



CLIMATE
PARTNERSHIP TO BE
'CORE PILLAR' OF US-
INDIA RELATIONS:
BIDEN | P9



AUSTRALIA BANS
ALL PASSENGER
FLIGHTS FROM INDIA
TILL MAY 15 | P9

ILEANA D'CRUZ TALKS ABOUT BEING
BODY-SHAMED SINCE SHE WAS 12,
SAYS 'IT'S A DEEPLY INGRAINED
SCAR' | P15



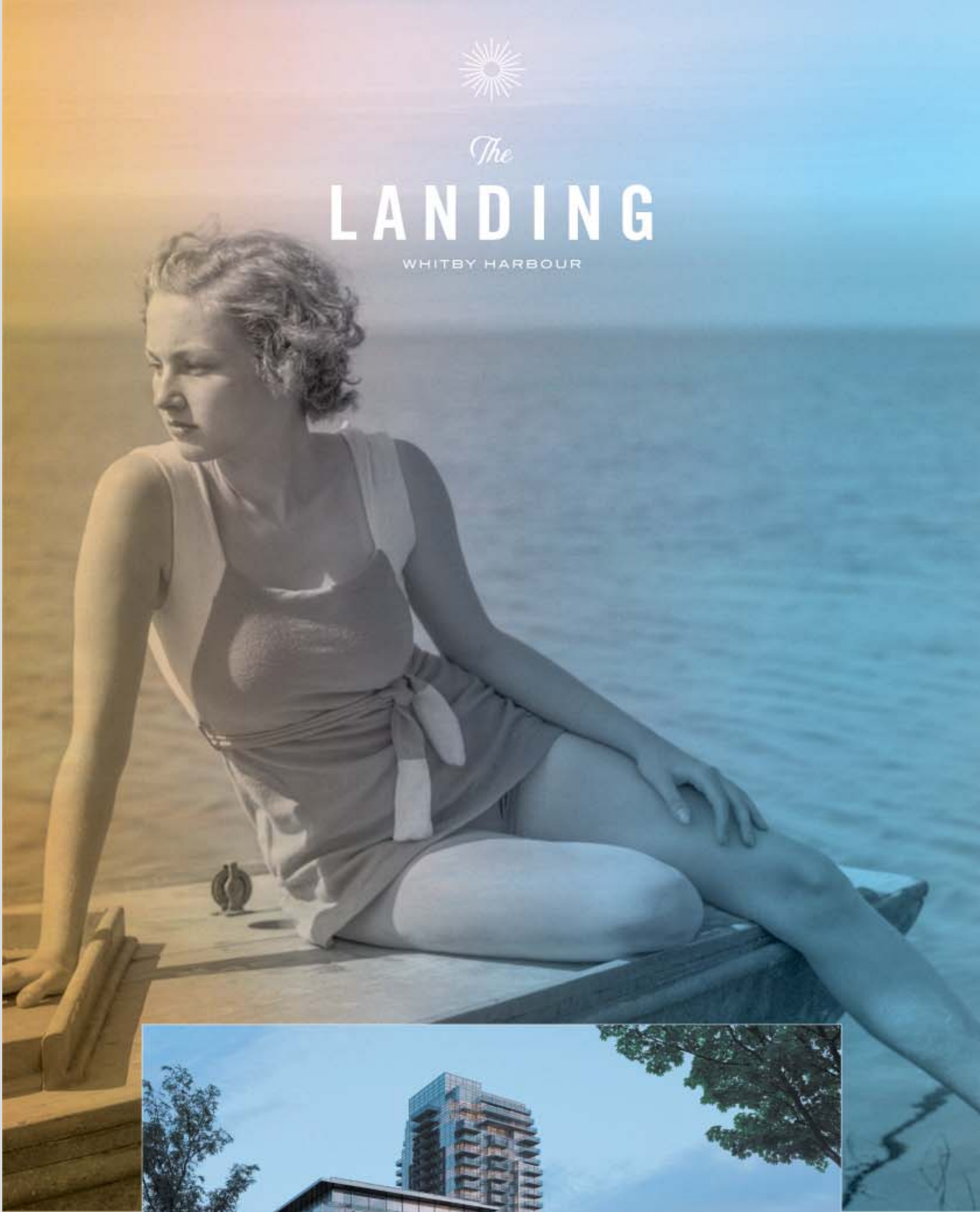
SOUTH ASIAN

MidWeek

NEWS WEEKLY



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FORMER BRAMPTON CITY DIRECTOR, ALLEGES CORRUPTION, NEPOTISM AND ABUSE OF POWER



Y MEDIA EXCLUSIVE

YUDHVIR JASWAL
Group Editor - Y MEDIA



GURDEEP KAUR
Brampton's former Director of Corporate Projects, Policy and Liaison

WATCH EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW ON CHANNEL Y

Y MEDIA COVID & VACCINE REPORT

CANADA ANNOUNCES SUSPENSION OF FLIGHTS FROM INDIA & PAKISTAN

OTTAWA, (IANS) Canada's government said that it would temporarily bar passenger flights from India and Pakistan for 30 days starting on Thursday as part of stricter measures to combat the spread of the coronavirus.

The center-left Liberal government of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau acted after prominent right-leaning politicians complained Ottawa had not done enough to combat the third wave of infections ripping through Canada, the Geo TV reported.

The ban, which takes effect at 11.30 p.m. (0330 GMT Friday), does not affect cargo flights.

India on Thursday recorded the world's highest daily tally of 314,835 Covid-19 infections amid fears about the ability to crumble health services to cope.

Canadian Health Minister Patty Hajdu said that while Indian citizens accounted for 20 per cent of all international arrivals, they represented over 50 per cent of the positive tests conducted by Canadian airport officials. "By eliminating direct travel from these countries, public health experts will have the time to evaluate the ongoing epidemiology of that region and to reassess the situation," she told a news conference.

- *Vaccine Advisory Group Oks #Astrazeneca Vaccine For Canadians Aged 30+*
- *US to send 60 million AstraZeneca vaccine doses to Covid hard-hitting countries.*
- *36 cases of the B.1617 (Indian) variant have been detected in Ontario. Canada Bans Commercial & Passengers Flights From India & Pakistan For 30 Days.*
- *Canada has secured access to guaranteed 35 million Pfizer vaccine doses for 2022, for 2023, Canada to receive 30 million Pfizerdoses.*
- *Ontario is working with Shopper Drugs Mart to begin offering 24/7 COVID-19 vaccinations for Ontarians aged 40+ at 20 pharmacy locations in hot spot communities.*
- *US lifts pause on Johnson & Johnson Covid-19 vaccine.*
- *13-year-old, Emily Victoria Viegas, Youngest Bramptonion To Die From COVID-19.*
- *Ontario Expands COVID-19 Vaccination Booking to Individuals 45 and Over in Hot Spot Communities.*
- *Licensed Child Care Workers Across Ontario Eligible to Book Vaccine Appointments This Week.*

"WE GOT IT WRONG. WE MADE A MISTAKE."
- ONTARIO'S PREMIER DOUG FORD



CANADA TO PROVIDE \$10 MILLION (RS 60 CR) TO INDIA TO COMBAT COVID



OTTAWA, (IANS) The Canadian government has announced to provide help of 10 million Canadian dollars (About Rs 60 crore) to India to fight the situation that emerged following the outbreak of the worst Covid-19 wave.

CONTD. ON PAGE 6

US, UK OFFER SUPPORT TO HELP INDIA FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19

Canada is willing to supply India with medical equipment as the country continues to report record-high number of Covid-19 cases and deaths. "We are in touch with India and our High Commissioner in India Nadir Patel about a number of options that may be on the table for us to assist," procurement minister Anita Anand said during a press conference when asked whether Canada would step in to help. "We will stand ready with PPE and ventilators and any items that might be useful for the government of India."

"I, of course, have a personal connection with that country but on the broader level, when we see a country in need in that regard, we do stand ready," said Anand.

CONTD. ON PAGE 4

PUNJAB CM AMARINDER CHALLENGES NAVJOT SIDHU TO CONTEST AGAINST HIM FROM PATIALA

CHANDIGARH, (IANS) Taking a tough stance, Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh categorically said on Tuesday that if his former Cabinet colleague Navjot Singh Sidhu "wants to contest against him, then he is free to do so but that would only lead to Sidhu meeting the fate of General J.J. Singh who had lost his security deposit".

CONTD. ON PAGE 8



INDIAN-AMERICAN CIVIL RIGHTS LAWYER, VANITA GUPTA, NARROWLY CONFIRMED AS ASSOCIATE AG

NEW YORK, (IANS) Indian-American civil rights lawyer Vanita Gupta has been confirmed as the US Associate Attorney-General with the help of a breakaway Republican Senator overcoming stiff opposition from her fellow party members who accused the nominee of espousing "radical" policies.

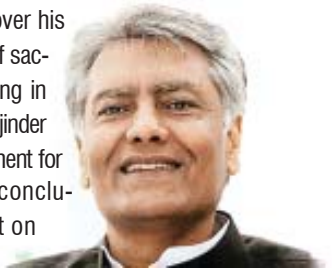
CONTD. ON PAGE 6



SACRILEGE CASE: PUNJAB CONGRESS PRESIDENT SUNIL JAKHAR, CABINET MINISTER SUKHJINDER RANDHAWA 'RESIGN', CM 'REJECTS'

CHANDIGARH, (IANS) Facing criticism over his Congress government's 'failure' in cases of sacrilege as well as the associated police firing in 2015, an upset Punjab Cabinet minister Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa, who blamed the government for the delay in the case reaching its logical conclusion, resigned from his post in protest on Monday.

CONTD. ON PAGE 8



PAK'S EDHI FOUNDATION OFFERS TO SEND 50 AMBULANCES TO HELP INDIA

PAK PRAYS FOR INDIA AMID TESTING COVID TIMES



Faisal Edhi, son of the renowned philanthropist Abdul Sattar Edhi and chairman of the Edhi Foundation has also written to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, offering help in confronting the epidemic. "We are very sorry to hear about the exceptionally heavy impact that the pandemic has had on your country, where a tremendous number of people are suffering immensely," the letter read.

CONTD. ON PAGE 5

WATCH Y MEDIA EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS ON CHANNEL Y



YUDHVIR JASWAL
Group Editor - Y MEDIA



OMAR ALGHABRA
Minister of Transport

Govt. may not send evacuation flights to India & Pakistan



MARCO MENDICINO
Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship

Immigration goes in hand with economics on announcement regarding permanent residency to 90,000 essential workers and international graduates



CITY OF BRAMPTON
2021 TAX PAYMENT DEFERRAL PROGRAM

- 2021 Final taxes can be deferred by application
- Apply online by May 1
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**BRAMPTON**

BRAMPTON OFFERS AN OPTIONAL PROPERTY TAX PAYMENT DEFERRAL PROGRAM TO SUPPORT ITS RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES DURING COVID- 19 (CITY OF BRAMPTON/ TWITTER).

NEW APP FOR PALLIATIVE CARE PATIENTS GETS A BOOST WITH HEALTH CANADA FUNDING

NEW FUNDING WILL ENABLE EXPANSION OF RELIEF – A REMOTE SYMPTOM-MONITORING APP – ACROSS PARTS OF ONTARIO AND QUEBEC

For patients with palliative care needs, access to care is often constrained by health system resources and a requirement to visit their clinician for assessments. Assessments typically only occur every 4–8 weeks—a delay which can result in otherwise avoidable emergency department visits for patients. More frequent symptom assessments would provide more timely and earlier interventions for patients by their healthcare providers should intervention be required; however, a key barrier to effective symptom management and patient comfort is the lack of real-time symptom status.

Researchers from Humber River Hospital, William Osler Health System, and the Bruyère Research Institute are tackling this issue with RELIEF—an app for the remote self-reporting of symptoms—thanks to \$1.4 million in funding from Health Canada. Led by Dr. Martin Chasen, Medical Director of Palliative Care at William Osler Health System and Clinician-Researcher at the Bruyère Research Institute, and Dr. Pete Wegier, Research Chair in Optimizing Care Through Technology at Humber River Hospital, RELIEF will allow patients to regularly report their symptoms online from anywhere while being monitored by their team of healthcare providers.

“We developed RELIEF in partnership with uCaret Technologies Inc. as an easy method for the remote self-reporting of symptoms by patients to their healthcare providers”, says Chasen. “In a previous pilot study, we found RELIEF to be an effective method for remote symptom reporting for patients with palliative care needs, and that RELIEF reduced visits to the emergency department for a number of patients and led to substantial healthcare cost avoidance.”

Patients report their symptoms on RELIEF daily and healthcare providers receive alerts for any sudden changes in symptom status or worrying trends. These alerts allow for timely acute interventions or close passive monitoring, reducing patient stress through the knowledge that their healthcare provider is monitoring their symptoms. RELIEF can be scaled up across the healthcare system, improving communication between patients and providers while also improving navigation across the continuum of care. “Thanks to supporting from Health Canada, we are now able to expand RELIEF to a number of healthcare settings to study its effectiveness as a remote monitoring tool for a diverse group of Canadians”, explains Wegier. In addition to Humber River Hospital and William Osler’s Brampton Civic Hospital, RELIEF will be implemented with healthcare partners in the North East, North West, and Champlain LHINs in Ontario, and Lakeshore General Hospital in Québec. These sites will allow the research team to see how RELIEF can help serve a

number of different populations of Canadians, including the homeless and vulnerably housed, rural and remote communities, Indigenous communities, Anglophones in Québec, and Francophones outside Québec. In addition to Chasen and Wegier, the RELIEF team includes a variety of research scientists and clinicians, including:

- * Dr. Ravi Bhargava, Physician-Scientist at the Global Institute of Psychosocial, Palliative and End-of-Life Care, University of Toronto
- * Dr. James Downar, Chair of Palliative and End of Life Care at the Bruyère Research



Institute

- * Dr. Sarina Isenberg, Chair of Mixed Methods Palliative Care Research at the Bruyère Research Institute
- * Bonnie Keating, Clinical Nurse Specialist at William Osler Health System
- * Saranjah Subramaniam, the RELIEF Research Project Manager at Humber River Hospital

“Digital health technologies are allowing the clinicians and healthcare professionals to deliver more personalized and proactive care”, says Bhargava. “We will be able to assess the impact of RELIEF on important patient outcomes such as avoidance of unnecessary trips to the emergency department and associated cost savings, satisfaction with the app, engagement with the app, and connectedness to the healthcare team”, says Isenberg. “Our evaluation of economic outcomes will enable us to determine the impact of RELIEF on the broader health care system and further bolster support to disseminate RELIEF across the province.”

“The COVID pandemic has shown us that virtual and remote care solutions are the future”, says Barb Collins, President & CEO of Humber River Hospital. “Patients with access to RELIEF will no longer be limited in their ability to access high-quality palliative care services as a consequence of their geographic location, socioeconomic status, or healthcare needs. Healthcare provider capacity will also increase, as a single provider will be able to monitor and address the issues of a larger number of patients.”

“Osler welcomes Health Canada’s support of RELIEF”, says Dr. Naveed Mohammad, President & CEO, William Osler Health System. “The development of this innovative app speaks to our commitment to patient-inspired health care by ensuring that patients have convenient access to high-quality care and technology that will enable better health outcomes. We are pleased to have played a critical role in creating the app and look forward to supporting the project team as RELIEF is implemented in other health care settings.”

US LIFTS PAUSE ON JOHNSON & JOHNSON COVID-19 VACCINE

WASHINGTON, (IANS) The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced they have determined to lift the pause regarding the use of the Johnson & Johnson Covid-19 vaccine, allowing its resumed use for adults.

The decision was made following a thorough safety review, including two meetings of the CDC’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), said a joint statement of the two agencies on Friday, Xinhua news agency reported on Saturday.

The pause was recommended on April 13 after reports of six cases of a rare and severe type of blood clot in individuals following administration of the Johnson & Johnson Covid-19 vaccine.

During the pause, medical and scientific teams at the FDA and CDC examined available data to assess the risk of thrombosis involving the cerebral venous sinuses, or CVST (large blood vessels in the brain), and other sites in the body along with thrombocytopenia, or low blood platelet counts, according to the statement.

The teams at FDA and CDC also conducted extensive outreach to providers and clinicians to ensure they were made aware of the potential for these adverse events and could properly manage and recognize these events due to the unique treatment required for these blood clots and low platelets. The FDA has determined that the available data show that the vaccine’s known and potential benefits outweigh its known and potential risks in individuals 18 years of age and older.

CANADA SECURES VACCINE SUPPLY BEYOND 2021



The Government of Canada is committed to protecting the health and safety of everyone in Canada by securing access to safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines now and into the future. Today, the Honourable Anita Anand, Minister of Public Services and Procurement, announced that Canada has secured COVID-19 vaccines from Pfizer for 2022 and 2023, with options to extend into 2024. The agreement guarantees access to 65 million doses of Pfizer-BioNTech’s COVID-19 vaccine, with access to up to 120 million more if all options are exercised. In addition to providing booster vaccine doses, the agreement provides flexibility to procure future COVID-19 vaccine formulations from Pfizer, such as those to protect against variants of concern and vaccines developed for children. Importantly, these doses are in addition to the 48 million doses of Pfizer-BioNTech’s COVID-19 vaccine arriving before the end of September 2021 as part of Canada’s existing agreement. The Government of Canada will continue to follow scientific and expert advice to pursue future access to COVID-19 vaccines.

QUOTES

“The Government of Canada is working tirelessly to protect everyone in Canada from COVID-19. This means getting doses for everyone who wants one before the end of this September and securing doses for 2022 and beyond.”

The Honourable Anita Anand
Minister of Public Services and Procurement

“Access to safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines is essential to our pandemic preparedness and response in Canada. Today’s announcement secures vaccines needed to continue to respond and to adapt to the evolving nature of the COVID-19 pandemic.”

The Honourable Patty Hajdu
Minister of Health

QUICK FACTS

As part of the new agreement with Pfizer:

Canada has secured access to a guaranteed 35 million doses of Pfizer-BioNTech’s COVID-19 vaccines for 2022, with options for up to 30 million more.

For 2023, Canada has secured access to a guaranteed 30 million doses, with options for 30 million more.

2024 is an option year. If this option is exercised, Canada will have access to another 30 million doses, with options for an additional 30 million.

Canada’s existing bilateral agreement with Pfizer is for up to 76 million doses of its mRNA vaccine BNT162, 48 million of which will be delivered before the end of September 2021. Vaccination is one of the most effective ways to protect us against COVID-19. Vaccines will be available at no charge to everyone in Canada. On behalf of the Public Health Agency of Canada, and based on advice from the COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force, Public Services and Procurement Canada is leading negotiations and finalizing agreements with suppliers of COVID-19 vaccine candidates.

CANADA, US, UK OFFER SUPPORT TO HELP INDIA FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19

CONTD. FROM PAGE 3

The UK will be sending more than 600 pieces of vital medical equipment to India to support it in fight against Covid-19, the UK government announced.

The assistance package, funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, includes ventilators and oxygen concentrators from surplus stocks. The Department of Health and Social Care have worked closely with the NHS, as well as suppliers and manufacturers in the UK to identify reserve life-saving equipment that can be sent to India.

Recently, India has been reporting high number of Covid-19 cases and deaths while several reports of shortage of oxygen are also coming. The first shipment of equipment has already left the UK and it will be arriving to India in the early hours of Tuesday. Further shipments are due to follow later this week.

In total, nine airline container loads of supplies, including 495 oxygen concentrators, 120 non-invasive ventilators and 20 manual ventilators, will be sent to the country this week. This equipment will be crucial in helping to save the lives of the most vulnerable in India. The oxygen concentrators, for example, can extract oxygen from the air in the atmosphere so that it can be provided to patients, taking the strain off hospital oxygen systems and allowing oxygen to be provided in situations where hospital oxygen supplies have run out.


US TO RUSH VACCINE RAW MATERIALS, ANTI-COVID SUPPLIES TO INDIA

In a break from the America First policy, President Joe Biden’s administration is “working round the clock” to immediately send India raw material needed for making Covishield and other products needed in the fight against the COVID-19 surge overtaking the nation, according to National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan.

Recalling the assistance sent by India to the US in the early phase of the pandemic last year, he told India’s National Security Adviser AjitDoval in a phone call on Sunday that “the United States is working around the clock to deploy available resources and supplies”, Sullivan’s Spokesperson Emily Horne said.

Sullivan told Doval that Washington “also is pursuing options to provide oxygen generation and related supplies on an urgent basis,” she said in a readout of their conversation.

The US will also send India anti-COVID supplies like test kits, ventilators, medications and personal protective equipment used by front-line workers. The National Defence Production Act invoked by former President Donald Trump banned the export of vaccine raw materials and some other COVID-related products and have continued under Biden. The decision to lift the embargo for India on the export of vaccine raw materials comes after nearly two weeks of requests from Adar Poonawalla, the CEO of vaccine-maker Serum Institute of India, and others in India. But as recently as Friday various US government spokespersons would not say if the Biden administration would lift the embargo. State Department Spokesperson Ned Price said on Thursday that the “first obligation” was to the American people and added, “It’s in the interests of the rest of the world to see Americans vaccinated”. But as calls grew for helping India, Secretary of State Anthony Blinken gave a hint on Saturday that India may get the material to fight the pandemic surge. He tweeted, “We are working closely with our partners in the Indian government, and we will rapidly deploy additional support to the people of India and India’s health care heroes.”




COVID-19 TESTING IS FREE
No OHIP card or identification is needed.

GET TESTED IF:

1. You have any symptom, even if it’s mild.
2. You had close contact with someone who has COVID-19.
3. You were notified by the COVID Alert app.
4. Public health recommended you get tested.

Note: Testing does not replace the need to limit visits with others.

[TORONTO.CA/COVID19](https://toronto.ca/covid19)

GET COVID-19 TESTING FREE OF COST IF YOU ARE EXPERIENCING ANY SYMPTOMS (CITY OF TORONTO/TWITTER).

Y MEDIA POLITICAL SENSEX- 5 STATES ELECTION, INDIA

Bengal heads for penultimate phase of polling



PM APPEALS TO BENGAL VOTERS TO CAST VOTE FOLLOWING COVID NORMS

NEW DELHI, (IANS) Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday urged people of West Bengal to use their franchise for state assembly polls following all Covid protocols. Seventh phase polling in West Bengal is being held on Monday. Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted, "The seventh phase of the West Bengal elections takes place today. Urging people to exercise their franchise and follow all COVID-19 related protocols."

RSS PREDICTS 6, BJP EXPECTS 12 SEATS IN KERALA

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, (IANS) Finally the RSS/BJP combine in Kerala has come out with their own assessment of what's in store for the BJP-led NDA in Kerala when votes will be counted on May 2. While the RSS has predicted six seats, the BJP appeared more confident that their tally will be 12 and its youthful state president K. Surendran, went a step ahead and said that neither the Left nor the Right in Kerala will get a clear majority. However, both the ruling CPI-M led Left and the Congress led Opposition have predicted that the BJP's account that was opened in the 2016 assembly polls, when it won one seat, will be closed this time, leaving the BJP drawing a blank in the 140-member Kerala Legislative Assembly. Incidentally, soon after the April 6 assembly polls ended in the state, V. Muraliedharan, Union Minister of State for External Affairs, the lone Keralite in the Narendra Modi cabinet, said the BJP has put up an excellent fight in 27 constituencies. On Friday, the Kerala unit of the RSS top brass pulled out their notebooks and after a few hours of detailed discussions, said they have huge hopes in six constituencies which include their sitting seat at Nemom in the state capital district, Manjeswaram, Palakkad, Thrissur, Kazhakootam and Vattiyoorkavu. In the BJP list of winning seats apart from the above six, they have put

EC RESPONSIBLE FOR COVID UPSURGE IN COUNTRY: BENGAL CM MAMATA

KOLKATA, (IANS) On the last day of her 50-day long poll campaign in West Bengal, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday criticized the Election Commission for allegedly working in favour of the BJP, besides holding the poll panel responsible for the upsurge in Covid cases in the country. Earlier in the day, the Madras high court had observed that the EC was "singularly responsible" for the second wave of Covid-19 and that the poll body's officials could be "booked for murder" for allowing political rallies amid the pandemic. Welcoming the Madras HC observation, Banerjee said, "The Election Commission cannot ignore the fact that it is responsible for this huge upsurge in Covid cases in the country. It brought 2 lakh police personnel from outside, and none of them have gone through the Covid test. "They are acquiring schools, colleges and stadia, causing hindrance for the government and the people. I have been continuously telling the EC to withdraw the forces, but it kept on working under the instruction of someone else. The EC is responsible for the spread of the infection and it cannot shrug off the responsibility." Earlier, the Calcutta High Court had censured the EC, saying that issuing circulars and holding meetings on Covid guidelines were

Polling is being held for 34 assembly seats of five districts -- Kolkata, Burdwan, South Dinajpur, Malda and Murshidabad, in the seventh and second last phase of West Bengal Assembly elections. Polling for the eighth and final phase will be held on April 29. Eight phase West Bengal Assembly polls started with first phase voting on March 27. Counting of votes for 294 members of the West Bengal Assembly will take place on May 2.

their money in seats like Kasargode, Chathanoor, Malampuzha, Kozhikode North, Kattakada and Manaloor. However, Surendran time and again has been saying that it will be the BJP who will be the deciding factor as neither of the traditional political fronts which have alternated in the seat of power, this time, will get a clear majority and what has left many astonished is his wishful thinking that if the BJP manages to win 35 seats, it will be a BJP led Kerala government. Looking back at how the BJP has performed in elections in Kerala if Surendran's wishful thinking is to materialise, it's definitely something which is beyond rationale because at the 2014 Lok Sabha polls the BJP had a vote share of 10.33 per cent, which touched 15.10 per cent at the 2016 assembly polls (they won one out of the 140 seats) and at the 2019 Lok Sabha polls it was 15.6 per cent and drew a blank in the 20 constituencies. At the 2015 local body polls the BJP secured 13.28 per cent vote share and managed to win around 1,200 seats out of around 21,000 seats and at the last year's polls, Surendran's predictions fell flat. However, with just days left for the counting day, when the rival fronts have predicted victory in around 80 seats, all what remains to be seen is, whoever wins or loses, one thing is sure, the loser in the polls, will definitely say, the winner had a tacit relation with the BJP.

not enough. Following the Calcutta HC order, the EC had capped the attendance at public events to 500 people for the last two phases of Assembly elections in West Bengal. Accusing the Commission of working as the mouthpiece of BJP, the Chief Minister, who was campaigning virtually for Trinamool Congress candidates in North Kolkata, said, "We have told repeatedly to club the elections, but the EC kept on working on the directives of the BJP. This BJP government is an example of 'monumental incompetence'. It has only one agenda and that is to conquer and for that, it has jeopardized the lives of the people". Cautioning the EC of approaching the Supreme Court, Banerjee said, "The EC has lost all its credibility. The democratic exercise of an entire country cannot depend on the whims and fancies of three nominated persons. They had done it in 2016, but I kept quiet thinking that they will rectify themselves, but nothing has changed. "The Election Commission has lost all its credibility, but someone should 'bell the cat' and so I am going to the Supreme Court against this partisan attitude of the Commission and its irresponsibility that led to the deaths of so many people."

MAMATA ACCUSES CENTRE OF DIVERTING OXYGEN SUPPLY FROM BENGAL

KOLKATA, (IANS) West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Friday accused the Central government of diverting the oxygen supply meant for Bengal to the other states, which will create shortage of oxygen in the state, jeopardising the treatment of Covid patients. "In 2020, the WHO had told the Central government to increase the storage of oxygen but it had ignored the suggestion. Now when the entire country is reeling under the crisis of oxygen shortage, it has decided to divert the oxygen supply scheduled for the state to Uttar Pradesh. "SAIL, which used to supply oxygen to us, has been asked to send the oxygen to Uttar Pradesh. This will increase the crisis of oxygen in our state," Banerjee said at a press conference on Friday. "Presently, there is a crisis of oxygen and medicines. We have stopped supplying oxygen for industrial purposes and decided to use it for medical purposes only. We have arranged for a stock of 5,000 cylinders and there is an additional stock of 15,000 cylinders. This will create a storage of 20,000 cylinders which will meet our requirements for the next few days," the Chief Minister added. Later, the state government said in a note, "The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, government of India, had on April 21 allotted 200 MT of oxygen from different plants located in West Bengal to outside the state. As per the current patient load and the rising trend of the infection, it is expected that the consumption level in West Bengal will radically rise to roughly 450 MT per day in the next couple of weeks."



PAK'S EDHI FOUNDATION OFFERS TO SEND 50 AMBULANCES TO HELP INDIA

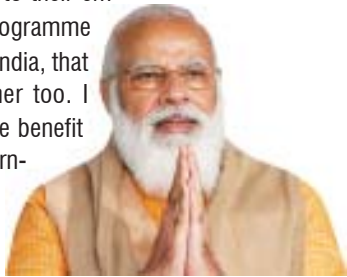
PAK PRAYS FOR INDIA AMID TESTING COVID TIMES

CONTD. FROM PAGE 3

"Edhi Foundation sympathized with India during this difficult time and offered help in the form of a fleet of 50 ambulances along with our services to assist you in addressing and further circumventing the current health conditions. We wish to lend you our full support, without any inconvenience to you, which is why we will arrange all necessary supplies that our team needs to assist the people of India," the letter added. Pakistan's Edhi Foundation, in a magnanimous gesture offered a fleet of 50 ambulances and its staff to help manage the crisis brought about by the coronavirus pandemic in India. "As a neighbouring friend, we sympathise with you greatly and during this strenuous time, we would like to extend our help in the form of a fleet of 50 ambulances along with our services to assist you in addressing, and further circumventing, the current health conditions," reads a letter written by Faisal Edhi, Chairman of the Edhi Foundation to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. With the Covid-19 situation in India continuing to wreak havoc on the neighbouring country, the people of Pakistan - politicians, journalists, and citizens - are all prayers, sending wishes and expressing genuine concerns for all Indians. The second wave of the COVID-19 outbreak is challenging the country's health infrastructure with devastation, struggle and suffering, bringing it under severe stress. In these testing times, while the whole world is pouring in with prayers and best wishes for the people of India; through the weekend, #PakistanstandswithIndia and #Indianeedsupport remained as top trends on the social media platform Twitter as alarming numbers of positive cases of the novel coronavirus battered Indians. Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan has expressed solidarity with the people of India, offering every kind of support in difficult times. On April 24, Imran Khan @ImranKhanPTI tweeted: I want to express our solidarity with the people of India as they battle a dangerous wave of COVID-19. Our prayers for a speedy recovery go to all those suffering from the pandemic in our neighbourhood & the world. We must fight this global challenge confronting humanity together. Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi has also expressed support to the people of India, stating that humanitarian issues require responses beyond political considerations.

DON'T FALL PREY TO MISINFORMATION ON COVID: PM MODI

NEW DELHI, (IANS) Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday appealed to countrymen to seek all Covid related information only through correct sources and not to fall prey to misinformation. Addressing the nation in the 76th episode of 'Mann Ki Baat', Modi said, "If you need any information, if you have any apprehension, get the information only from the correct source." He said that for right information one can consult one's family doctor or doctors in the neighbourhood on the phone. "I am noticing that many of our doctors are taking upon themselves this responsibility, on their own to educate people. Many doctors are providing information to people through social media. They are counseling on phone and WhatsApp. Many hospitals have websites where information is available. You can seek advice of doctors too," he said. The Prime Minister informed the countrymen that in the days gone by, to tide over this crisis, he had long deliberations with experts from various sectors. "People from our Pharma industry, vaccine manufacturers, those connected with oxygen production, experts from the medical field have put forth their valuable suggestions to the government. This time, to emerge victorious in this battle, we have to accord priority to experts and scientific advice," he said. Modi explained that the Government of India is using its entire might to give a fillip to the endeavours of State Governments and the State Governments too are trying their best to fulfill their responsibilities. "Presently, the country's doctors and health workers are waging a colossal battle against Corona," the Prime Minister said. He also appealed to people not to fall prey to any rumour about vaccine. "All are getting aware of the importance of vaccine, so it is my appeal, don't get swayed by any rumour about the vaccine," he said. He further stated: "You all must be knowing that people above 45 years of age can benefit from the free vaccine that has been sent to all state governments by the government of India." He highlighted that now from May 1 onwards, the vaccine is going to be made available for every person above 18 years in the country. Now the Corporate Sector, companies too will be able to participate in the programme of administering vaccine to their employees. "I also want to say that the programme of free vaccine by the government of India, that is going on now, will continue further too. I appeal also to the states to extend the benefit of this free vaccine campaign of government of India to maximum number of people of their state," the Prime Minister said.



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PM TRUDEAU & HIS WIFE, SOPHIE GREGOIRE TRUDEAU, RECEIVE ASTRAZENECA VACCINE (JUSTIN TRUDEAU/ TWITTER)

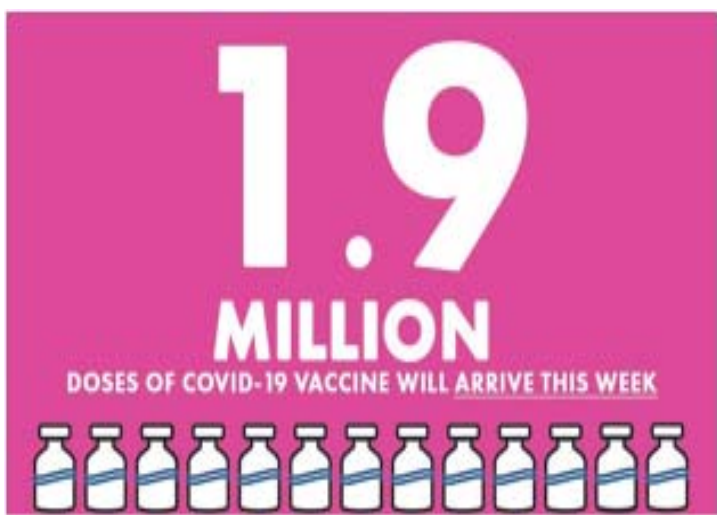
ONTARIO EXPANDS COVID-19 VACCINATION BOOKING TO INDIVIDUALS 45 AND OVER IN HOT SPOT COMMUNITIES

The Ontario government is expanding booking for COVID-19 vaccination appointments to individuals 45 and over in designated hot spot communities in 13 public health units, as identified by postal code, through its provincial booking system. Child care workers in licensed child care settings across the province will also be eligible to book their COVID-19 vaccination appointments. All individuals who are 45 and over in 2021, living in one of the 114 high-risk neighbourhoods, will be eligible to book a COVID-19 vaccine appointment at a mass immunization clinic through the provincial online booking system and call centre or directly through public health units that use their own booking system. "This is a step forward in Phase Two of our vaccine distribution plan to ensure we are protecting people and communities most at risk," said Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health. "By using every available channel to deliver vaccines, we are working to vaccinate Ontarians as quickly as possible and stop the spread in our communities. I encourage everyone who is eligible to book their appointment as soon as they can." Despite facing consistent challenges in receiving a stable and reliable supply of COVID-19 vaccines, Ontario has continued to ramp up capacity and expand its rollout to additional groups. Keeping childcare open is critical to the mental health and well-being of children and in supporting working parents in Ontario. Effective Thursday, April 29, 2021, child care workers in licensed child care settings will be eligible to book an appointment through the Provincial

Vaccine Booking Line number at 1-833-943-3900 or directly through public health units that use their own booking system. Eligible workers in licensed child care settings will receive a letter from their employer. This letter must be available at the point of booking and taken to the vaccination appointment. In the coming weeks, eligibility will be expanded to child care workers in unlicensed child care settings across the province. "Ontario's child care workers are making a difference and supporting working parents at this critical time," said Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education. "That's why child care workers provincewide will be eligible to book a vaccine appointment. Our child care centres are safe and the expansion of vaccines will further protect children and staff." Ontarians who are now eligible to book their vaccine appointment are asked to be patient, as it could take time for them to receive an appointment. Vaccine administration rates are based on supply of vaccines from the federal government, local context and may differ as vaccine supply is delivered across the province. For more information on local vaccine rollout, individuals are encouraged to visit their public health unit's website. "Expanding age bands within hot spot communities is part of our targeted approach to help limit the spread of COVID-19 in neighbourhoods and communities that have been disproportionately impacted by this deadly virus," said Solicitor General Sylvia Jones. "I am encouraging everyone to please get vaccinated when it is your turn as this is the best way to protect your health and the health of those around you."

Masses help Covid-hit families find beds, food via social media in India

NEW DELHI, (IANS) With an absence of a central/state level repository of data pertaining to the availability of oxygen and ICU beds in the severely hit states, people from various walks of life are currently using social media platforms by collating information on Covid-19 resources to help the needy. Twitter and Facebook have become the virtual command centres with the help of users, as governments fail to provide any real-time data on the availability of life-saving drugs and beds as the crisis deepens. Amid the chaos and false information being circulated is a silver lining for thousands of corona-hit families from Delhi and Lucknow to Bengaluru, who are seeking help on Twitter and other social media platforms. Some have come forward to help people suffering from pandemic-induced mental stress, via Zoom or Google Meet apps. "In the next few weeks, I'm blocking some time to offer free psychotherapy sessions to anyone who'd like a layer of support in these distressing times. I can provide a safe listening space & share some coping strategies. Kindly RT for reach. DMs open. First come, first serve," posted Shruti Goutham who works in public health with Stanford Med School. Ershad Kaleebullah, the editor of MySmartPrice.com, tweeted: "Two fantastic online resources for Hospital Beds here: Bangalore – covidbengaluru.com and Delhi – coronabeds.jantasamvad.org/beds.html. RT to help people in need". Some posted information about where to find free food in such difficult times. Ankit Vengurlekar, India Managing Editor at LinkedIn News, posted: "Saroj Didi and Jaya amma are cooking fresh and homely vegetarian meals for Covid patients in HSR Layout, Koramangala, BTM Layout and Bellandur. Didi's Kitchen meals are free and made with love. All you need to do is book Dunzo/Swiggy genie pick-up from my home in HSR. DM if you need a tiffin". Prem Shankar Mishra from Lucknow tweeted: "Here is the information on where to find a hospital with referral and without a referral, along with the cost. This will help reduce your waiting time and cut travel woes too". With 3,52,991 fresh Covid cases and 2,812 deaths, India saw a new record high as a deadly second wave sweeps the country. This is the fifth straight day that over 3 lakh cases have been recorded in the country and nearly 10 lakh cases have been reported in the last 72 hours.



CANADA IS ALL SET TO RECEIVE ANOTHER 1.9M DOSES THIS WEEK 1M PFIZERVACCINE DOSES, 650K MODERNA VACCINE STARTING MID-WEEK & 300K JOHNSON & JOHNSON VACCINE LATER THIS WEEK WITH DISTRIBUTION NEXT WEEK (ANITA ANAND/ TWITTER)

Residents 18 years or older that live in hot spot communities can book a COVID-19 vaccine appointment at the following clinics.

For all Peel hot spot postal codes

- L4T, L4W, L4X, L4Z
- L5A, L5B, L5C, L5K, L5L, L5M, L5N, L5R, L5V, L5W
- L6P, L6R, L6S, L6T, L6V, L6W, L6X, L6Y, L6Z
- L7A, L7C

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INDIAN-AMERICAN CIVIL RIGHTS LAWYER, VANITA GUPTA, NARROWLY CONFIRMED AS ASSOCIATE AG



CONTD. FROM PAGE 3
Senator Lisa Murkowski gave her the crucial vote on Wednesday in the 100-member Senate, which is evenly divided between the Republican and Democratic parties, to assume the third-highest position in the Justice Department. Gupta is a legendary figure in the US civil rights movement having as a newly-minted lawyer won the release of 38 people, most of them African-Americans, who had been wrongly convicted by all-White juries on drug charges in a Texas town and also got them \$6 million in compensation. She went on to become the Principal Deputy Associate Attorney-General and head of the Civil Rights Division during former President Barack Obama's administration. Gupta overcame a campaign against her estimated to have run close to a million dollars by conservative and right-wing groups portraying as a "radical" who was against law enforcement. But she also received the support of other conservative Republicans and law enforcement groups. The Senate Judiciary Committee, which has to give preliminary approval for Gupta's confirmation, was deadlocked on her nomination for more than a month and the Senate bypassed it.

CANADA TO PROVIDE \$10 MILLION (RS 60 CR) TO INDIA TO COMBAT COVID

CONTD. FROM PAGE 3
Canadian minister Karina Gould tweeted on Tuesday night: "Announced today: We are providing \$10 million through the @redcrosscanada to the @IndianRedCross to support people in India as they combat #COVID19." Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on Wednesday retweeted the tweet with the caption: "Right now, the people of India are facing a tragic situation. To help with everything from ambulance services to buying personal protective equipment, we're contributing \$10 million to @IndianRedCross through @RedCrossCanada. We stand ready to donate extra medical supplies, too." India on Wednesday reported over three lakh fresh Covid-19 cases for the seventh consecutive day. According to the health ministry data, a total of 3,60,960 new cases and 3,293 deaths were reported in the past 24 hours.

MUSLIM YOUTHS PERFORMED LAST RITES OF HINDU WOMAN

PATNA, (IANS) As the country is fighting the severe crisis due to the surge in the Covid-19 cases and fatalities, a group of Muslim youths have set an example of Hindu-Muslim unity in Bihar's Gaya district as they cremated a 58-year-old Hindu woman who suspectedly died due to Covid-19. A video went viral where Muslim men are seen carrying the bier of deceased. The said video is of Tetaria village under Imamganj police station where a woman, identified as Prabhawati Devi (58), who was admitted to a private hospital died during the treatment and the doctors believe that she might be infected with Covid-19. Mohamad Shariq, a social worker in Imamganj said: "When her health deteriorated during the treatment, the doctors asked her parents for Covid test. The rapid antigen test appeared negative but she died during the treatment."

SPECIALY ABLED AIIMS STAFF HELPING PATIENTS IN TESTING TIMES

NEW DELHI, (IANS) Santdev Chauhan is an employee in AIIMS for the last 25 years and is working day and night to help the poor during this pandemic. He is facilitating the treatment of the people coming to AIIMS from far flung areas. Santdev is running a community kitchen, feeding about fifty people daily and also helps people in lodging. While talking to IANS, he said, "I am working in AIIMS for many years but it is now that I get satisfaction when I help people who are in distress, sometimes financially also. I have also donated my one year's salary to PM-Cares fund." Santdev hails from Mau in UP. He said that he got the passion for social service from his grandfather. Santdev is the head of AIIMS Disabled Employees Federation which has around 2,000 members including some doctors, nurses and other staff. When asked about his experience, he said that he has helped hundreds of people and today also I have paid for a patient's tests. He is also helping the specially abled community to get vaccinated as soon as possible. The country is facing tough times during the pandemic and many people are running away from their responsibilities and some are indulging in illegal activities like black marketing and other means to make money.

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BANK OF CANADA WILL HOLD CURRENT LEVEL OF POLICY RATE AT 0.25%

The Bank of Canada today held its target for the overnight rate at the effective lower bound of ¼ percent, with the Bank Rate at ½ percent and the deposit rate at ¼ percent. The Bank continues to provide extraordinary forward guidance on the path for the overnight rate, reinforced and supplemented by the Bank's quantitative easing (QE) program. Effective the week of April 26, weekly net purchases of Government of Canada bonds will be adjusted to a target of \$3 billion. This adjustment to the amount of incremental stimulus being added each week reflects the progress made in the economic recovery.

The outlook has improved for both the global and Canadian economies. Activity has proven more resilient than expected in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the rollout of vaccines is progressing. A number of regions, including Canada, are experiencing a difficult third wave of infections and lockdowns. The more contagious variants of the virus are straining healthcare systems and affecting hard-to-distance activities, and have introduced a new dimension of uncertainty. The recovery remains highly dependent on the evolution of the pandemic and the pace of vaccinations.

Global economic growth is stronger than was forecast in the January Monetary Policy Report (MPR), although the pace varies considerably across countries. After a contraction of 2 ½ percent in 2020, the Bank now projects global GDP to grow by just over 6 ¾ percent in 2021, about 4 percent in 2022, and almost 3 ½ percent in 2023. The recovery in the United States has been particularly strong, owing to fiscal stimulus and rapid vaccine rollouts. The global recovery has lifted commodity prices, including oil, contributing to the strength of the Canadian dollar. In Canada, growth in the first quarter appears considerably stronger than the Bank's January forecast, as households and companies adapted to the second wave and associated restrictions. Substantial job gains in February and March boosted employment. However, new lockdowns will pose another setback and the labour market remains difficult for many Canadians, especially low-wage workers, young people and women. As vaccines roll out and the economy reopens, consumption is expected to rebound strongly in the second half of this year and remain robust over the projection. Housing construction and resales are at historic highs, driven by the desire for more living space, low mortgage rates, and limited supply. The Bank will continue to monitor the potential risks



associated with the rapid rise in house prices. Meanwhile, strong growth in foreign demand and higher commodity prices are expected to drive a robust recovery in exports and business investment. Additional federal and provincial fiscal stimulus will contribute importantly to growth. The Bank now forecasts real GDP growth of 6 ½ percent in 2021, moderating to around 3 ¾ percent in 2022 and 3 ¼ percent in 2023. The Bank has revised up its estimate of potential output in light of greater resilience to the pandemic and accelerated digitalization. The virus and lockdowns have had very different impacts across sectors, businesses, and groups of workers, creating an unusual degree of uncertainty about the amount of slack in the economy and how long it will take to be absorbed. To gauge the evolution of slack, the Bank will look at a broad spectrum of indicators, including various measures of labour market conditions.

Over the next few months, inflation is expected to rise temporarily to around the top of the 1-3 percent inflation-control range. This is largely the result of base-year effects—year-over-year CPI inflation is higher because prices of some goods and services fell sharply at the start of the pandemic. In addition, the increase in oil prices since December has driven gasoline prices above their pre-pandemic levels. The Bank expects CPI inflation to ease back toward 2 percent over the second half of 2021 as these base-year effects diminish, and inflation is expected to ease further because of the ongoing drag from excess capacity. As slack is absorbed, inflation should return to 2 per cent on a sustained basis sometime in the second half of 2022. Even as economic prospects improve, the Governing Council judges that there is still considerable excess capacity, and the recovery continues to require extraordinary monetary policy support. We remain committed to holding the policy interest rate at the effective lower bound until economic slack is absorbed so that the 2 percent inflation target is sustainably achieved. Based on the Bank's latest projection, this is now expected to happen sometime in the second half of 2022. The Bank is continuing its QE program to reinforce this commitment and keep interest rates low across the yield curve. Decisions regarding further adjustments to the pace of net purchases will be guided by Governing Council's ongoing assessment of the strength and durability of the recovery. We will continue to provide the appropriate degree of monetary policy stimulus to support the recovery and achieve the inflation objective.

PARENTS BEGIN RECEIVING DIRECT SUPPORT UNDER ONTARIO COVID-19 CHILD BENEFIT



TORONTO — Stephen Lecce, Ontario's Minister of Education, made a statement about the Ontario COVID-19 Child Benefit: "As we have done before, our government is again providing direct relief to families to help offset additional costs incurred as a result of the pandemic. I am pleased to confirm that payments to parents through the Ontario COVID-19 Child Benefit will begin on April 26, 2021, to help working parents of students aged 0 through Grade 12, and up to age 21 for children and youth with special needs, with direct financial support during this pandemic. COVID-19 has imposed many costs on moms, dads and caregivers across the province, and we are committed to helping them through this incredible challenge. To make this easier on families, individuals who previously received the Support for Learners payments will not be required to reapply — you will automatically receive your payment. We also know affordable child care is critical to working parents, which is why our government supported the creation of 16,000 new spaces in 2019-20. We are also proposing to enhance the Childcare Access and Relief from Expenses (CARE) tax credit by 20 per cent for 2021, which would increase support from \$1,250 to \$1,500, on average, providing about \$75 million in additional support for the child care expenses of over 300,000 families. Ontario is committed to building an affordable child care system that is flexible and responsive to the unique needs of all families."

BACKGROUND: The government is providing a new round of payments through Ontario's COVID-19 Child Benefit. In total, Ontario will have provided families \$1.8 billion since last March. The payment will be doubled to \$400 per child and \$500 for any child and youth up to age 21 with special needs. The government is automatically providing this round of payments to parents who received Support for Learners payments, and money will begin to flow on April 26th. Parents who received a confirmation email but have not received their payment by May 10 should contact the call centre for further information — toll-free at 1-888-444-3770, and toll-free TTY at 1-800-268-7095. Parents who did not apply for or receive the Support for Learners program can apply for the new funding starting May 3 with a deadline of May 17. Applications will be open on Monday, May 3, 2021. More information about how to apply will be available at Ontario.ca/covidchildbenefit shortly.

GTA NEW HOME MARKET STRONG IN MARCH: BILD

TOTAL MARCH NEW HOME SALES, WITH 5,003 UNITS SOLD, WERE UP 37 PER CENT ABOVE THE 10-YEAR AVERAGE

The GTA new home market saw a very strong month in March, with sales of both single-family homes and condominium apartments above last year and above the 10-year average, the Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD) announced today. Total March new home sales, with 5,003 units sold, were up 27 per cent from March 2020 and 37 per cent above the 10-year average, according to Altus Group*, BILD's official source for new home market intelligence. "The new condominium apartment market picked up the pace in March as the spring market got underway," said Ryan Wyse, Altus Group's Manager, Analytics, Data Solutions. "The number of units in new projects launched and the number of sales was both well above the March average of the past 10 years and those newly launched projects saw particularly strong sales at the opening." Condominium apartments, including units in low, medium and high-rise buildings, stacked townhouses and loft units, accounted for 3,297 new home sales in March, up 11 per cent from March 2020 and 42 per cent above the 10-year average. It was the second-highest March for condominium apartment sales since 2000.

Sales of new single-family homes, including detached, linked, and semi-detached houses and townhouses (excluding stacked townhouses), with 1,706 units sold, were up 75 per cent from last March and 27 per cent above the 10-year average. With sales continuing to outpace new supply, the remaining inventory decreased in March compared to the previous month, to 11,471 units. The remaining inventory includes units in preconstruction projects, in projects currently under construction, and in completed buildings.

"The March new home sales figures prove what we've known all along: demand for housing in this region isn't going anywhere," said Dave Wilkes, BILD President & CEO. "Even as we continue to battle the third wave of the pandemic, it is vital that we don't lose sight of the long-term housing needs of the GTA and that we continue to work to remove barriers to building more supply." The benchmark price for new single-family homes rose to \$1,443,638, which was up 29.4 per cent over the last 12 months, and the benchmark price for new condominium apartments was \$1,064,317, which was up 8.3 per cent over the last 12 months.

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PUNJAB CM AMARINDER CHALLENGES NAVJOT SIDHU TO CONTEST AGAINST HIM FROM PATIALA



CONTD. FROM PAGE 3

In an interview to a private channel, the Chief Minister challenged Sidhu to clearly spell out whether he is a member of the Congress party. "If yes, then his continuing rant against his Chief Minister and the government amounts to gross indiscipline," said Amarinder Singh, adding that the Congress dissident ought to choose the side he is on because "he is indulging in breaking the discipline of the party, and the BJP won't take him back and as far as the SAD is concerned, they are also peeved with him". Without mincing words, the Chief Minister lauded Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee (PPCC) President Sunil Jakhar and said that he "is doing a good job and discharging his responsibility well so there is no question of Sidhu being appointed in Sunil Jakhar's place". "It has been just four years since Sidhu joined the Congress and as such there are many people who have started their career with the Youth Congress who are much senior to him. So how can he be given the post

of Deputy Chief Minister or PPCC President," Amarinder Singh asked. On the issue of Cabinet minister Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa and Jakhar tendering their resignations over the state government's handling of the 2015 sacrilege cases, the Chief Minister said that he had rejected the same. Referring to the recent high court verdict quashing the Special Investigating Team (SIT) probing the Kotkapura firing, the Chief Minister said that a new SIT has been approved which would take the case to its logical conclusion. However, he also said that the judgement has gone beyond its brief and it is not a judicial but a political judgement. On the issue of delay in the case, Amarinder Singh clarified that the recent judgement of the high court had nothing to do with the sacrilege cases and was related to the firing at Kotkapura. The sacrilege cases are going on and already a number of arrests have been made, he said. The Chief Minister said it was the previous SAD government which had handed over the cases to the CBI and the present Congress government had to approach the Supreme Court to get back the case files.

HIGH COURT ORDER ON SACRILEGE EXPOSES NEXUS, SAYS AKALI DAL

CHANDIGARH, (IANS) The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) on Saturday said the politically motivated, malicious and vendetta driven inquiry launched by Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh in league with AAP in cases of sacrilege as well as associated police firing cases had proved the Congress government and its collaborators were not interested in nailing the real culprits behind these heinous acts. Addressing a press conference here, senior SAD leaders Maheshinder Singh Grewal and Daljit Singh Cheema said the High court verdict in the Kotkapura firing case had exposed the unholy nexus between the Congress and AAP to defame the SAD as well as Sikh institutions. "Since the Chief Minister led the exercise by holding meetings to execute the Congress and AAP's political agenda along with leaders like PPCC President Sunil Jakhar, Navjot Sidhu and Sukhjinder Randhawa, he does not have any moral right to continue in office and should resign forthwith." The leaders asserted that Kejriwal was also hand in glove with the Congress in promoting and defending former tainted police officer Kunwar Vijay Pratap Singh, who was charged with executing the conspiracy. They said since a direct criminal conspiracy had been proved following the High court verdict, tainted former IG Kunwar Vijay Pratap should be charge sheeted and a criminal case should be registered against him and he should be arrested and punished for his misdeeds.

SACRILEGE CASE: PUNJAB CONGRESS PRESIDENT SUNIL JAKHAR, CABINET MINISTER SUKHJINDER RANDHAWA 'RESIGN', CM 'REJECTS'



CONTD. FROM PAGE 3

Also, the party's state unit chief, Sunil Jakhar, announced in the Cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Amarinder Singh that he is sending his resignation to party president Sonia Gandhi over the issue, it is reliably learnt. At the meeting, the Chief Minister, who tried to pacify them, tore their resignations and assured them that the culprits would be brought to justice soon. Two days ago, Randhawa had told the media that there has been a delay in delivering justice to the victims of police firing. "Someone's responsibility has to be fixed for this inexplicable delay. Our own government is also responsible for it. Four years of our government gone, and we could not even submit challans in time," he said. Even Amarinder Singh's former Cabinet colleague and Congress leader Navjot Singh Sidhu had questioned him for 'evading' responsibility as the Home Minister in the 2015 sacrilege case. "Is sacrilege case not the top priority for the Home Minister," Sidhu had asked the CM on Twitter. "Evading of responsibility and making only the Advocate General a scapegoat means the executive authority has no supervisory control. Who controls the AG? The legal team is just a pawn in this game of shifting responsibilities," the cricketer-turned-politician added. For quite some time, Sidhu, who has been lying low in the political circles since he had resigned from his post as a Cabinet minister in July 2019 after differences with the Chief Minister over portfolio allocation to him, has been blaming his government for 'weak' investigation into the cases related to the sacrilege issue. Two persons were killed and many others were injured after the police under the previous SAD-BJP government resorted to unprovoked firing on hundreds of people protesting against the alleged desecration of the Guru Granth Sahib in Bargari village in Faridkot district in 2015. "It is not a failure of the government or the party, but one person who is hand in glove with the culprits," Sidhu had said two days back.



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PAK PM CALLS IN ARMY AS COVID CASES SURGE



THE DATA FURTHER SHOWED THE BED OCCUPANCY IN THE INTENSIVE CARE UNITS OF LAHORE'S 16 STATE-RUN HOSPITALS REACHED 88.6 PER CENT AND IN HIGH DEPENDENCY UNITS 77.3 PER CENT. — REUTERS

ISLAMABAD, (IANS) Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan has said that he had asked the Pakistan Army to assist the police and law enforcement agencies in enforcing SOPs for curbing the spread of the coronavirus, warning that Pakistan may soon be facing a situation similar to India if the current trend continues. Addressing the nation after a meeting of the National Coordination Committee, he said: "I am appealing to you to follow SOPs so that we don't have to take steps that India is taking which means imposing lockdowns. Half the problem is solved when you wear face masks." New SOPs announced by the NCOC: Schools in districts with over 5 per cent positivity rate closed till Eid Markets to be closed at 6 p.m. Indoor and outdoor dining banned till Eid; only takeaway and delivery to be allowed Office timings limited to 2 p.m. 50 per cent of staff to be allowed in offices "If our circumstances become the same as India, then we will have to close down cities. We can't do that because, as experience has shown, the poor suffer the most when lockdowns are imposed," the Prime Minister said. "People are telling me to impose a lockdown today, but we are not going to do so because, and I keep repeating this, daily wagers and labourers will suffer the most." That is why we have not taken action, he said, adding that however long this lasts will depend on the people. The premier called on the nation to start observing precautionary measures, in the same way which you did

the previous year during Ramadan, the Dawn reported. "Pakistan was the only country which had kept mosques open last year during Ramadan. I was proud of the way our religious scholars and imams informed the people about precautionary measures," he said. The premier also noted that very few people were following SOPs. "If we don't take precautionary measures, we will have to impose a lockdown which will also affect our economy at a time when it is on the rise." The Prime Minister added that he had asked the Pakistan Army to assist the police and law enforcement agencies in enforcing SOPs. "We have been asking people to follow precautionary measures. But we have seen that people have become careless." He added that the government was making all out efforts to procure vaccines. "We have asked China, but their demand is also quite large. There is a shortage in the rest of the world." Even if we get the vaccines today, it will take at least a year for them to have an impact, he said. "What will make the biggest difference is following precautionary measures," he said, reiterating that half the problem is solved when wearing face masks. He hoped that once the nation starts following SOPs, the number of cases would decrease. "Until we face this together, we will not be able to win. I remember how a year ago people adopted precautionary measures and followed SOPs before Ramadan because they were scared. "But citizens have become tired over the span of a year and fatigue has set in which is why there is such a stark difference." He hoped the nation would follow SOPs so that the government is not forced to lock down cities.

‘DEVELOPED NATIONS SHOULD CONTRIBUTE MORE TO TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE’: UN

UNITED NATIONS, (IANS) United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called on developed countries to contribute more to defeating climate change during a US-hosted virtual event. "Let us mobilize political leadership to move ahead together — to overcome climate change, end our war on nature and build lives of dignity and prosperity for all," the UN chief told world leaders attending the Leaders Summit on Climate on Thursday, Xinhua news agency reported. The top UN official underscored that the past decade was the hottest on record. "Dangerous greenhouse gases are at levels not seen in 3 million years. Global temperature has risen 1.2 degrees Celsius — racing toward the threshold of catastrophe." "We need a green planet — but the world is on red alert," said the secretary-general. "We are on the verge of the abyss. We must make sure the next step is in the right direction." He called on leaders to take action to conquer climate change and reiterated his position to build a global coalition for net-zero emissions by mid-century. He urged countries to make this "a decade of transformation", calling on them to submit new and more ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions for mitigation, adaptation and finance, to layout actions and policies for the next 10 years aligned with a 2050 net-zero pathway. Guterres also called for efforts to "translate those commitments into concrete, immediate action". Moreover, he asked countries to put a price on carbon, end subsidies for



fossil fuels, ramp up investments in renewable energy and green infrastructure, stop the financing of coal and the building of new coal power plants, phase out coal by 2030 in the wealthiest countries and by 2040 everywhere else, and ensure a just transition for affected people and communities. Lastly, the secretary-general urged countries to make a breakthrough on finance and adaptation, stressing "this is critical for trust and collective action". Developed countries must deliver on public climate finance, including the long-promised \$100 billion for climate action in developing countries, at the G7 Summit scheduled for June in Britain, he underscored.

PAK-IRAN TIES MOVING TOWARDS POSITIVE COOPERATION: QURESHI

TEHRAN, (IANS) Pakistan and Iran are making headways towards increasing bilateral cooperation with border security and establishment of trade markets along the borders. Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, who is on a three-day visit to Iran, said that the relations between the two countries are moving towards positive cooperation. "Fraternal relations between the two countries had deepened during the visit," he said. "Iranian President Hassan Rouhani acknowledged that bilateral relation between Pakistan and Iran had improved. Pakistan has signed MoU with Iran to open trade centres in border areas." On the other hand, Rouhani highlighted that border security remained as the prime point of concern for Pakistan and Iran, which he said "could be tackled through greater cooperation between the two neighbours". "Security is a common concern for the two countries, and the development of relations in this regard is imperative," he said. An MoU was also signed to open the third cross-border market at Mand-Pishin border crossing point to enhance bilateral trade. But border security and cross-border movement of terrorists has been one of the prime issues of distrust between the two countries for some time. The 909 km-long border between Pakistan and Iran is filled with operating terror groups, criminal gangs, human traffick-

ers and drug traffickers. Terror attacks targeted at locals on both sides along with attacks on security forces on both sides, have kept relations between the two countries stretched. President Rouhani also offered support and cooperation to Pakistan in ensuring peace in Afghanistan, adding, "peace and stability could be ensured through regional mechanisms". "Iran and Pakistan, as two most important and effective neighbouring countries to Afghanistan, should increase cooperation and interaction for the development of the peace process in the country," he said. Qureshi stated that "Pakistan has vociferously expressed serious concern over the increasing trend of Islamophobia in the West, which was being fanned by certain extremist elements". "Pakistan does not oppose the right to freedom of speech and expression, but this did not give anyone the right to hurt other's feelings. Certain incidents in the past regarding publications of blasphemous sketches and statements hurt the sentiments of the entire Muslim ummah, including Pakistani nation," he said. Both countries have also expressed desire and intent to complete the unimplemented agreements, including the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline, which has been pending for long. Qureshi stated that both Pakistan and Iran realize the need to enhance bilateral relations and play progressive role in increasing people-to-people contact.

AUSTRALIA BANS ALL PASSENGER FLIGHTS FROM INDIA TILL MAY 15

Australia has banned all international flights from India for the next three weeks in view of the worsening COVID-19 situation in the country. Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced on Tuesday that the country has decided to suspend all direct passenger flights from India till May 15. The decision was taken during a meeting of the Cabinet's national security committee. The Prime Minister said that the situation will be reassessed before taking any further decisions. There are about 9,000 Australians in India who are registered with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade as wanting to return home. Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced a 'pause' in flights, blaming escalating cases in people coming back from India and going into Australia's hotel quarantine system. He said the halt will allow quarantine facilities to reduce cases before allowing more people in. The quarantine system has largely helped Australia to keep its COVID-19 numbers relatively low, with just under 29,700 cases and 910 deaths. Meanwhile, Australians stranded in India say the suspension on flights from the nation has left them feeling 'helpless' with many having already spent more than a year trying to get a seat on a plane home.

Climate Partnership to be 'core pillar' of US-India relations: Biden

NEW YORK, (IANS) US President Joe Biden has said that the climate partnership with India will be "a core pillar" of relations between the two countries. Speaking at the conclusion of the two-day, 40-nation Leaders Summit on Climate, Biden said on Friday that he was "looking forward to working with India's Prime Minister Modi's new partnership to achieve our climate and energy goals, making this a core pillar of our bilateral cooperation". Modi announced the US-India Climate and Clean Energy Agenda 2030 Partnership when he addressed the opening session of the summit on Thursday. He said that "together we will help mobilise investments, demonstrate clean technology and enable green collaboration". The key element of the partnership is enabling India to reach its goal of generating 450 gigawatts of clean, renewable energy by 2030. Listing the various action pledges made at the summit, Biden said, "The commitments we've made must become real commitment without us doing a lot of hot air. No pun intended". Biden said that "we need to limit warming to 1.5 degrees" centigrade or "all of us could be in a point of no return". Scientists consider that limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees centigrade is essential to prevent the devastating effects of climate change. US Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John explained on Thursday that if the partnership can enable India to reach its target of 450 gigawatts of clean energy, India would be on track to meet its commitment to helping hold down the temperature increase to 1.5 degrees. A joint statement by India and the US that they "aim to demonstrate how the world can align swift climate action with inclusive and resilient economic development, taking into account national circumstances and sustainable development priorities". Outlining the partnership's agenda the statement said it "will aim to mobilize finance and speed clean energy deployment; demonstrate and scale innovative clean technologies needed to decarbonise sectors including industry, transportation, power, and buildings; and build capacity to measure, manage, and adapt to the risks of climate-related impacts".

FLOYD CASE HISTORIC FOR RACIAL JUSTICE: MEDIA

WASHINGTON (IANS) The George Floyd case has brought historic profound ramifications to the issue of racial justice in the United States, US media. An opinion piece in The New York Times holds that the killing of Floyd not only led to massive protests, but also brought salience to racial justice in many aspects of American life, policing and healthcare, for example, Xinhua news agency reported on Saturday. "The entire arc of the Floyd case -- from his death and the protests through the trial and conviction of Chauvin -- played out against the backdrop of the coronavirus pandemic, which further focused attention on the nation's racial inequities: People of colour were among those hardest hit by the virus and by the economic dislocation that followed," it said. Former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin was found guilty Tuesday on all the three criminal charges in the murder of George Floyd last summer.

QUEEN THANKS PUBLIC FOR SUPPORT OVER PRINCE PHILIP'S PASSING

LONDON, (IANS) Queen Elizabeth II, who turned 95, gave her birthday message to thank the public for the "support and kindness" to her family and herself after the death of her husband, Prince Philip. The Queen's birthday, which comes a few days after the late prince's April 17 funeral, was marked in a low-key, private way, as there was no public celebrations when the monarch continues to observe two weeks of mourning until Friday, Xinhua news agency reported on Wednesday. Traditional gun salutes to mark the Queen's birthday have been cancelled for the second consecutive year. In a statement published on the royal family Twitter account, the Queen said she has received and appreciated many messages of good wishes on her 95th birthday. "While as a family we are in a period of great sadness, it has been a comfort to us all to see and to hear the tributes paid to my husband, from those within the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth and around the world." "My family and I would like to thank you all for the support and kindness shown to us in recent days," the statement said. The funeral of the Duke of Edinburgh, who died on April 9 at the age of 99, was held last Saturday in Windsor in line with the country's public health guidelines.



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Planned to make the most of these outstanding surroundings, The Landing community will include one contemporary 18-storey tower and five low-rise buildings that offer urban sophistication in the midst of small-town charm. Connected by shared central courtyards, this community will offer communal patios and grassy areas to invite interaction, activity and play. Architecture by leading industry firm IBI Group ensures that the

residences will create striking silhouettes on the Whitby landscape. Residents will also enjoy building amenities designed by the award-winning interior design firm Figure3. Among them are a luxurious lounge and event space for indoor and outdoor entertaining, complete with an outdoor barbecue terrace; a sun-filled, well-equipped modern fitness centre; and a yoga studio perfect for stretching, relaxing and toning. Add to that Zoom rooms and a workspace off the lobby, a dog wash and bike wash/repair and the appeal is irresistible.

The Landing's spacious suites boast contemporary kitchens and baths custom designed by Figure3. Luxurious standard features and finishes in every suite include quartz kitchen countertops, porcelain backsplashes and stainless-steel appliances. The suites have 9-foot ceiling heights, large windows for great views, and laminate flooring throughout. Suites

are available in a variety of layouts including one-, two- and three-bedroom designs. Many of the suites feature dens as well. The Landing definitely offers something for everyone from first-time buyers to active families and empty-nesters.

Whitby is home to an enviable array of amenities including a dynamic Lake Ontario waterfront offering opportunities for boating, sailing, fishing, paddle boarding, wind surfing and lounging on the sandy beach at Iroquois Beach Park. Whitby Marina is one of only 12 Ontario marinas designated with a 5-Diamond ranking, and the Whitby Lighthouse is a cherished landmark of the area. Durham College and University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT) are located in Whitby, and Trafalgar Castle School is considered one of the finest all-ages girls' private schools in Ontario. Other choices include pre-schools, public elementary and secondary schools, as well as French Immersion options.

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