

Federal Government introduces further restrictions on international travel



DETAILS ON PAGE 7

Canada Signs Deal With Novavax To Make Its Covid-19 Vaccine At New National Research Council Montreal Facility

Since the beginning of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of Canada has worked quickly to strengthen and expand our capacity to manufacture safe and effective vaccines, treatments, and related supplies across the country. This includes investing in made-in-Canada projects to protect Canadians from COVID-19 and ensure our country is well-positioned to fight future pandemics here at home.

The Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, today announced the government has signed a memorandum of understanding with Novavax to pursue the production of its COVID-19 vaccine at the National Research Council of Canada's Biologics Manufacturing Centre in Montréal.

The Prime Minister also announced investments to support vaccine, therapeutic, and biomanufacturing projects in Canada. These include:

Up to \$25.1 million to Precision NanoSystems Incorporated (PNI), a Vancouver-based biotechnology company, to expand our ability to produce ribonucleic acid vaccines and future genetic medicines in Canada. PNI will build a \$50.2 million biomanufacturing centre to produce vaccines and therapeutics for the prevention and treatment of diseases such as infectious diseases, rare diseases, cancer and other areas of unmet need. Up to \$14 million to Edesa Biotech Inc. (Edesa), a biopharmaceutical company based in Markham, Ontario, to advance work on a monoclonal antibody therapy for acute respiratory distress syndrome, which is the leading cause of COVID-19 deaths. Edesa's \$18.7 million projects have received Health Canada approval to conduct its phase 2 clinical trials and has begun administering its treatment to clinical trial participants in Canada. The Government of Canada will al-

ways rely on science- and evidence-based decision-making. This is why the investments and the actions of the government are informed by the recommendations of the COVID-19 Vaccine and Therapeutics Task Forces and COVID-19 Joint Biomanufacturing Subcommittee. We will continue to partner with Canadian industry and businesses to protect Canadians from COVID-19 and to build our biomanufacturing capacity as part of our recovery plan. Together, we can build a country that is healthier and safer for everyone.

Quotes

"Since the beginning of the pandemic, our top priority has been the health and safety of all Canadians. Today, we are investing in our biomanufacturing capacity so that we have the made-in-Canada vaccines and treatments we need to protect Canadians, now and in the future, and recover from the impacts of COVID-19."

The Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada

"Our government is bringing back the vaccine manufacturing capacity that Canadians expect and need. These investments will help to ensure that Canada has modern, flexible vaccine manufacturing capabilities now and in the future. With the investments announced today, our government is helping Canadian companies advance made-in-Canada vaccines and therapies, while securing domestic manufacturing options for international vaccine candidates. This is all part of our government's commitment to protect the health and safety of all Canadians today, and in the future."

The Hon. François-Philippe Champagne, Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry

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PRIME MINISTER JUSTIN TRUDEAU SPEAKS WITH UNITED STATES VICE PRESIDENT KAMALA HARRIS

OTTAWA: Today, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau spoke with United States Vice President Kamala Harris. The Prime Minister congratulated the Vice President on her historic election, and she recalled fondly her years spent in Montréal. The Prime Minister looked forward to working with the U.S. administration on shared priorities, including fighting the COVID-19 pandemic through close collaboration on borders and access to vaccines, and to building back better.



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FARM BILLS HAVE POTENTIAL TO REPRESENT SIGNIFICANT STEP FORWARD FOR AGRICULTURE REFORMS IN INDIA: IMF

The IMF believes the farm bills passed by the Indian government have the potential to represent a significant step forward for agricultural reforms, but a social safety net is needed to protect those who might be adversely impacted during the transition to the new system, a spokesperson of the global lender said here.



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SAVE MAX REAL ESTATE OPENS DOORS FOR ENTREPRENEURS WITHOUT LICENSE TO JOIN REAL ESTATE INDUSTRY

MISSISSAUGA, ONTARIO: Save Max has been in the real estate business since 2010 and ever since they have been innovating and giving real estate services that are cost effective and implemented for the long run. Save Max introduced the List Your Home for \$999 model wherein they promised and delivered incomparable full brokerage services for as low as \$999 - regardless of the value of the home with an objective to provide the best Real Estate services at an affordable price to the client.



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NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN FOR CITY OF BRAMPTON ACCESSIBILITY AWARDS

BRAMPTON- Nominations are now open for the City of Brampton's 2021 Accessibility Awards. The Accessibility Awards is a civic recognition program that recognizes individuals, businesses, and organizations in Brampton who demonstrate a commitment to accessibility and inclusion of people with disabilities.

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NEW FEDERAL INVESTMENT TOWARDS ACCESSIBLE PUBLIC TRANSIT INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE REGION OF PEEL

"Public transit connects our communities in Brampton and empowers residents to access the opportunities available to them. These investments are critical as modernizing our transit systems is a priority for all Bramptonians and something I hear about frequently. We are working hard to make our systems more accessible and more efficient than ever. These projects will also create jobs, stimulate economic growth, and make our community more resilient than ever." — Sonia Sidhu, Member of Parliament for Brampton South



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FEDERAL GOVERNMENT INTRODUCES FURTHER RESTRICTIONS ON INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

The Government of Canada continues to take unprecedented action to protect the health and safety of Canadians by introducing measures to prevent further introduction and transmission of COVID-19 and new variants of the virus into Canada. Today, the Government of Canada announced new rules on international travel, in addition to the multi-layered approach on COVID-19 already in place. The government and Canada's airlines have agreed to suspend all flights to and from Mexico and Caribbean countries until April 30, 2021.

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Y MEDIA COVID & VACCINE REPORT

LIVE



YUDHVIR JASWAL
(GROUP EDITOR - Y MEDIA GROUP)

HARKIRAT SINGH
(BRAMPTON CITY COUNCILLOR)

BALDEV MUTTA
(CEO - PUNJABI COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES)

DHARAMPAL SINGH
(FOUNDER OF DRUG AWARENESS SOCIETY OF ONTARIO)

TAJI OBEROI

DR. AMANPREET BRAR
(GENERAL SURGERY RESIDENT AT UofT)

Y MEDIA GROUP EDITOR AND CEO, YUDHVIR JASWAL, IN A LIVE SHOW ON CHANNEL Y WITH PANEL MEMBERS DISCUSSED ON COVID-19 - HOW THE COMMUNITY CAN STOP THE SPREAD OF COVID 19 IN CANADA, EFFECTS OF COVID 19 ON MENTAL HEALTH IN THE COMMUNITY, VACCINATION IN CANADA AND INCREASING NUMBER OF CANNABIS STORES IN GTA.

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FARMER UNIONS ANNOUNCE THREE-HOUR NATIONWIDE AGITATION ON FEB 6



FARMER UNIONS MONDAY ANNOUNCED A COUNTRYWIDE 'CHAKKA JAM' ON FEBRUARY 6 WHEN THEY WOULD BLOCK NATIONAL AND STATE HIGHWAYS FOR THREE HOURS.

US DEMOCRATS FILE BUDGET
RESOLUTION FOR COVID-19 RELIEF

WASHINGTON (IANS) US Democratic leaders have filed a joint budget resolution for the fiscal year 2021 that could pave the way for Congress to quickly pass President Joe Biden's \$1.9 trillion Covid-19 relief proposal, with or without help from the Republicans.

"Congress has a responsibility to quickly deliver immediate comprehensive relief to the American people hurting from Covid-19," House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said in a joint statement on Monday night.

"The cost of inaction is high and growing, and the time for decisive action is now. With this budget resolution, the Democratic Congress is paving the way for the landmark Biden-Harris coronavirus package that will crush the virus and deliver real relief to families and communities in need," the Democratic leaders said.

As Republicans have voiced opposition against Biden's relief proposal, the budget resolution would help Democrats push the relief proposal through the Senate with a simple majority, rather than the 60 votes needed for most legislation, according to local media.

The party breakdown in the Senate is 50-50 now, with Vice President Kamala Harris having the power to cast the tie-breaking vote to give Democrats the majority. Biden on Monday signalled that he would not back down from his demand for the \$1.9 trillion relief package named the 'American Rescue Plan', after a nearly two-hour meeting with a group of 10 Republican senators at the White House.

The package includes over \$400 billion to combat the pandemic directly such as more funding for testing and vaccine distribution; roughly \$1 trillion in direct relief to households; and over \$400 billion for hard-hit small businesses and communities.

"While there were areas of agreement, the President also reiterated his view that Congress must respond boldly and urgently and noted many areas which the Republican senators' proposal does not ad-



dress," White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said Monday night in a statement. "He reiterated that while he is hopeful that the Rescue Plan can pass with bipartisan support, a reconciliation package is a path to achieve that end," Psaki said, adding the President will not settle for a package that "fails to meet the moment".

A group of Republican senators led by Susan Collins from the state of Maine on Monday morning unveiled their \$618 billion Covid-19 relief proposal, falling short of Democrats' demands.

"It was a very good exchange of views. I wouldn't say that we came together on a package tonight. No one expected that in a two-hour meeting," Collins told reporters after the meeting with Biden.

"But what we did agree to do is to follow up and talk further at the staff level and amongst ourselves and with the President and Vice President on how we can continue to work together on this very important issue," Collins said.

China, EU hold high-level dialogue on environment, climate

BEIJING, (IANS) Chinese Vice Premier Han Zheng held the first High-level Environment and Climate Dialogue between China and the EU with Executive Vice President of the European Commission Frans Timmermans via video link.

Han, also a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, said China has vowed to peak its carbon dioxide emissions by 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality by 2060, which is a major announcement on its own climate and environmental policies, Xinhua news agency reported on Tuesday.

He said that in order to achieve these goals as scheduled, China needs to make extremely arduous efforts to promote energy conservation, emission reduction and low-carbon development.

The two sides should implement the consensus reached by both leaders, give full play to the leading role of the high-level dialogue, deepen China-EU environmental and climate pragmatic cooperation, and make green cooperation a new highlight and engine of China-EU comprehensive strategic partnership, said, Han.

The two sides should uphold multilateralism, safeguard the international system with the United Nations at the core, abide by the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, and promote the construction of a fair, reasonable, and win-win global environmental governance system said the vice-premier.

Noting that this year China will host the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP15) in



Kunming, Han said that China hoped to work together with the EU side to push the conference to achieve positive results, launch a new process of global biodiversity governance and promote the building of a shared future for all life on Earth.

Timmermans, for his part, highly appreciated China's positive position on climate change and other issues. He expressed a willingness to expand and deepen EU-China dialogue and cooperation in the field of environment and climate and give full play to the role of multilateral mechanisms.

MYANMAR MILITARY FREES REGIONAL, STATE CMS AFTER COUP

NAY PYI TAW, (IANS) A day after seizing control of the country, the military in Myanmar on Tuesday released a majority of the detained regional and state Chief Ministers, but there was no word on State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and President U Win Myint.

Confirming the development to Xinhua news agency, a military official said: "There may be a reshuffle among chief ministers by appointing qualified ones." MPs belonging to Suu Kyi's ruling National League for Democracy (NLD) party were also among the freed government official, the source added.

Hours after the coup, the military, known as the Tatmadaw, also announced a major cabinet reshuffle, under which there were new appointments for 11 Ministries, while 24 Deputy Ministers were removed.

The Union Chief Justice and Judges of the Supreme Court of the Union, Chief Justices and Judges of Regional or State High Courts are allowed to remain in office, according to a statement issued by the military.

Members of the Anti-Corruption Commission, Chairman, Vice Chairman and members of the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission will also remain in office. Chairmen and members of the Nay Pyi Taw Council and the Union Civil Service Board will be removed from their posts, while a new Chairman was appointed for the Union Civil Service Board, the statement said.

In an earlier release, the military also said that the Union Election Commission (UEC) will be reformed and ordered a review into the results of the disputed polls, noting that there were some irregularities in the voting process in the previous months. "When these tasks have been completed in accord with the provisions of the State of Emergency, free and fair multi-party general elections will be held and the assigned duty of the state will be handed over to the winning party meeting norms and standards of democracy." At present, access to state-run broadcasting channels and telecommunications have resumed after being cut off across the country earlier Monday.

The Military True News Information Team announced on Tuesday that all banks were open to provide customer services. Internet services have also been reactivated after they were suspended after the coup.

PAK SC ORDERS PEARL
MURDER ACCUSED TO BE
FREED FROM DEATH CELL

ISLAMABAD, (IANS) The Pakistan Supreme Court on Tuesday ordered the immediate release of Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh, the key accused in the 2002 kidnap and murder case of American journalist Daniel Pearl, from his death cell and be shifted to a government rest house.

On Tuesday, a three-judge bench of the apex court resumed the hearing of an appeal filed by the Sindh government against the Sindh High Court's (SHC) December 24, 2020, order to release Sheikh, The Express Tribune reported. The bench further directed to keep Sheikh at a better location in the jail in an open room for the two days before he is to be transferred to the rest house, where security will be provided.

The British-born Sheikh will, however, not be allowed to use a smartphone or the internet.

The bench also allowed his family to stay and visit at the rest house from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Before the apex court rejected the provincial government's appeal, the Sindh Advocate General (AG) told the bench that Sheikh's accomplices could attack the rest house and help him escape. Tuesday's development comes after the Supreme Court on January 28 decided to acquit and release the four accused persons in the case, including Sheikh.

The US has heavily criticized the decision, saying that it was prepared to prosecute Sheikh in Washington.

The 38-year-old South Asia bureau chief of The Wall Street Journal was doing research on religious extremism in Karachi when he was abducted in January 2002.

A graphic video showing his beheading was delivered to the US consulate a month later.

PRIME MINISTER JUSTIN TRUDEAU
SPEAKS WITH UNITED STATES VICE
PRESIDENT KAMALA HARRIS

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He also looked forward to strengthening the bilateral trading relationship and Canada-U.S. supply chains, and avoiding the unintended consequences of Buy America policies, for the benefit of people in both countries. The Prime Minister and the Vice President welcomed opportunities for Canada-U.S. cooperation in leading global action to fight climate change. The Prime Minister also highlighted the importance of strengthening North American energy security.

The Prime Minister and Vice President agreed on the centrality of democratic principles and respect for rule of law and justice as values that Canada and the U.S. share. They spoke of the need to increase trust in government through greater transparency and effective delivery of services. The Prime Minister and the Vice President discussed a wide range of issues, from promoting diversity and inclusion to the importance of mental health, as well as the need to address online hate, firearm trafficking, and gender-based violence.

Prime Minister Trudeau thanked Vice President Harris for the United States' ongoing support to free Canadians Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor, who have been arbitrarily detained in China. Both the Prime Minister and Vice President looked forward to the upcoming bilateral meeting between Prime Minister Trudeau and President Biden.

JAPAN'S EMERGENCY PERIOD BE
EXTENDED TO MARCH 7: PM

TOKYO, (IANS) Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga on Tuesday announced that he will extend the state of emergency for Tokyo and other regions hit hard by the Covid-19 pandemic by a month until March 7. "The number of new cases is falling. I think that measures targeted at eating and drinking have been effective," Suga said in Parliament. According to the Prime Minister, the extended emergency period will be applicable to 10 prefectures including Osaka, Aichi and Fukuoka, reports Xinhua news agency. Tochigi prefecture will not be subjected to the extension and will have the state of emergency lifted on February 7, as cases there have subsided drastically. Following an expert panel approving the one-month extension, the Japanese premier announced the move in Parliament, with the decision to be finalized later in the day by the government's expert coronavirus task force.

FARM BILLS HAVE POTENTIAL TO
REPRESENT SIGNIFICANT STEP FORWARD
FOR AGRICULTURE REFORMS IN INDIA: IMF

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Gerry Rice, Director of Communications at the International Monetary Fund (IMF), said the new measures will reduce the role of the middlemen and enhance efficiency. "We believe the farm bills do have the potential to represent a significant step forward for agricultural reforms in India," Mr. Rice said at a news conference in Washington on Thursday. "The measures will enable farmers to directly contract with sellers, allow farmers to retain a greater share of the surplus by reducing the role of middlemen, enhance efficiency and support rural growth," he said. "However, it is crucial that the social safety net adequately protects those who might be adversely impacted during the transition to this new system," the spokesperson said responding to a question on the ongoing protests by farmers against the laws in India. This can be done by ensuring that the job market accommodates those that are impacted by the reforms, he said. And of course, the growth benefits of these reforms will depend, critically, on the effectiveness and the timing of their implementation, so need to pay attention to those issues as well with the reform," Mr. Rice said. Thousands of farmers, mostly from Punjab and Haryana, have been camping at several Delhi border points, demanding a complete repeal of the three farm laws and legal guarantee of minimum support price for their crops. Enacted in September last year, the three laws have been projected by the Centre as major reforms in the agriculture sector that will remove middlemen and allow farmers to sell their produce anywhere in the country.

COVID-19: SAUDI ARABIA BANS ENTRY OF 20 COUNTRIES, INCLUDING INDIA



THE TEMPORARY BAN WILL ALSO APPLY TO TRAVELLERS WHO PASSED THROUGH THE 20 BANNED COUNTRIES DURING THE 14 DAYS PRECEDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BAN, SAUDI ARABIA'S INTERIOR MINISTRY SAID.

SAVE MAX REAL ESTATE OPENS DOORS FOR ENTREPRENEURS WITHOUT LICENSE TO JOIN REAL ESTATE INDUSTRY

Opportunity to Operate and Function as a Real Estate Franchise for non-licensed professionals

CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

They also stood true to their motto 'Sell Max with Save Max' and brought a lot of trust with their clientele. Over the years Save Max kept moderating their business model to meet the business needs and kept introducing innovative solutions to the market.

Real estate is one of the biggest industries in Canada, therefore a lot of investors and business minded people are driven to it. When most people think about transitioning to real estate, the first thing that comes to mind is taking a Real Estate License. With all the education and licensing requirements, however, that can seem quite discouraging and many a times people refrain from joining this industry because of this reason. At Save Max we feel that to be a part of this dynamic and ever-growing industry you should not be dependent on a Real Estate License. As always, we have come up with a process to overcome the challenge and introduced an innovative solution for anyone who wants to live a Sudo life of a Realtor at Save Max. Save Max has come up with FOCO (Franchisee owned & Corporate Operated) model wherein you can own a real estate Franchise without a real estate or broker license. Your franchise will operate just like any other real estate franchise with Realtors® and Brokers working and you operating as an owner for the same and contributing towards the Business Development of the Franchise.

Sachin Gupta, COO Save Max Group of Companies and Owner of Save Max Supreme Real Estate mentions, "When you buy a franchise with any fast-food brand, you don't necessarily need to cook



inside, you can hire people to do your tasks. Save Max is doing the same, we are bringing you the brand Save Max which is established in the real estate market and helping you through the business by taking care of the technical aspects of things."

Save Max will extend support right from marketing the franchise you own to training your people and managing all administrative tasks for you. All you need to do is, get into the roller-coaster and enjoy the real estate experience. Despite COVID, 2020 saw a huge influx of interest in real estate and is said to be rapidly cultivating careers for people who seek that kind of entrepreneurship in Canada. With the commencement of the FOCO model, Raman Dua, President & CEO at Save Max Real Estate, says, "I am overwhelmed with the response we received when we went to Vancouver early last week. We received so much love and support from people. We love the enthusiasm that we see, and we are very hopeful to see bright entrepreneurs taking the baton of Save Max to nooks and corners of Canada. We are soon going international as well and I am extremely elated to introduce this unique business model we have created in the real estate world."

Kamal Tomar, Director of Franchise Operations & Hiring says, "Save

INDIAN BUDGET TO PROVIDE FINANCIAL SUPPORT WORTH RS 6450 CR TO 10 COUNTRIES IN THE REGION

India will be providing financial assistance in form of grants and loans worth Rs 6458.95 cr to 10 countries in the region, budget documents have announced. The highest assistance goes to Bhutan on expected lines, with New Delhi announcing Rs 3004.5 cr to the country - Rs 2124.20 cr in form of grant and Rs 880.75 cr in form of loan. The Second highest amount goes to Nepal at Rs 992 cr, followed by the Indian ocean Island country of Mauritius at Rs 900 cr. Afghanistan, where India has a history of building mega projects like India Afghanistan friendship dam in Herat, Afghan Parliament gets Rs 350 cr. Maldives got Rs 250 cr, while Myanmar got Rs 400 cr. Both Bangladesh and Sri Lanka got Rs 200 cr while Seychelles got Rs 160 cr and Mongolia Rs 2 cr. India has been involved in number of development and Infrastructure and capacity building projects in the region.

Focus increasingly has been on connectivity projects as well. The Chabahar project has been given Rs 100 cr, and the same amount it got last year. When it comes to Africa, New Delhi has kept aside Rs 300 cr, for Eurasian countries Rs 100 cr, a significant increase from Rs 40 cr last financial year and for Latin America Rs 40 cr. Around half of the Ministry of External Affairs' budget goes in the assistance. The budget for MEA for the Financial year 2020-21 stands at Rs 18154.73 cr.



US MAKES MASKS ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT MANDATORY



WASHINGTON, (IANS) The US has made it mandatory for everyone to wear masks while using public transportation as part of a national strategy to curb the spread of Covid-19.

The mandate, which went into effect at 11.59 p.m. on Monday, makes refusal to wear a mask a violation of federal law, enforced by the Transportation Security Administration and other federal, state and local authorities, reports Xinhua news agency.

The rule, issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), applies to passengers on airplanes, trains, subways, buses, taxis and ride-shares.

It also extends to waiting areas such as airports, train platforms and subway stations.

The mandate builds on an order announced by President Joe Biden who on his first day in office unveiled a national strategy in order to change the course of the Covid-19 crisis in the country, currently the hardest-hit in the world.

A year into the pandemic, Americans have still not come to a uniform consensus on mask-wearing, which public health experts say is among the most effective means of stemming the virus spread.

As of January 29, about 10 states remained without a mask mandate. The pandemic has so far infected a total of 26,307,963 people across the US and killed 443,186 others, according to the Johns Hopkins University's latest update on Tuesday morning.

Health experts have attributed the country's failure to control the virus to political polarization, a rejection of science and an absence of a national strategy under the former Donald Trump administration.

January 2021 has been by far the deadliest month of the pandemic in the country, with over 95,000 Covid-19 deaths, surpassing December's total of over 77,000 deaths, according to Johns Hopkins University.

PANESAR INVITES RIHANNA TO TALK ON INDIAN FARMERS' PROTEST



LONDON, (IANS) Former England left-arm spinner Monty Panesar, who played a key role in helping England beat hosts India in the 2012-13 series, has invited pop star, Rihanna, to talk on the ongoing farmers' agitation in India after the Barbadian tweeted support for it.

"It would be an honour to interview you @panjabradio_ @AsianFXRadio on my show 'The Full Monty' this Saturday to talk about farmers issues in India," tweeted 38-year-old Panesar in reply to Rihanna's tweet.

The 32-year-old singer's 'work' had earlier tweeted an article from CNN headlined, "India cuts internet around New Delhi as protesting farmers clash with police" and wrote on her timeline, "why aren't we talking about this?!" #FarmersProtest."

Panesar also retweeted the article. The spinner, who played 50 Tests, took 167 wickets with a best of 11/210 at an average of 34.71. That spell came against India in the Mumbai Test in 2012-13 that England won by 10 wickets.

Panesar captured 36 wickets, including 17 in three Tests in the 2012-13 series, in 11 Tests against India. The visiting England team shocked India to win the 2012-13 series 2-1.

Nominations now open for City of Brampton Accessibility Awards

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Nominations are evaluated based on achievements and contributions made in the following areas:

Preventing and removing barriers – the nature of the barrier may be attitudinal, communicative, physical, programmatic, social, or related to transportation or a policy.

Accommodating persons with disabilities – an accommodation may involve the modification of a space, schedule or task that enables someone to participate in the community.

Acting as an accessibility ambassador or champion – promoting accessibility awareness within the community.

Providing employment support for persons with disabilities – creating opportunities to participate in the work environment.

Providing exemplary accessible customer service – taking time to understand the customer's request and offer an appropriate solution.

Providing assistance for independent living – assisting with skills training and support.

New this year, the awards program has been updated to include self-nominations.

In order to be eligible for an award, a nominee must be a resident of Brampton, a community or non-profit organization operating in Brampton, or a business owner in Brampton. The achievements and contributions of nominees must benefit the Brampton community. Nominations will be accepted until March 31. Awards will be presented in the spring. For more information on the Accessibility Awards and the online nomination form, residents can visit www.brampton.ca.

WORLD TEST CHAMPIONSHIP: INDIA MUST BEAT ENG BY 2-TEST MARGIN TO ENTER FINAL



NEW DELHI, (IANS) Host India needs to win at least two Test matches against the visiting England to qualify for the final of the World Test Championship (WTC) against New Zealand in June. A drawn series with England or even a 1-0 win by India, however, could pave the way for Australia to enter the final. New Zealand was guaranteed a place in the WTC final after Cricket Australia on Tuesday decided to postpone their tour of South Africa. Post this development, the International Cricket Council (ICC) tweeted permutations and combinations for teams needed to qualify for the final.

India now needs to beat England in the four-Test series by one of the following margins: 2-0, 2-1, 3-0, 3-1 or 4-0. If they do that, they will enter the final.

For England, any of the following margins will guarantee them a place in the final against New Zealand: 3-0, 3-1, 4-0.

However, Australia enters the final if India wins by just a margin of 1-0. They also qualify if England wins by 1-0, 2-0 or 2-1. A 0-0, 1-1 or 2-2 draw could also see Australia make the final against New Zealand. "All to play for in the upcoming India v England series with three teams able to meet New Zealand in the final of the inaugural ICC World Test Championship!" the ICC tweeted on Tuesday.



FORD GOVERNMENT UPDATES VACCINATION GOAL AMID VACCINE DELAYS & REDUCED SHIPMENT

TORONTO — Ongoing vaccine delays and reduced shipments have forced the Ontario government to update its goal of completing the administration of first doses of COVID-19 vaccines to residents in each long-term care, high-risk retirement and First Nations elder care home to February 10. Amidst these delays, vaccination teams will be distributing vaccines in First Nations fly-in communities in the north as part of Operation Remote Immunity, beginning this week. Details were provided today by Premier Doug Ford, Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health, Solicitor General Sylvia Jones, and General Rick Hillier (retired), Chair of the COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Task Force. “While it’s disappointing that vaccine supplies are being delayed, General Hillier and his team are doing a fantastic job of getting vaccines into the arms of our seniors and those who care for them, and now to remote First Nations communities,” said Premier Ford. “It’s clear we need to start production of COVID vaccines here in Canada, and I will continue pushing for that to begin as quickly as possible. In the meantime, we are continuing to build our capacity so when we receive enough supply for mass vaccinations, we will be ready.” Last week, Ontario developed a plan to accelerate vaccination of the most vulnerable populations across Ontario with the goal of visiting each long-term care, high-risk retirement, and First Nations elder care home in the province to administer first doses by February 5, 2021, pending this week’s delivery dates. Since that time, the federal government has confirmed Ontario’s allocation of the Moderna vaccine will be significantly reduced by 18,200 doses, to 63,400 doses. With the reduced shipment anticipated to be received late this week, doses will be delivered to public health units across Ontario to ensure residents of these homes are offered their first dose by February 10, 2021.

The decrease in the supply of the Moderna vaccine is in addition to further reductions in Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine shipments from the federal government, which resulted in no deliveries for the week of January 25, 2021, and a reduced shipment of just over 26,000 doses for the first week of February.

The province’s initial approach was to offer vaccination to all residents, staff and essential caregivers working at long-term care and high-risk retirement homes to provide the opportunity for the best overall protection. In response to the reduction in vaccine supply, the province prioritized the vaccination of residents of long-term care, high-risk retirement and First Nations elder care homes.

The province is expecting approximately 310,000 doses to be delivered in the remaining weeks of February. Once sufficient doses are available, vaccinations will resume providing first doses for staff and essential caregivers in settings with the most vulnerable populations.

“Despite limited supplies from the federal government, our govern-

ment has taken decisive action to provide protection to our most vulnerable seniors as quickly as possible,” said Minister Elliott. “Until everyone can receive the vaccine, it remains critical that Ontarians stay home and continue to follow public health measures to stop the spread and save lives.”

In addition to prioritizing the vaccination of First Nations elder care home residents, Ontario continues to implement its vaccination plan for northern, remote First Nations communities. Ornge, Ontario’s provider of air ambulance and critical care transport services, is providing the vaccine to community members 18 years of age or older in 31 Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) fly-in communities and Moosonee over the next three months. This week, vaccination teams will be providing the Moderna vaccine in Neskantaga, Slate Falls, Muskrat Dam, Fort Severn, Kashechewan and Webequie. Planning for vaccine distribution to additional First Nations communities and to urban Indigenous populations is underway through the ongoing and regular engagement of the First Nations and Urban Indigenous Vaccine Distribution Sub-Tables, respectively.

The province also continues to protect access to second doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for those who have already received their first dose.

“Our government’s vaccine distribution plan continues to focus on getting the vaccine to those who need it most,” said Solicitor General Sylvia Jones. “Despite the supply challenges, we are forging ahead with our plan to protect Ontarians, starting with our most vulnerable populations which includes remote First Nations communities.”

Quick Facts

As of February 1 at 8:00 p.m., over 344,000 vaccine doses have been administered across the province, including over 91,000 doses administered to long-term care staff and retirement home staff, over 138,000 doses administered to health care workers and over 90,000 doses administered to long-term care and retirement home residents. To protect access to second doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for those who have already received their first dose, Ontario will maintain the maximum interval of 21-27 days for long-term care, retirement and First Nations elder care home resident groups. For all other groups, second dose appointments will be 35 days after the administration of the first dose, and no later than 42 days. These intervals are aligned with guidance provided by the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI). The intervals will be adjusted down to 21-27 days as quickly as possible, once vaccine supply permits.

Ontario is ready to administer the COVID-19 vaccine and expand the number of vaccination sites as soon as doses are received. The province has the capacity to vaccinate nearly 40,000 people per day and is building to triple or quadruple that capacity pending federal government supply.

Brampton’s first electric bus arrives, getting ready for the road this spring

BRAMPTON, ON — Today, the City of Brampton welcomed Brampton’s first Nova Bus electric bus to Brampton Transit’s Sandalwood Facility. This Nova Bus is the first of eight battery electric buses that will be on Brampton’s roads in spring 2021.

Over the next few months, the second Nova Bus and six buses from New Flyer will arrive at Brampton Transit’s Sandalwood Facility for the largest single global deployment of standardized and fully interoperable battery electric buses and high-powered overhead on-route charging systems - three by ABB Inc. and one by Siemens Canada Limited.

“This is a very exciting development in the milestone Pan-Canadian Battery Electric Bus Demonstration and Integration Trial in Brampton,” said Mayor Patrick Brown. “Brampton is a Green City and we are proud to collaborate with CUTRIC and various project partners to further enhance the sustainability and connectedness of our transit network through this global-first electric bus project.”

The breakthrough battery electric buses with zero tailpipe emissions will be launched on two existing conventional routes in Brampton: routes 23 Sandalwood and 26 Mount Pleasant. The four high-powered (450 kWh) overhead pantograph on-route charging stations will be launched at the Mount Pleasant Village terminal, the Queen Street/Highway 50 Zum station and the Sandal-

Ontario Continues Accelerated Vaccinations

TORONTO — Ongoing vaccine delays and reduced shipments have forced the Ontario government to update its goal of completing the administration of first doses of COVID-19 vaccines to residents in each long-term care, high-risk retirement and First Nations elder care home to February 10. Amidst these delays, vaccination teams will be distributing vaccines in First Nations fly-in communities in the north as part of Operation Remote Immunity, beginning this week.

Details were provided today by Premier Doug Ford, Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health, Solicitor General Sylvia Jones, and General Rick Hillier (retired), Chair of the COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Task Force. “While it’s disappointing that vaccine supplies are being delayed, General Hillier and his team are doing a fantastic job of getting vaccines into the arms of our seniors and those who care for them, and now to remote First Nations communities” said Premier Ford. “It’s clear we need to start production of COVID vaccines here in Canada, and I will continue pushing for that to begin as quickly as possible. In the meantime, we are continuing to build our capacity so when we receive enough supply for mass vaccinations, we will be ready.”

Last week, Ontario developed a plan to accelerate vaccination of the

wood Transit Facility.

“Brampton City Council is committed to reducing our city’s carbon footprint,” said Paul Vicente, Regional Councillor, Wards 1 & 5, and Chair of Public Works and Engineering. “We are on a journey to reduce greenhouse gas emissions generated in Brampton by 80 per cent by 2050. These buses will save approximately 235 tonnes of CO2 per year, per bus.”

The eBuses are battery-powered by electricity, with electric motors, no transmission and zero tailpipe emissions, and each bus takes just three to seven minutes to charge fully.

“The eBus pilot project is an important milestone in our commitment to the Community Energy and Emissions Reduction Plan (CEERP) to reduce our contributions to global climate change and build a better future,” said Doug Whillans, City Councillor, Wards 2 & 6; Member, CEERP Community Task Force and Brampton’s representative at the Global Covenant of Mayors on Climate Change. “Brampton is a leader in sustainability.”

“The Brampton Transit team is working hard to get the buses and training ready to be in service later this spring,” said Alex Milojevic, General Manager, Brampton Transit. “This is the first step in electrifying our fleet and for the duration of the pilot project, all eight electric buses and four chargers will be identified with a new branding design.”

of Most Vulnerable Despite Vaccine Delays

most vulnerable populations across Ontario with the goal of visiting each long-term care, high-risk retirement, and First Nations elder care home in the province to administer first doses by February 5, 2021, pending this week’s delivery dates. Since that time, the federal government has confirmed Ontario’s allocation of the Moderna vaccine will be significantly reduced by 18,200 doses, to 63,400 doses. With the reduced shipment anticipated to be received late this week, doses will be delivered to public health units across Ontario to ensure residents of these homes are offered their first dose by February 10, 2021.

The decrease in supply of the Moderna vaccine is in addition to further reductions in Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine shipments from the federal government, which resulted in no deliveries for the week of January 25, 2021, and a reduced shipment of just over 26,000 doses for the first week of February.

The province’s initial approach was to offer vaccination to all residents, staff and essential caregivers working at long-term care and high-risk retirement homes to provide the opportunity for best overall protection. In response to the reduction in vaccine supply, the province prioritized the vaccination of residents of long-term care, high-risk retirement and First Nations elder care homes.

NEW FEDERAL INVESTMENT TOWARDS ACCESSIBLE PUBLIC TRANSIT INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE REGION OF PEEL



“Public transit connects our communities in Brampton and empowers residents to access the opportunities available to them. These investments are critical as modernizing our transit systems is a priority for all Bramptonians and something I hear about frequently. We are working hard to make our systems more accessible and more efficient than ever. These projects will also create jobs, stimulate economic growth, and make our community more resilient than ever.”

— Sonia Sidhu, Member of Parliament for Brampton South

BRAMPTON - The Honourable Catherine McKenna, Canada’s Minister of Infrastructure and Communities has announced federal funding for two projects that will modernize and improve accessibility for public transit in the Region of Peel. The Government of Canada is investing more than \$3.5 million in these projects through the Public Transit Infrastructure Stream (PTIS) of the Investing in Canada plan.

One project involves the replacement of existing specialized transit buses with 69 new, specialized, 8-metre buses as the current fleet reaches the end of its planned service lifecycle. The new propane-powered buses, with side-mounted lift, will provide accessible transit in Brampton, Mississauga, and Caledon, and are capable of carrying as many as six wheelchair passengers.

The second project involves the adoption of the PRESTO electronic fare collection system across the Regional Municipality of Peel’s TransHelp fleet. This project includes the design, planning, purchase and hardware installation of up to 145 portable, tablet-based, electronic payment units.

These projects will result in increased capacity, and improved quality, safety and access to the public transit system in the Region of Peel, including Brampton South.

PREMIER FORD HONOURS MEMORY OF THOSE LOST IN TRAGIC MOSQUE SHOOTING

TORONTO: Premier Doug Ford issued the following statement to commemorate the anniversary of the tragic shooting at the Islamic Cultural Centre in Quebec City:

“Today, we join the Muslim community in Ontario and across the country in honouring the memory of the victims who were murdered in a senseless act of terrorism and violence at the Islamic Cultural Centre in Quebec City four years ago.

We grieve with their families and members of their community as they continue to struggle with this tragic loss. We stand together with them and renew our commitment to defending our fundamental right as Canadians to worship freely. Our government believes every person has the right to practise their faith free of violence and fear.

Islamophobia and hate have no place in our society. May we continue to stand united in our desire to build a more open and inclusive province for all.”

CANADA INVESTS IN ACCESSIBLE PUBLIC TRANSIT INFRASTRUCTURE FOR RESIDENTS IN BRAMPTON

Brampton: Ms. Ruby Sahota, Member of Parliament for Brampton North reconfirms that the safety and well-being of Canadians are top priorities of the Federal Liberal Government. “Investments in infrastructure during this extraordinary time provides an opportunity to create jobs, stimulate economic growth, and to make our communities more inclusive and resilient,” said MP Sahota. “That is why, our government is taking decisive action to help families, businesses and communities like Brampton as they adapt to the realities of the COVID-19 pandemic. My residents of Brampton need safe and reliable public transit to get to work and home, to appointments, to shop for essentials, and to conduct business. Strategic investments in accessible public transportation infrastructure play a key role in delivering this service.”

Last week, The Honourable Catherine McKenna, Canada’s Minister of Infrastructure and Communities announced funding for two projects that will modernize and improve accessibility for Peel Region’s public transit system. The Government of Canada is investing more than \$3.5 million in these projects through the Public Transit Infrastructure Stream (PTIS) of the Investing in Canada plan. The Government of Ontario is providing close to \$3 million, and the Region of Peel is contributing more than \$2.3 million. One project involves the replacement of existing specialized transit buses with 69 new, specialized, 8-metre buses as the current fleet reaches the end of its planned service lifecycle. The new propane-powered buses, with side-mounted lift, will provide accessible transit in Brampton, Mississauga, and Caledon, and are capable of carrying as many as six wheelchair passengers.



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“We need to screen every single person who's coming into the country and into Ontario for these new variants for the sake of our long-term care homes, schools and hospitals.”

- PREMIER DOUG FORD



Canada Signs Deal With Novavax To Make Its Covid-19 Vaccine At New National Research Council Montreal Facility

CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

“Our government is working with domestic suppliers, partnering with leading international vaccine developers, and building biomanufacturing capacity to secure safe and effective vaccines for Canadians. These investments are a great complement to our diverse portfolio of seven agreements, and will further ensure Canada’s access to vaccines for COVID-19 and future pandemics.” The Hon. Anita Anand, Minister of Public Services and Procurement

“We are working hard to ensure Canadians have access to safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines and treatments. Through these partnerships, we are supporting and partnering with innovative Canadian companies – something that will help keep Canadians safe and healthy”

The Hon. Patty Hajdu, Minister of Health

Quick Facts

Canada has already approved vaccines to prevent COVID-19, which are being distributed across the country. The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine was approved by Health Canada on December 9, 2020, and the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine was approved

on December 23, 2020.

The memorandum of understanding with Novavax enables the government to pursue options to produce the Novavax COVID-19 vaccine at the National Research Council’s Biologics Manufacturing Centre in Montréal, once both the vaccine candidate and the facility receive Health Canada approvals. Novavax recently initiated the rolling submission process for regulatory approval to Health Canada. The Government of Canada currently has an agreement with Novavax to purchase up to 76 million doses of the Novavax COVID-19 vaccine candidate. Precision NanoSystems Incorporated is a global leader in innovative solutions for the discovery, development, and manufacturing of nanomedicines to treat infectious diseases and cancer. Its project proposal was reviewed by the COVID-19 Joint Biomanufacturing Subcommittee.

Once the biomanufacturing centre is completed, targeted for March 2023, PNI will have the capacity to produce up to 240 million doses of its self-amplifying ribonucleic acid (RNA) COVID-19 vaccine every year. PNI will create and maintain up to 125 highly-skilled jobs and invest \$120 million in research and development in Canada, thanks in part to today’s investment by the Government of Canada.

ONTARIO’S COVID-19 CASES SEE DOWNWARD TREND

POOJA LUTHRA

Ontario’s second provincial Emergency and stay-at-home order extended till Feb. 9 has finally resulted in the decline of Covid-19 cases. The new modelling also indicated a downward trend in cases and positivity rate. The Health Ministry today reported 1,563 new cases of Covid-19 and 88 additional deaths. The positivity rate was recorded at 2.6 per cent, which was the lowest since late October. Locally, there were 584 cases in Toronto, 265 in Peel, 132 in York Region, 78 cases in Hamilton, 58 cases in Halton and 34 cases in Durham. Ontario reported 1,172 cases of COVID-19 on Wednesday and 745 on Tuesday. Both counts were impacted by a significant transition in data management systems at several public health units, including Toronto. At present, COVID-19 cases are expected to drop between 1,000-2,000 by the end of February, but that could change as the new variant takes hold, Dr. Adalsteinn Brown, co-chairman of the advisory table, said at a news conference. Even the strain on hospitals, especially ICUs, has reduced. There are currently 1,101 people in hospitals getting treated for Covid-19, including 323 in intensive care units. On Feb. 3, the Ministry of Health said 1,066 people in the hospital for COVID-19 treatment, down from at least 1,382 one week ago. In the province, 6,393 people have lost their lives due to Covid-19, including 379 deaths in the past week. There are 16,330 active cases, and the total number of cases stands at 273,660.

PEEL POLICE SERVICES BOARD APPOINTS CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

BRAMPTON - Mississauga resident Ahmad Attia was elected as Chair of the Peel Police Services Board at its January Board meeting. At the same meeting, Brampton resident Ron Chatha was elected Vice-Chair. Both the Chair and Vice-Chair are elected by their colleagues at the first Board meeting each year. Ahmad Attia was appointed to the Police Services Board on May 23, 2019 as the citizen appointee for the Region of Peel. Ahmad was born and raised in Mississauga where he and his wife continue to live and raise their three children. Ahmad is a businessman and entrepreneur who has dedicated his life, professionally and through his volunteerism, to advancing community and social causes. With over 15 years of experience, Ahmad currently serves as CEO of Incisive Strategy where he has demonstrated deep expertise in crisis management, public affairs and risk management. Ahmad is a respected community advocate and human rights activist in Canada and internationally. He currently serves on the board of the Muslim Council of Peel. Through his volunteer work he dedicates his time to supporting youth mentorship, relief work, civic engagement and community projects. “I am humbled and honoured to be elected Chair of the Peel Police Services Board. I want to thank my colleagues on the Board for their confidence and support, and for allowing me the opportunity to serve in this important role,” said Attia. “The Board will continue to focus on community safety and wellbeing and keeping our communities safe through this pandemic.” Chatha, who served as Chair of the Board in 2020, was appointed to serve as a provincial representative on the Board in January 2019 for a period of 3 years. Ron has been a Realtor since 2008 and is currently working for a leading real estate firm in Peel Region. Outside of real estate, Ron has a lengthy history of serving his community. Passionate about community service, Ron is an active volunteer and is serving on many not-for-profit boards. He is serving as a board member for the Peel Children’s Aid Foundation and has also served on Brampton’s School Traffic Safety Council.

The City of Brampton releases 2020 Term of Council Priorities highlights and Council approves sharpened focus on 16 key priorities for 2021-2022

BRAMPTON – Yesterday, the City of Brampton released an update on its advancement of the 2018-2022 Term of Council Priorities in 2020, highlighting key achievements over the past year amid the pandemic.

As a result of interviews conducted with the Mayor and Members of Council, feedback captured from senior leadership, and a polling exercise performed at Council Workshop in November 2020, Council yesterday approved 16 initiatives (pg.162) as top priorities for Council in support of the community. The priorities are divided into two streams: Intergovernmental/Advocacy Priorities; and City Mandated/Controlled Priorities, all of which continue to support Brampton’s established strategic directions.

COVID-19 created unforeseen conditions and challenges requiring staff to adapt quickly and shift in the delivery of programs and services. In spite of this, the City continued to move forward in key areas while balancing its COVID-19 response and recovery:

Brampton is a City of Opportunities

The City of Brampton continued to improve livability and support businesses by:

Providing \$233,000 in grant funding to small businesses

Engaging more than 5,000 participants through 137 virtual events and seminars

Providing 1,043 client consultations, including the creation of 38 new businesses and 82 business expansions through the Brampton Entrepreneur Centre

Launching four new partners in the Innovation District to enhance economic presence in Downtown Brampton

Brampton is a Mosaic

The City continued to celebrate Brampton’s diversity and champion inclusion through:

Investing \$435,561 in the Advance Brampton Fund, supporting 48 digital projects for non-profits

Established Black African and Caribbean Social, Cultural and Economic Empowerment and Anti-Black Racism Unit, and approved launch of an Equity Office in 2021 with a focus on identifying and removing barriers in the workplace and community

Hosting Fire Services Career Info Session for the Black Community with record participation of 900 attendees

Renaming two City parks, Purple Lilac Memorial Park and Emancipation Park with a focus on safety and inclusion

Brampton is a Green City

The City focused on innovation, energy efficiency, public transit and revitalizing natural spaces by:

Launching its first-ever Backyard Garden program, attracting more than 6,000 participants, growing 10,000 lbs donated to local food banks

Introducing its Community Energy & Emissions Reduction Plan to reduce green house gases

Securing \$83.1M in funding to advance Transit projects; and \$38M for its Riverwalk project to advance flood mitigation

Approving plans for Transit’s third facility, a fully electric transit maintenance and storage facility

Brampton is a Healthy and Safe City

The City helped improve community safety, enhance mental health supports and encourage active and healthy lifestyles through:

Installing 26 Automated Speed Enforcement Cameras in Community Safety Zones across Brampton

Opening four new outdoor skating rinks to ensure residents could safely keep active in winter months

Completing enhancements to fitness amenities like recreation centres, parks and fields

Constructing 26 kms of bike lanes to promote active transportation throughout the city

Brampton is a Well-Run City

The City of Brampton continued to prioritize service excellence and being a Well-Run City in the face of the pandemic through:

Freezing taxes for the third consecutive year with a record contribution to reserves, while delivering key services to residents

Maintaining a triple AAA credit rating, the highest rating a municipality can receive for sound fiscal practices

Being an early adopter of Mobi Inspect, an app to inspect facilities

Advocating for and securing financial relief of \$34.9M (Phase 1 Safe Restart Program), \$27.5M (Phase 2 Safe Restart Program) and \$0.6M (Municipal Transit Enhanced Cleaning Fund)

Being named by Forbes as one of Canada’s Best Employers, in a list of the 300 top employers across the country

For more information about the highlights and achievements for 2020 within the 2018-2022 Term of Council Priorities visit www.brampton.ca/tocp

Quotes

“I am pleased to present the highlights and results of our Term of Council Priorities that we accomplished as a team in 2020. In the wake of the pandemic, the City’s immediate focus was to support our community. At the same time, we continued our important work on the existing 51 initiatives and 22 priorities, and 20 additional Council-approved initiatives. As we move into 2021, our Council’s sharpened focus on 16 priorities for 2021-2022 ensures that we maintain focus on what matters to the community.”

- Patrick Brown, Mayor, City of Brampton

“In 2020, we faced extremely challenging times due COVID-19 and City staff worked tirelessly to support our residents, businesses and community groups. Our team continues to deliver efficient and effective City services amid a global pandemic while continuing to achieve this Term of Council’s Priorities. I am proud to share the 2020 achievements of our team, and Council’s mid-term refresh resulting in 16 key priorities are a testament to Team Brampton’s commitment to deliver the very best for our community.”

- David Barrick, Chief Administrative Officer, City of Brampton.

MidWeek

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Offering 24/7 support for urgent homelessness needs, food, shelter access, referrals and more. The Street Helpline connects to our mobile Street Outreach team who can often come to your location to help. If you're in crisis or face an urgent need, call us.

Shelter Intake Line

Call 905-450-1996

We can help you find the best option in any Peel shelter, including in adult, youth and family shelters.

Out of the Cold Program at St. Leonard's Place Peel

1105 Queen St E, Brampton

416-500-7274



FEDERAL GOVERNMENT INTRODUCES FURTHER RESTRICTIONS ON INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

Further effective midnight (11:59 PM EST) February 3, 2021, in addition to proof of a negative pre-departure test, Transport Canada will expand the existing international flight restrictions which funnel scheduled international commercial passenger flights into four Canadian airports: Montréal-Trudeau International Airport, Toronto Pearson International Airport, Calgary International Airport, and Vancouver International Airport. The new restrictions will include scheduled commercial passenger flights arriving from the United States, Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean and South America, which were exempted from the previous restriction. Private/Business and charter flights from all countries will also be required to land at the four airports. Flights from Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon and cargo-only flights will remain exempt. As soon as possible in the coming weeks, all air travellers arriving in Canada, with very limited exceptions, must reserve a room in a Government of Canada-approved hotel for three nights at their own cost, and take a COVID-19 molecular test on arrival at their own cost. More details will be available in the coming days. The Government of Canada will introduce a 72-hour pre-arrival testing requirement (molecular test) for travellers seeking entry in land mode, with limited exceptions such as commercial truckers. In addition, we continue to collaborate with partners in the United States to strengthen our border measures and keep our countries safe. To ensure travellers' awareness and compliance with quarantine requirements, the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) is working with security companies to help complete compliance checks for travellers arriving in Canada. **CONTD. FROM PAGE 1**

Employees of these companies were trained by PHAC and authorized as Screening Officers under the Quarantine Act. These Screening Officers will visit travellers' quarantine locations to establish contact, confirm the identity and confirm that travellers are at the place of quarantine they identified upon entry into Canada. These new officers will conduct visits in 35 cities across the country, starting in Montréal and Toronto.

QUOTES

"The safety of the travelling public and the transportation industry are top priorities. Our government continues to strongly advise against non-essential travel outside Canada and has implemented many measures to protect the health of Canadians in our transportation system. The expansion of the flight restrictions is based on decisive, public health rationale from the Public Health Agency of Canada to further protect Canadians from the health impacts of COVID-19."

The Honourable Omar Alghabra

Minister of Transport

"No one should be travelling right now. Each of us has a part in keeping our communities safe, and that means avoiding non-essential travel, which can put you, your loved ones, and your community at risk. The new measures announced today will be an important tool for protecting our communities, and increasing our compliance and enforcement capacity will help us keep all Canadians safe from COVID-19."

The Honourable Patty Hajdu



Minister of Health

"We continue to enhance the already very strong border measures that were put in place since March 2020. Today's announcement further strengthens these measures and will help prevent the spread of COVID-19. We are working with provinces, territories and the United States to explore ways to keep us safe while ensuring the flow of essential goods and services remains uninterrupted."

The Honourable Bill Blair

Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness

"As new variants emerge, now more than ever, Canadians should be staying home. For their health and that of their loved ones, Canadians should only be considering travel if it is absolutely essential. With school breaks around the corner, I take this opportunity to remind Canadians that under no circumstance should anyone be planning travel for leisure."

The Honourable Marc Garneau

Minister of Foreign Affairs

QUICK FACTS

Travellers entering Canada have a responsibility to make suitable arrangements for mandatory quarantine, which begins on the day they enter Canada. They are also required to submit COVID-19 related information electronically daily.

Failure to provide accurate information is an offence under the Quarantine Act. In addition, violating any quarantine or isolation instructions provided to travellers by a Screening Officer or quarantine officer when entering Canada is also an offence under the Quarantine Act and could lead to serious penalties, including six months in prison and/or \$750,000 in fines.

PHAC currently contacts more than 6,500 travellers each day through phone calls, which verify their compliance with the mandatory isolation order.

As of January 26, 2021, 99% of the 48,682 interventions by law enforcement have resulted in compliance by travellers. However, in a minority of cases, verbal warnings, written warnings, tickets, and charges have been issued.

The Government of Canada is working directly with Aéroports de Montréal to offer voluntary testing on-site at the Montréal-Trudeau International Airport for arriving international travellers who wish to take a test before leaving the airport. This testing pilot project is in addition to those at Toronto's Pearson International Airport and the Calgary International Airport.

Ontario Community Support Program Extended until 2022

TORONTO — The Ontario government is extending the Ontario Community Support Program (OCSP) until 2022 to ensure that low-income seniors and people with disabilities have access to food, medicine and other essentials during COVID-19. The program was established in April 2020, and involves an innovative partnership with the Ontario Community Support Association (OCSA) and its large volunteer base in communities across the province. During that period nearly 800,000 deliveries have been made.

"The Ontario Community Support Program is a made-in-Ontario success story that shows the true Ontario spirit, and our government offers our thanks to the army of dedicated workers and volunteers," said Premier Doug Ford. "Through the generous and tireless efforts of these people, Ontarians with disabilities and older Ontarians have the food and necessities they need to stay home and stay safe."

The OCSP operates in communities across the province by matching volunteer services with seniors, people with disabilities and other vulnerable Ontarians through an online registration system. Volunteers are stepping up in significant numbers to give their time and efforts to fellow Ontarians who need support to meet the challenges of COVID-19.

"This program is critical because it keeps our seniors and people with disabilities safe, by allowing them to receive essential items like food and medicine right at their door, without the need to go out during the pandemic," said Raymond Cho, Minister for Seniors and Accessibility. "Extending this program will ensure that we continue to support our most vulnerable when they need it most."

During the Fall Economic Update, the government announced plans to extend the program until March, 2022, in recognition of its positive impact on vulnerable Ontarians.

QUICK FACTS

To sign up for Meals on Wheels in your local community or get essentials such as medicine delivered, visit www.ontariocommunitysupport.ca.

Services can also be arranged by dialing 211 or 1-877-330-3212 (toll free). TTY service is also available by dialing 1-888-340-1001.

Seniors, people with disabilities, and others in need of assistance, including mental health supports can connect to essential services in their community by visiting www.211ontario.ca. Services are available 7 days a week in over 150 languages.

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White or Stainless Steel

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FARMERS' PROTEST: OFFER TO SUSPEND FARM LAWS FOR 18 MONTHS STANDS, SAYS PM MODI AT ALL-PARTY MEET



PM MODI ALSO SAID AT THE ALL-PARTY MEET THAT THE PARTIES WITH LESS MPS SHOULD GET AMPLE TIME TO PUT FORTH THE ISSUES OF THEIR STATES.

During the all-party meeting on Saturday (January 30), Prime Minister Narendra Modi asserted that smaller parties (having fewer MPs in Parliament) should get an ample amount of time to present their views and issues pertaining to their states, according to Union Minister of Parliamentary Affairs Pralhad Joshi.

While talking to the media, the minister gave details about the all-party meeting. "During all-party meetings, smaller parties demanded that they should get an ample amount of time to put forth issues pertaining to their states, to which PM Modi said that the government agrees to it. He urged all the big parties including BJP not to disrupt the house as when the house is disrupted, most of the harm is done to small political parties as their time gets deducted. PM Modi said that everyone should appeal that the house should continue to function without disruption," Joshi said.

Joshi said that all-party meeting has been conducted in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. "Almost all parties participated in the meeting. Opposition parties have demanded a discussion on Farm laws and farmers' issues. We agreed. In the end, the Prime Minister said that the offer which has been given by Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar on January 22 still stands and the government is ready for the discussion on all

issues," Joshi said. Joshi said, "In eleventh round of Centre-farmer negotiation, we had said that government is open for discussion. Agriculture Minister had said that he is just a phone call away. Whenever you give a call he is ready for discussion. It still stands good. This is what PM said (in the all-party meet)." On January 22, during the 11th round of talks with protesting farmers, the government proposed to suspend the new legislations for one-and-a-half years and also proposed to set up a joint committee to discuss the Acts. The Parliamentary Affairs Minister said, "The PM said that in today's global scenario, India can make great contributions to the world. It will lead to the development and the poor will be benefited with that development. It is not a question of credit to the government but of the success of the nation." "So PM said that everyone must make an effort together to make contributions. The govt is ready for all discussions required for this, the PM said. Almost all parties congratulated PM for the successful rollout of vaccination," he added.

Joshi said that PM Modi has strongly condemned the vandalism of Mahatma Gandhi statue in the US (in California). "This is a huge insult. The PM has strongly condemned it," Joshi said. The Minister further said that leaders of all the parties congratulated PM Modi for the successful roll-out of vaccination drive.

'MIX OF IGNORANCE AND MISINFORMATION': TOMAR COUNTERS PAWAR'S VIEWS ON FARM LAWS

Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar on Sunday said Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) chief Sharad Pawar's critique of the new farm laws on Twitter was a mixture of "ignorance and misinformation."

In a series of tweets, Tomar said he would "like to believe that the veteran politician was genuinely misinformed of the facts about the three laws. Now that he has the right facts, I hope he will also change his stand and also explain the benefits to our farmers."

"Sharad Pawarji is a veteran politician and a former Union Agriculture Minister, who is also considered well-versed with the issues and solutions relating to Agriculture. He has himself tried hard to bring the same agriculture reforms earlier," the Agriculture Minister tweeted. He said since Pawar speaks with some experience and expertise on the issue, "it was dismaying to see his tweets employ a mix of ignorance and misinformation on the agriculture reforms. Let me take this opportunity to present some facts."

"New Laws facilitate promotion of additional choice channel for farmers with a choice to sell their produce to anyone, anywhere with hassle-free movement in and outside the state to realize the competitive and better net price for their produce. This doesn't affect the current minimum support price (MSP) system," he said in another tweet. Tomar added that under the new ecosystem, mandis are not affected. "Instead, they will be more competitive and cost-effective in terms of services and infrastructure; and both the systems will synergistically co-exist for the common interest of farmers," he stated.

On Saturday, Pawar, the Union Agriculture Minister for 10 years in

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's government, had posted a critique of the new farm laws against which farmers have been protesting at different borders of Delhi for over two months.

Pawar said the new central laws will adversely affect the MSP and weaken the mandi system. "Reform is a continuous process and no one would argue against the reforms in the APMCs or Mandi System, a positive argument on the same does not mean that it is done to weaken or demolish the system," he tweeted. "During my tenure, the draft APMC Rules - 2007 were framed for the setting up of special markets thereby providing alternate platforms for farmers to market their commodities and utmost care was also taken to strengthen the existing Mandi system," he added. Supporting the farmers' stand that the new laws will result in loss of income, Pawar said, "New agricultural laws restrict the powers of Mandi system i.e. the collection of levy and fees from the private markets, dispute resolution, agri-trade licencing and regulations of E-trading." "New laws will adversely impact the MSP procurement infrastructure thereby weakening the Mandi system. MSP mechanism has to be ensured and strengthened further," NCP chief tweeted further.

Pawar said he was also concerned about the amended Essential Commodities Act, as "according to the act the government will intervene for price control only if rates of horticultural produce are increased by 100 per cent and that of non-perishable items increase by 50 per cent." "Stockpiling limits have been removed on food grain, pulses, onion, potato, oilseeds etc. It may lead to apprehensions that Corporates may purchase commodities at lower rates and stock pile and sell at higher prices to consumers," the former Agriculture Minister added.

CENTRE ASKS TWITTER TO BLOCK 250 ACCOUNTS FOR 'HATEFUL' TWEETS ON FARM PROTEST

The ministry of electronics and IT (MEITY) has directed Twitter to block around 250 tweets and Twitter accounts which were using offensive, inciting hashtags which have been making fake, intimidatory and provocative tweets.

Reports said that this was done on the request of the Union home ministry which has also reimposed internet restrictions on border areas to prevent any escalation of law and order situation.

"Incitement to genocide is a grave threat to public order and therefore the Ministry of Electronics and IT ordered for blocking of these Twitter accounts & Tweets under Section 69A of the Information Technology Act. Twitter has blocked these Tweets/Twitter Accounts," news agency ANI reported quoting sources.

The order from the Centre came on January 30 amid tense situation on the border where farmers have been protesting since November. On Monday, the Union home ministry extended the suspension of internet services at the farmer protest sites in Singhu, Ghazipur and Tikri borders till Tuesday night, officials said. The adjoining areas will also be affected. The suspension is effective from 11pm of January 31 to 11pm of February 2. The decision has been taken to 'maintain public safety and averting public emergency' under Temporary Suspension of Telecom Services (Public Emergency or Public Safety) Rules 2017, a home ministry official said. The suspension of internet services at the three border points and their adjoining areas was imposed at 11 pm on January 29 and was initially effective till 11 pm on January 31. Internet services were also temporarily suspended in some parts of Delhi on January 26, when large scale violence was reported during the farmers' tractor rally.



FM NIRMALA SITHARAMAN ANNOUNCES REFORMS IN TAXATION; AGRI CESS ON PETROL, DIESEL



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has presented the Union Budget 2021-22 in Parliament. In significant changes to the taxation process, Sitharaman announced the scrapping of income tax for senior citizens under certain conditions, new rules for removal of double taxation for NRIs, and a reduction in the time period of tax assessments among other measures. Startups will get an extension in their tax holiday for an additional year. Sitharaman also announced that the advance tax liability on dividend income shall arise after declaration of payment of dividend. At the conclusion of her speech, Sensex was at 47451.62, up 1165.85 points.

In her speech, Sitharaman announced that India's fiscal deficit is set to jump to 9.5 per cent of Gross Domestic Product in 2020-21 as per Revised Estimates. This is sharply higher than 3.5 per cent of GDP that was projected in the Budget Estimates. A slump in government revenues amid the Covid-19 pandemic has led to a sharp rise in deficit and market borrowing. In health care spending, Sitharaman announced a total spend of around Rs 2 lakh crore on healthcare with Rs 35,000 crore on Covid-19 vaccine development and inoculation.

Sitharaman, in her speech, announced a push to the textile industry, a hike in custom duty on cotton and raw silk, a new cess on agriculture development – Rs 2.5 per litre on petrol and Rs 4 per litre on diesel – a central university in Leh, a focus on sea-weed farming with a new facility in Tamil Nadu and a new vehicle scrapping policy that aims to provide the auto sector a boost among other announcements. Sitharaman also announced that an additional 1 crore families will now benefit under the Centre's Ujjwala scheme. Four poll-bound states – Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Assam and West Bengal – will see significant spending on highway road expansion.

Addressing the nation after the Budget, Modi said it speaks of "all-round development." "From Covid-related reforms to Atmanirbhar resolve, we moved ahead with this mantra in Budget 2021. It's an active and not a reactive budget," he added, congratulated the Finance Ministry team.

This was Sitharaman's third budget under the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. In a significant departure from the tradition, this year's Budget was not printed and was only made available in a digital format..

IN FIR AGAINST PROTESTERS, FARM LAWS FIND MENTION



In an FIR registered at Paschim Vihar police station on January 26 against protesters, including farm union leaders, in connection with the violence at Nangloi Chowk during the kisan rally on Republic Day, Delhi Police said the laws were aimed "at providing farmers with multiple marketing channels and a legal framework for farmers to enter into pre-arranged contracts regarding their agriculture produce". The FIR was registered on a complaint by Paschim Vihar SHO Tejpal Pal Singh under sections of the IPC, Epidemic Diseases Act and Disaster Management Act. When contacted, Singh said, "I am not authorised to speak to the media. My DCP is authorised to speak to the media." DCP (Outer district), Dr A K Koan could not be reached for a comment. Referring to the Presidential assent to the Bills on September 27, 2019, the FIR, a copy of which was accessed by The Indian Express, noted that "... some people objected to the Bills and labelled these corporate friendly and anti-farmer". "The laws were initially protested mainly by some farmers in Punjab, and some political parties joined in on the pretext that the laws would hurt the farmer's earnings... canards were spread that farmers will lose their land to corporates and APMC-run mandis will cease to exist, further the government will do away with minimum support price for agricultural produce. The government... tried to dispel the misgivings but protests started which initially remained localised in Punjab. On 26.11.2020, some protesting farmers were stopped by Haryana Police from marching towards Delhi for protesting against the said farm laws. Violence broke out and the above protesting farmers and their leaders broke through the barricades and continued with their march towards Delhi. On 27.11.2020, protesters started travelling with their tractors and trolleys to borders of Delhi and Haryana. Police arrangement was in place at Tikri border to stop them from marching towards Delhi," read the FIR. It detailed "11 rounds of negotiations between union cabinet ministers and 36 farm union leaders and others", giving the contact details of all 36 leaders. The FIR also stated that the Supreme Court intervened and stayed implementation of the laws till the outcome of the report by a committee it set up.

BUDGET 2021: FM NIRMALA SITHARAMAN DONS RED SAREE FOR BUDGET PRESENTATION



SITHARAMAN, REPLACING HER SIGNATURE 'BAHI KHATA', OPTED TO CARRY THE DOCUMENTS IN A TABLET, WHICH WAS WRAPPED IN A RED-COLOURED COVER.

For her third budget presentation, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman kept her look simple, donning a crisp red-coloured saree with off-white detailing and gold border. She completed her look with a gold chain and bangles and tiny earrings. Amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, replacing her signature 'bahi khata', she opted to carry the documents in a tablet, which was wrapped in a red-coloured cover with national emblem emblazoned on it. The red colour, which is considered auspicious, represents the strongest emotions including love, energy, attention, and power. Sitharaman's sartorial choices have made headlines on many occasions - from donning beautiful handloom sarees to sporting silk sarees. For the unversed, she likes wearing subtle yet classy handloom and silk sarees to work. And it is safe to say that it is her wardrobe arithmetic that gives her appearance a distinct stamp. For the 2020-21 budget presentation, the Union Finance Minister had opted for a crisp yellow-gold silk saree with a blue border and matching blouse. The minister had carried the documents in a traditional 'Bahi-Khata' (ledger) which she trademarked during the 2019-20 budget presentation. The colour yellow, which is considered as a mark of prosperity, is also believed to be auspicious on important occasions. During her maiden budget presentation in 2019, Sitharaman grabbed

many eyeballs when she broke away from long-standing traditions of colonial-era, ditching the briefcase and opting for traditional bahi khata, which is a kind of a ledger wrapped in a red coloured cloth. Clad in a warm pink-coloured, gold-bordered Mangalgiri saree paired with a gold chain, tiny diamond earrings, and a bindi on her forehead, Sitharaman had made quite a statement during her budget presentation in 2019. While the tradition of carrying the Budget documents in a briefcase has been on since the British-era, Finance Ministers have chosen to carry the document in suitcases of different colours like red velvet, black, and tan. The Union Budget 2020-21 will be presented at 11 am on Monday. The Budget Session began on Friday with an address by President Ram Nath Kovind to the joint sitting of two houses of Parliament. This year, the Union Budget will be delivered in paperless form for the first time. Finance Minister had launched the "Union Budget Mobile App" for hassle-free access of Budget documents by Members of Parliament (MPs) and the general public using the simplest form of digital convenience, according to the Finance Ministry. The first part of the session will continue till February 15. The second part of the session will be held from March 8 to April 8. Rajya Sabha will function from 9 am to 2 pm and Lok Sabha from 4 pm to 9 pm with Zero Hour and Question Hour.

EXPLAINED: ELECTING A CONGRESS PRESIDENT - HOW THESE POLLS ARE MEANT TO BE HELD, HOW IT PLAYS OUT

ON JULY 3, 2019, Rahul Gandhi made public his decision to step down as Congress president taking moral responsibility for the Congress's disastrous showing in the Lok Sabha elections that May. On August 11, the Congress Working Committee (CWC) appointed Sonia Gandhi as interim president despite Rahul suggesting that someone from outside the Gandhi family should helm the party. Over one-and-a-half years of internal turmoil later, the Congress is still without a full-time president. It had set in motion the process of elections last August when Sonia constituted a Central Election Authority. But the CWC, which met on January 22 this year, decided to put off the exercise until June in view of the forthcoming Assembly elections in four states. There is still no clarity on whether Rahul would return as Congress president. In his 2019 open letter, he had said "rebuilding the party requires hard decisions and numerous people will have to be made accountable for the failure of 2019". There is no clarity on whether anyone has been held accountable either.

When were organisational elections last held in the Congress?

That was in 2017, after a gap of seven years. At its 83rd plenary in Burari in December 2010, the party had amended its constitution to provide for organisational elections once in five years (it was once in three years earlier). The party had also extended its president's term to five years from three years. So, the elections of 2017 had actually been due in 2015. According to the Congress constitution, elections are to be held right from the primary committee — at the booth level — to that for the post of Congress president. But more often than not, an election in the truest sense is avoided and the president and committees are appointed through consensus at all levels of the party. In the case of Rahul too, there was no challenger and he was elected unopposed. The Central Election Authority had nevertheless come out with a detailed schedule, with last dates for filing nominations, withdrawal, scrutiny etc. According to the Congress constitution, "any ten delegates may jointly propose the name of any delegate for election as President of the Congress."

FARMERS OBSERVE MAHATMA GANDHI'S DEATH ANNIVERSARY AS 'SADBHAVNA DIWAS' WITH DAY-LONG FAST



More than two months to the farmers' protest, and with an uneventful tractor rally turning violent on Republic Day, the agitation farmers on Saturday are observed 'Sadbhavna Diwas' on Mahatma Gandhi's 73rd death anniversary, with a day-long fast. The fast is also the farmers' way of reasserting the 'peaceful' nature of their protest against the three farm laws passed in September and which is joined by participants from Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, and other states. Addressing a press conference at Delhi's Singhu border, the farmer leaders said the fast will be held from 9 AM to 5 PM and appealed to the people of the country to join them. The farmer protests have been marred with multiple instances of violence over the past many days, which the farmers assert were a result of the government's moves to misrepresent the entire agitation and break it up eventually. However, they claimed that the protest has only gained strength now, with many more farmers reaching out in support and physically joining them at the many protest venues around Delhi. Addressing a press conference at the Delhi-Haryana border point in Singhu on Friday, the leaders slammed the ruling party of trying to 'destroy' the 'peaceful' agitation. "The way the government has unsuccessfully tried to spoil the atmosphere on the Ghazipur border and the Singhu border for the past three days proves that the police and BJP-RSS are desperately plotting to kill this movement. Similar unsuccessful attempts were made on the Tikri border too," a statement issued by the Samyukta Kisan Morcha has said. Farmer leaders say that the number of participants at the prominent protest venues - Ghazipur, Singhu, and Tikri - was swelling following the police's alleged high-handedness on Thursday night. Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) supporters stayed put on the Delhi-Meerut Expressway on Friday as the crowd swelled there, notwithstanding the Ghaziabad administration's ultimatum to vacate the UP Gate protest site where security force in large numbers was re-deployed. A confrontation was building up at the UP Gate in Ghazipur even as frequent power cuts were witnessed on Thursday evening at the protest site, where BKU members, led by Rakesh Tikait, are staying put since November 28 last year.

INDIA FOLLOWING SWAMI VIVEKANANDA IN EMPOWERING POOR: PM MODI



Swami Vivekananda wanted empowerment to be taken to the poor, if the poor themselves cannot easily go to empowerment, said Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday. "First, he wanted empowerment to be taken to the poor, if the poor themselves cannot easily go to empowerment. Second, he said about India's poor, They are to be given ideas; their eyes are to be opened to what is going on in the world around them and then they will work out their own salvation," PM Modi said while addressing the 125th-anniversary celebrations of "Prabuddha Bharata" journal, which was started by Swami Vivekananda. The Prime Minister asserted that this is the approach with which India is moving ahead today. Referring to Swami Vivekananda's letter to the Maharaja of Mysore and to Swami Ramakrishnananda, the Prime Minister underlined two clear thoughts in the Hindu philosopher's approach to empower the poor. "If the poor cannot access banks, then banks must reach the poor. That is what the Jan Dhan Yojana did. If the poor cannot access insurance, then insurance must reach the poor. This is what the Jan Suraksha schemes did. If the poor cannot access health-care, then we must take health-care to the poor. This is what the Ayushman Bharat scheme did. Roads, education, electricity and internet connectivity are being taken to every corner of the country, especially to the poor. This is igniting aspirations among the poor. And, it is these aspirations that are driving the growth of the country," he further emphasised. "Swami Vivekananda saw India as a cultural consciousness that has been living and breathing for centuries, an India that only emerges stronger after every challenge despite contrary predictions. He wanted to make India 'Prabuddha' or awakened," said PM Modi. The Prime Minister said Swami Vivekananda named this journal Prabuddha Bharata to manifest the spirit of our nation. "He wanted to create an awakened India. Those who understand Bharat, are aware that it is beyond just political or territorial entity," he added. The Prime Minister further stated, Prabuddha Bharata is a special journal. "It is an iconic journal closely associated with Swamivivekanand himself. It is also among the longest-running English journals in the country. There is a powerful thought behind this name," he added. "Swami Vivekananda had great compassion for the poor, he truly believed that poverty was at the root of every problem. Therefore, poverty had to be removed from the nation," said PM Modi.

START COVID VACCINATION OF FRONTLINE WORKERS FROM FEBRUARY FIRST WEEK, CENTRE TELLS STATES



The Centre on Friday directed all states and union territories to start inoculating frontline workers along with healthcare workers against COVID-19 from the first week of February. Vaccination of healthcare providers began on January 16, 2021. The Health Ministry said on Friday that more than 33 lakh healthcare workers had been administered the vaccine so far. "4,40,681 beneficiaries were vaccinated till 7 pm today, the fourteenth day of nationwide Covid-19 vaccination," it said. Health Ministry Additional Secretary Manohar Agnani, in a letter to states and union territories (UTs), said the database of frontline workers is being updated by states and UTs in collaboration with the respective line ministries. The database of more than 61 lakh frontline workers has been uploaded on the Co-WIN portal. "In this regard, after due consultation with states and UTs, it is advised that the states and UTs shall initiate simultaneous vaccination of frontline workers and healthcare workers from the first week of February," Agnani said. The Ministry has communicated to states that "further augmentation" of Covaxin and Covishield stocks will be made through "subsequent releases of vaccine doses". The states and UTs should ensure that sessions must be created for both the type of vaccines in proportion to the release of vaccines to the state, wherever applicable, the letter said. "I request you to kindly direct the concerned officials to initiate requisite planning and review for initiating vaccination of frontline workers along with healthcare workers from the first week of February 2021. Your unstinted support is a pre-requisite to achieve the desired acceleration and impact of COVID-19 vaccine drive," the letter stated. A pan-India COVID-19 vaccination drive initiated on January 16 aims to cover healthcare and frontline workers in the initial phase.

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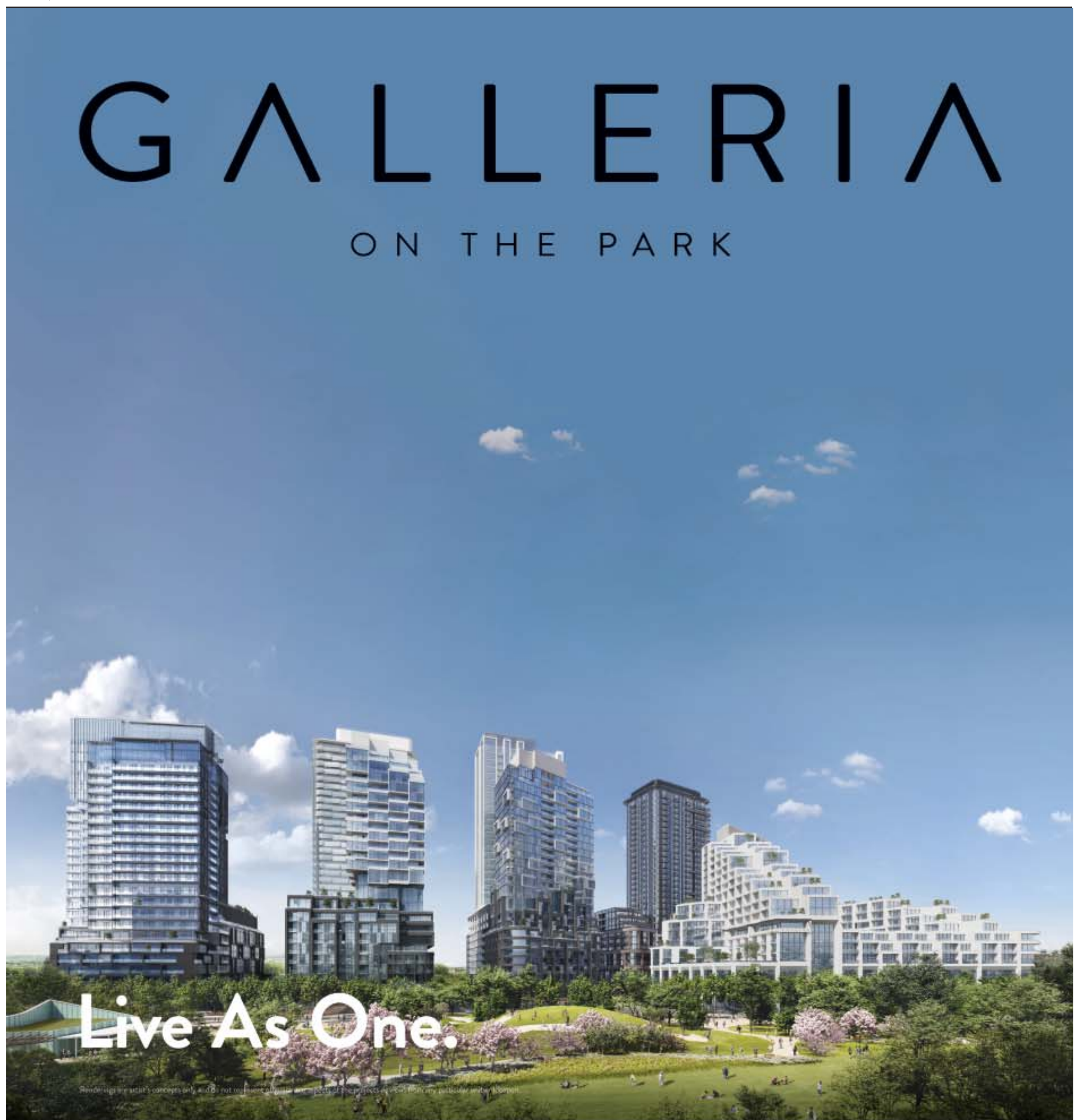
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