence for farmers who died during the ongoing protest. Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar said he remains hopeful of a solution in the next meeting on January 8, but asserted that efforts need to be made from both sides for a solution to be reached (taali dono haathon se bajti hai).

Tomar said no outcome could be reached in the seventh meeting because the farmer leaders remained adamant on one issue of repeal of the laws, despite the government wanting a clause-wise discussion on the legislation.

Farmer leaders, however, alleged that it was the government's "ego problem" that was coming in the way of resolving the issues and they insisted they would not relent on their key demands for the repeal of the three laws and a legal guarantee for the MSP (minimum support price) system for procurement of their crops.

Earlier in the day, Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) spokesperson Rakesh Tikait claimed that a total of 60 farmers have so far lost their lives during the ongoing farmers' protest against the new farm laws. He further said that one farmer is dying every 16 hours and it is the responsibility of the government to give an answer.

UNION BUDGET SET TO BE PRESENTED ON FEBRUARY 1, BUDGET SESSION OF PARLIAMENT TO COMMENCE ON JAN 29



The Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs (CCPA) on Tuesday (January 5) recommended that the Budget Session of Parliament be held from January 29. The CCPA has recommended that the first part of Budget Session be held from January 29 to February 15, while the second part can be held from March 8 to April 8.

As per the CCPA recommendation according to sources, President Ram Nath Kovind is likely to address the customary joint sitting of both Houses of Parliament on January 29, while the Union Budget 2021-22 will be presented on February 1. The CCPA has stated that all COVID-19-related protocols will have to be followed during the Par-

liament session. A final decision on the matter – the start of Budget Session - will be taken by the Union Cabinet. It may be recalled that there was a controversy after the government announced late last year that Winter Session had been cancelled in view of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Opposition had accused the government of running away from a discussion on the ongoing farmers protest as well as the coronavirus pandemic. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi had said that he had informally contacted floor leaders of various political parties and "they have expressed their concerns about the ongoing pandemic and opined of doing away with winter session".

US IRKED BY INDIA'S DEAL WITH RUSSIA FOR S-400 AIR DEFENCE SYSTEM, WARNS OF SANCTIONS

WASHINGTON: A defence deal between India and Russia has not gone down well with the United States and an unofficial report has said that the country does not like India to pursue defence deals with Russia. The report by the US Congress says that the United States may impose sanctions on India for purchasing the S-400 Air Defense System from Russia. In its latest report, the Congressional Research Service (CRS), the independent research arm of the US Congress, has said that India is keen on partnerships and joint production plans in the technology sector, whereas America expects some more reforms in India's defence policy. Also, the US wants India to adopt a flexible attitude towards foreign investment in its defence sector. The report warns that due to the S-400 deal, the US may impose sanctions on India under the 'Counting America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act' or the law governing prohibitions. However, it may be noted that the CRS report is not an official report of the US Congress. It is prepared for MPs by independent experts so that they make decisions after understanding everything. Nevertheless, the warning given about the India-Russia deal in the report is definitely a matter of concern. India and Russia are also strategic partners and New Delhi has been dealing with Moscow to meet its defence needs. In October 2018, India signed a five-billion dollar deal with Russia to buy four S-400 defence systems, ignoring the Trump administration's warning. India also paid \$800 million to Russia in 2019 as its first instalment. America's warning is also a matter of concern for India because recently, the US has imposed sanctions on Turkey which bought the S-400 system. Although America's relationship with India is better than Turkey, Biden's attitude towards New Delhi will be known only later. On the other hand, Russia has made it clear that American threats will not have any effect on this deal. Last month, Russia said that despite the threat of US sanctions, the first consignment of the S-400 missile system would be supplied on time. The S-400 is known as Russia's most advanced long-range surface-to-surface missile.



India has increased in speed, scale and scope of development, says PM Narendra Modi



Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday (January 5) inaugurated the natural gas pipeline from Kerala's Kochi to Mangaluru in Karnataka via video conferencing and said the project will have a 'positive impact' on the economic growth in the two southern states.

"This is an important day for India, especially for the people of Kerala and Karnataka. These two states are being connected by a natural gas pipeline," PM Narendra Modi said. He added that the pipeline will facilitate the ease of living for lakhs of people in both the states and also give a boost to the tourism sector.

PM Modi said he didn't wish to talk about the reasons behind the rate of India's progress in previous decades, adding, the country cannot develop slowly now. "In recent years, the country has increased its speed, scale, and scope of development," he said.

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said in a statement the 450km long pipeline built by GAIL (India) Ltd marks an important milestone towards the creation of 'One Nation One Gas Grid'. The Rs 3,000-crore project, which will carry natural gas from the Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) Regasification Terminal at Kochi to Mangaluru, while passing through Ernakulam, Thrissur, Palakkad, Malappuram, Kozhikode, Kannur and Kasaragod districts, has the transportation capacity of 12 million metric standard cubic metres per day, the statement added. Modi's office said over 1.2 million man-days of employment was generated during the construction of the pipeline. The pipeline will supply environment-friendly and affordable fuel in the form of piped natural gas (PNG) to households and compressed natural gas (CNG) to the transportation sector.

It will also supply natural gas to commercial and industrial units across the districts along the pipeline, PMO said. Consumption of cleaner fuel will help in improving air quality by curbing air pollution.

Salient feature

1. Natural gas pipeline network to be doubled in 5-6 yrs
2. CNG stations to be raised to 10,000 from current 1,500
3. Kochi-Mangaluru Natural Gas pipeline -- 450km pipelength, 12 MMSCMD capacity, Rs 3000 crore project cost
4. Facilitate convenient and environment friendly PNG to households & commercial units and CNG for transportation to 10 districts along the pipeline.
5. Drive self-reliance in India's energy landscape and help the goal of Atmanirbhar Bharat
6. Create large-scale opportunities for direct and indirect employment in the region.

NO RELIEF FROM RAIN IN DELHI-NCR, SECOND ROUND OF COLD WAVE FROM JANUARY 7



Rainfall in Delhi and its adjoining NCR continued on Tuesday morning. The effect of heavy snowfall in Jammu and Kashmir is also being seen in the national capital. The weather is expected to clear in Delhi from the afternoon of January 6, but there will be no relief from the cold. According to the Meteorological Department, from January 7, the second round of cold wave can begin in Delhi.

Rains started in Delhi on Saturday and the highest rainfall was recorded on Sunday. It also rained on Monday and the weather pattern remained the same on Tuesday. The night temperature was 11 to 12 degrees, which is 5 degrees above the average. The Meteorological Department has predicted that till the morning of January 6, Delhi-NCR weather will be cloudy and will clear only after the morning or afternoon. However, Delhiites may have to face the next round of cold wave. Experts say that a new Western Disturbance will be the reason for the next round of cold wave.

In the first four days of the year 2021, record rainfall has been witnessed. These four days received 39.8 mm of rain, the highest in the last two decades. Before this, 37.8 mm of rainfall was recorded in the year 2019 and 34.4 mm in the year 2020. There is a possibility of more rains in the coming two days. In January, the average rainfall of 19.3 millimetres of rainfall was crossed on January 3 in just one day. According to the Meteorological Department, there may be hailstorms in Delhi-NCR on Tuesday as well. Although the sky is expected to remain clear in many areas on Tuesday, there may also be dense fog in a few regions. Following the rains, there has been a decrease in pollution levels. According to Safar India, pollution levels in Delhi remained in the moderate category at 118 on Tuesday morning. The air quality index (AQI) was 132 in Lodhi Road, 118 in Noida and 1.4 in IIT Delhi.

UK PRIME MINISTER BORIS JOHNSON NOT COMING TO INDIA FOR REPUBLIC DAY



JOHNSON WAS INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THE REPUBLIC DAY CELEBRATIONS ON JANUARY 26 AS A CHIEF GUEST.

UK PM Boris Johnson called PM Modi and regretted that he would have to cancel his visit to India because of the serious Corona Virus related situation in the UK. Johnson was invited to take part in the Republic Day celebrations on January 26 as a chief guest. "The prime minister spoke to Prime Minister Modi this morning, to express his regret that he will be unable to visit India later this month as planned," a Downing Street spokesperson said. "In light of the national lockdown announced last night, and the speed at which the new coronavirus variant is spreading, the Prime Minister said that it was important for him to remain in the UK so he can focus on the domestic response to the virus," Johnson told PM Modi. Last month, the government had announced Johnson's intention to visit India as part of efforts to speed up talks on trade, with Britain in search of new bilateral deals after leaving the European Union. But Britain's COVID-19 crisis has since worsened with surging cases and hospital admissions at a new high, fuelled by the spread of a more transmissible variant of the virus. "The prime minister said that he hopes to be able to visit India in the first half of 2021, and ahead of the UK's G7 Summit that Prime Minister Modi is due to attend as a guest," the spokeswoman said. Johnson had on Monday ordered England into a new national lockdown

to contain a surge in COVID-19 cases that threatens to overwhelm parts of the health system before a vaccine programme reaches a critical mass. The announcement came just hours after the government hailed Britain's success in becoming the first country to begin rolling out the vaccine developed by Oxford University and AstraZeneca against COVID-19. Johnson said a new, more contagious variant of the coronavirus first identified in the United Kingdom and now present in many other countries was spreading at great speed and immediate action was needed to slow it down. "As I speak to you tonight, our hospitals are under more pressure from COVID than any time since the start of the pandemic," Johnson said in a televised address to the country. "With most of the country already under extreme measures, it's clear that we need to do more together to bring this new variant under control," he said. "We must therefore go into a national lockdown, which is tough enough to contain this variant. That means the government is once again instructing you to stay at home." Non-essential shops and hospitality would have to remain closed, while primary and secondary schools would close from Tuesday for all pupils except vulnerable children and those whose parents are key workers.

RAJASTHAN: THREE PEOPLE TEST POSITIVE FOR UK VARIANT OF COVID-19 IN SRIGANGANAGAR



A total of three persons have tested positive for the new UK variant of coronavirus in Rajasthan's Sriganganagar district, an official said on Monday. Three members of the same family - a husband, wife and their five-year-old child - have been found infected with UK strain in Hakmabad village of Sadulshahar in Sriganganagar. The three had returned from the UK on December 18 and were found positive on December 28. Thereafter, their samples were sent to Delhi for further testing which confirmed the new mutated strain. "Three persons have tested positive for the new UK variant of coronavirus. Their samples were sent to Delhi. All three have been shifted to the district hospital. Contact tracing and their sampling have been done. The area where they live has been sanitised," Hawaiian Singh, SDM Sriganganagar told ANI. A total of 38 samples have been found to be positive with the new UK variant genome of the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus, confirmed the Health Ministry on Monday. These persons have been kept in single room isolation in designated Health Care facilities by respective state gov-

ernments and their close contacts have also been put under quarantine. As per the experts, the new COVID-19 strain is more transmissible than other SARS-CoV-2 variants. On January 2, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) said India has successfully isolated and cultured the UK-variant of Sars-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19 disease. It is to mention that no other country has yet reported successful isolation and culture of the UK-variant of SARS-CoV-2, the ICMR informed. Meanwhile, three more Delhi residents tested positive for the new coronavirus strain as a result of door-to-door medical check-up of people who recently arrived from the United Kingdom and those who came in their contact in the city, an official said on Monday. With this, seven residents of the national capital have so far been found infected with the new coronavirus variant that has emerged in the UK. At present, 51 people, including those who recently returned from the UK and their contacts, have so far tested positive for COVID-19 and all have been kept in a separate isolation facility at Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Narayan Hospital (LNJP) Hospital.

COVID vaccine to be taken 28 days apart, antibodies will develop 2 weeks after last dose: AIIMS Director

As India gears up for the world's largest vaccination programme, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare addressed apprehensions expressed by the public regarding the COVID-19 vaccine's effectiveness, safety and availability, among others. In a video issued by the Health Ministry, Dr Randeep Guleria, Director of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) answered commonly asked questions regarding the dosage of the vaccine saying that two doses of the vaccine will have to be taken 28 days apart and protective levels of antibodies generally would develop two weeks after the second dose. He further informed that after all doses of the vaccine are administered, a QR-code based certificate will also be sent to the mobile number of the beneficiary and recommended that after vaccination, patients should take rest for at least 30 minutes. "If you feel any symptoms, any discomfort, please contact the nearest authorities like ANM, ASHA workers so that they can attend to the problem," Dr Guleria said, urging people to continue following COVID appropriate behaviours including wearing of masks and social distancing. The AIIMS Director also cautioned that the different COVID-19 vaccines are not interchangeable, and people should complete their entire schedule of vaccination by one type. Regarding vaccination of persons who actively had COVID-19, he recommended that they defer vaccination for at least 14 days after symptoms are resolved. "We do not know how effective the vaccine will be when one is already having active infection so for this reason, I believe that active and symptomatic individuals should defer vaccination for at least 14 days after symptoms are resolved," he said, adding that they may increase the risk of spreading the infection to others at the vaccination site. He further said that those who had recovered should also receive the complete schedule of the COVID-19 vaccine to help in a better immune response against the disease. "It is very important that individuals who have one or more comorbid conditions like cancer, diabetes, hypertension, etc, take the vaccine because they are actually high-risk groups. Their medicines will not interfere with the vaccine efficacy," he added.

5 POINTS: NO HEADWAY IN FARMER-CENTRE TALKS; NEXT ROUND ON JANUARY 8



The seventh round of talks between protesting farmers' unions and three central ministers ended inconclusively on Monday as the former insisted on the repeal of the three contentious farm laws right from the beginning, even as the government listed various benefits from the Acts. The next meeting will take place on January 8, farmer leaders said. Here are 5 points to explain what transpired in the seventh round of talks on Monday: Farmers adamant on repeal, we wanted to discuss laws clause-wise: Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar "We wanted farmer unions to discuss three laws clause-wise. We could not reach any solution as farmer union remained adamant on the repeal of the laws," Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar said after the meeting with farmers. Hopeful of meaningful discussion in next meet: Tomar "Looking at today's discussion, I hope that we will have a meaningful discussion during our next meeting and we will come to a conclusion," Tomar said. Will not accept amendments, want complete rollback of farm laws: Farmer leader The ministers wanted us to discuss the law point-wise. We rejected it and said that there is no point in discussing the laws because we want a complete rollback of the laws. Govt intends to take us towards amendments but we will not accept it: Yudhvir Singh, Bhartiya Kisan Union said after the seventh round of meeting with the Centre 7th round of meeting between farmers and Centre remains inconclusive The seventh round of talks between protesting farmers' unions and three central ministers ended inconclusively on Monday as the former insisted on the repeal of the three contentious farm laws right from the beginning, even as the government listed various benefits from the Acts. The next meeting will take place on January 8. Farmers refuse lunch with ministers Farmer representatives refused to share a meal with Union Ministers Narendra Singh Tomar, Piyush Goyal and Som Prakash during the seventh round of talks on Monday and said: "You eat your food and we will eat our food".

DCGI ALLOWS BHARAT BIOTECH TO CONDUCT VACCINE TRIALS ON CHILDREN ABOVE 12



Bharat Biotech's coronavirus vaccine 'Covaxin', which received emergency approval only in "clinical trial mode", has been approved for conducting trials on children above the age of 12 years by the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI). The vaccine has already been used on children above 12 in phase 1 and 2 trials and has been found safe. The Hyderabad-based firm is conducting Phase III trials. The vaccine is yet to complete late-stage human clinical trials in India. Oxford-AstraZeneca coronavirus vaccine 'Covishield', manufactured by Pune-based Serum Institute of India (SII) has been approved for those above the age of 18. The DCGI on Sunday gave its final approval to the Oxford-AstraZeneca and Bharat Biotech coronavirus vaccines for restricted use in an emergency situation, giving the country its first two shots for immunising its vast population in the coming weeks. Both the vaccines will be administered in two doses, the DCGI said. The approval by the DCGI was given on the basis of recommendations submitted by a coronavirus subject expert committee (SEC) of the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO). Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan had clarified yesterday that emergency approval for Covaxin is different from the one given for Covishield because Covaxin's use will be in clinical trial mode, which means, all its recipients will be tracked and monitored as if they are participating in a trial. Meanwhile, the BJP hit out at the Congress after some of its leaders questioned the approval process for Covaxin, with party president JP Nadda alleging that whenever India achieves something commendable the opposition comes up with "wild theories" to "ridicule" the accomplishments. Some Congress leaders, including Anand Sharma, Shashi Tharoor and Jairam Ramesh, raised serious concerns over the grant of approval to Covaxin, saying it is "premature" and can prove dangerous. Health Minister Vardhan said Bharat Biotech's vaccine is more likely to work against newer variants of coronavirus, including the UK variant, and asked politicians not to "discredit" the approval protocol. ICMR Director General Balram Bhargava also said Covaxin is based on an inactivated whole virus, having the potential to target mutated coronavirus strains including the UK variant, which was a major ground for giving it a conditional nod. Later on Sunday evening, the DCGI gave licensing permission to Bharat Biotech to manufacture Covaxin.

COVID-19: STRICTER LOCKDOWN RESTRICTION LIKELY ON THE WAY, SAYS UK PM BORIS JOHNSON



CASES OF COVID-19 IN BRITAIN ARE AT RECORD LEVELS AND INCREASING, FUELLED BY A NEW AND MORE TRANSMISSIBLE VARIANT OF THE VIRUS.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said on Sunday that tougher lockdown restrictions were probably on the way as COVID-19 cases keep rising, but that schools were safe places and children should continue to attend where permitted.

Cases of COVID-19 in Britain are at record levels and increasing, fuelled by a new and more transmissible variant of the virus. That has already forced the government to cancel the planned reopening of schools in and around London, with calls from teaching unions for wider closures. Much of England is already living under the toughest level of restriction set out in a four-tier system of regional regulations designed to stop the spread of the virus and protect the national healthcare system. But Johnson, asked in a BBC interview about concerns that the system may not be enough to bring the virus back under control, said that restrictions "alas, might be about to get tougher".

"There are obviously a range of tougher measures that we would have to consider ... I'm not going to speculate now about what they would be." Johnson sets policy for England, with rules in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales set by their devolved authorities.

Britain recorded 57,725 new cases of the virus on Saturday, and with more than 74,000 deaths so far during the pandemic the government's response has been heavily criticised.

However, the rollout of vaccines was set to accelerate on Monday with the first 530,000 doses of the newly approved Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccines ready to be administered, Johnson said. He added he hoped "tens of millions" would be treated over the next three months.

Addressing concerns over education, and with millions of pupils set to return from their Christmas holidays on Monday, Johnson said schools were safe, and advised parents to send their children in, in areas where rules allow it.

"There is no doubt in my mind that schools are safe, and that education is a priority," he said.

Amid rise in cases, UK approves Oxford-AstraZeneca coronavirus vaccines for use

Troubled by the new coronavirus strain and rapid increase in caseload, the UK on Wednesday approved the Oxford University-AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine for use after authorisation by the country's medicines regulator.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) concluded that the vaccine has met its strict standards of safety, quality and effectiveness. "The government has today accepted the recommendation from the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) to authorise Oxford University/AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine for use," the country's Health Ministry said. The UK has already vaccinated hundreds of thousands of patients with the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine and its rollout will continue. The National Health Service (NHS) in the UK will begin putting their extensive preparations into action to roll out the Oxford University/AstraZeneca vaccine, the government said.

PM MODI MOST POPULAR, GAINS HIGHEST APPROVAL RATINGS AMONG WORLD LEADERS: US SURVEY



Prime Minister Narendra Modi remained popular amid the COVID-19 pandemic and gained highest approval ratings among world leaders, according to a survey by a United States-based research firm.

The survey conducted by Morning Consult tracked the approval ratings of different leaders in their countries. In its results, the research firm showed that PM Modi had an approval rating of 55.

The survey, which was based on a seven-day moving average of adult citizens in the target countries, showed that the popularity of Australian PM Scott Morrison and Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador also rose during the coronavirus pandemic. As of December 22, the Australian PM had an approval rating of 27 and Mexico's President scored 29 in approval ratings. During his address on December 31 after laying the foundation stone of a new All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Rajkot, Gujarat, PM Modi said that India was preparing for the world's largest COVID-19 vaccination drive.

Rise of United Front in China: A super agency supervising Chinese intelligence and external affairs

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has been using a super system of a network of organisations and state agencies, collectively known as the united front system - administered by the United Front Work Department (UFW) of the Chinese government. The primary objective of the front is to work towards and fulfil Party's goals.

Over the years, the united front system has transcended the boundaries of Chinese territory and is currently delivering the duties of intelligence cum foreign affairs' organisation. The United Front system is primarily involved in ideological subversion and covert operations within and outside PRC. The UFW strengthens its influence by raising-up leaders from ethnic minority groups, religious movements, educational institutions, diaspora, society and political groups. All such organisations and stakeholders collectively constitute the united front system — a Chinese intelligence and propaganda network operating across the world.

CANADIAN GOVERNMENT URGED TO END WILDLIFE TRADE, PREVENT FUTURE PANDEMICS

As the world continues to reel from the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic - over one and a half million deaths, almost 75 million people sickened, long-term health effects, ruined businesses, and crashed economies, experts are asking what we can do to prevent the next one. There is an emerging consensus that banning the global wildlife trade would be a significant step.

HIV/AIDS, SARS, Ebola, and (now infamously) COVID-19 are some of the deadliest and most disruptive infectious diseases to have emerged in the last century. Like 75% of emerging infectious diseases today, these pathogens came from animals - mainly wild animals.

Humans would normally never find themselves in contact with the kinds of wild animals that carry deadly viruses, which often don't even sicken the carrier animal. But the booming, multi-billion dollar wildlife trade has brought humans into direct contact with bats, civets, pangolins, monkeys, apes, chimpanzees, and countless other species.

These poachers, hunters, and breeders may not know the health risk they are taking. Those who are aware do it because people are willing to pay a very high price for the animals or their parts. Regulation is lax or non-existent, domestically and internationally. Animals end up in markets, stacked in cages inches away from other species, creating conditions ripe for the spread of disease. While most Canadians consider this to be something more common in other countries, many



fail to realize that Canada has its own robust, and largely unregulated, trade in wildlife for fur, entertainment, and exotic pets. These animals

are sold online, in pet stores and exotic pet expos. Many are transported across the country in mobile petting zoos to schools, birthday parties, and long-term care homes, a situation that appalls some infectious disease experts.

"If we could do one thing to prevent the next pandemic, it should be to ban the global wildlife trade," says Melissa Matlow, Campaign Director with World Animal Protection Canada. "The trade in wild animals isn't just cruel. It puts everyone, everywhere at risk."

This is a global problem that requires a global solution. Every country has a role to play in curbing the wildlife trade.

Representatives of the organization have been hosting video meetings to brief Members of Parliament and push for change. They are calling on Canada to take measures to end the import and domestic trade in wild animals and wild animal products, and encourage other countries to do the same. A recent poll by Northstar Research Partners shows that Canadians are largely in favour of this.

World Animal Protection Canada has also launched a petition on its website, which has already been signed by over 50,000 Canadians. They join a million citizens globally who are calling on other G20 nations to act. Matlow is heartened by the receptiveness she is seeing to the message, but concrete action remains frustratingly slow.

"We are encouraged by the increasing support we're receiving from the public and MPs."

DUMP TRUCK DRIVERS BURIED BY REGULATIONS

After a difficult pandemic year, independent dump truck drivers are worried about their livelihoods and putting food on the table for their families.

Regulations that took effect Jan 1, require dump trucks manufactured prior to 2011 to undergo expensive retrofits (costing up to \$40,000), operate at significantly reduced capacity, or be taken off the road after 15 years of operation.

"This makes no sense since the average lifespan of a dump truck is 20 - 25 years," says the Ontario Dump Truck Association (ODTA). "Manufacturers began to use the new truck components starting in 2011. All trucks manufactured previously should have been grandfathered by the government for the full life span of the truck. It would've been like asking older car owners to install air bags - at a huge personal cost - after they were introduced."

The regulation only applies to four specific categories of trucks, used mainly in the construction industry: concrete trucks, water trucks, fuels trailers and dump trucks. Concrete trucks and fuel trailers have been given an exemption and allowed to operate for 20-25 years, while no load limits have been imposed on water trucks. Only dump trucks have not been accommodated.

"The Ministry claims this is a safety issue, but that's complete nonsense," says the ODTA. "Older trucks have been safely operating and will continue to be on the road for at least another decade given the special permits/exemptions granted by the government to other categories of trucks. There's simply no safety threat posed by dump trucks that operate at well supervised construction sites, for only

about 6-8 months a year, and at very low speeds. New technology should always be looked at and used, but it shouldn't render existing trucks obsolete. These are safe trucks that drivers have invested hundreds of thousands of dollars in, with the expectation that they will be able to use them for their entire life span, and earn a living."

The vast majority of the truck owners/operators are independent. They work hard every day to build roads, bridges, hospitals, homes and other essential infrastructure. The industry has been hit hard by COVID, but truckers have continued to work through the pandemic with about a 25% reduction in work and income. The new regulations will mean shortages, delays, longer build times and higher construction costs. The government continues to show their lack of knowledge of the industry by suggesting older trucks can operate at reduced capacity. "The reduced load they are permitting, amounts to about a one-third decrease in what our trucks can carry. Nobody will hire or use that truck. We'll be out of business," says Jaskarun Singh, an independent trucker.

A \$40,000 retrofit is simply beyond the reach of most independent truckers. "The government says we've had years to prepare - but we work to put food on the table. We don't have those kinds of funds to spend on something that should not have been required in the first place," says Craig Green, an independent trucker.

Finally, the government has not provided any support to the industry for retrofits and has only recently started informing operators of the enforcement measures starting Jan 1. In fact in 2016 the government assured the industry that no policy would move forward without the



consensus of the industry. There has been no meaningful consultation with groups that represent dump truck owners and numerous meeting requests by the ODTA were delayed or cancelled until the industry started protest actions.

The Ford government says they are pro small business and dedicated to keeping our economy moving. The ODTA is calling on them to come to the table and work toward practical solutions. They are asking all members of the public to contact their local MPP and Minister Caroline Mulroney to tell them to act on this issue.



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