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Coronavirus: What's happening in Canada and around the world on Monday

Intensive care cases in Australia's New South Wales will hit a peak in October as COVID-19 infections accumulate, said the premier of the country's most-populous state, which reported record daily new infections on Monday.

New South Wales, the epicentre of Australia's current outbreak, declared a record 1,290 new cases as the nation struggles to contain the highly contagious delta variant.

Premier Gladys Berejiklian said the state was preparing for additional hospitalizations as infections pile up, before increased vaccination coverage starts to ease the pressure.

"We anticipate that the worst month, the worst time for our intensive care unit, will be in October," Berejiklian said in the state capital Sydney.

"We will need to manage things differently because we are in the middle of a pandemic, but we will cope."

There are 840 people in hospital for COVID-19 in New South Wales, with 137 in intensive care and 48 requiring ventilation. The state reported four additional fatalities on Monday, taking the COVID-19 death toll to 1,003 in Australia.

One of the four was the first known death of an Aboriginal person. The 50-year-old man, who was not vaccinated, lived in western NSW where vaccination rates are particularly low, raising fears there will be many more deaths there.

"Aboriginal people were deemed to be vulnerable communities, vulnerable groups in the vaccine rollout. And clearly that has failed," Linda Burney, Labour's Shadow



Minister for Indigenous Australians, Tok Repenart.

Australia has used a system of strict lockdowns and quarantine to keep coronavirus infection and death rates lower than in most comparable nations, however the delta variant is now pressuring health services.

Just over 33 per cent of those aged 16 and older have received two vaccine doses, well below most comparable nations, according to government data.

What's happening around the world
 As of early Monday morning, more than 216.4 million cases of COVID-19 had been reported worldwide, according to Johns Hopkins University, which has been tracking coronavirus cases. The reported global death toll stood at 4.5 million.

In the Americas, the government's top infectious disease expert says the U.S. is sticking with its recommendation for Americans to get coronavirus booster shots eight months after receiving the vaccine but will be open to changes based on evolving data. Dr. Anthony Fauci said there's "no doubt" in his mind

that people will need to get an extra shot after they have received the two-dose Pfizer or Moderna vaccine, given the highly contagious delta variant.

Reports of waning immunity from COVID-19 vaccines, the potential need for booster shots and the possibility of breakthrough infections among the fully vaccinated may be leading many of us to second guess what we can and can't do safely in the fourth wave.

And the more contagious, potentially more deadly delta variant has prolonged the pandemic, made daily life more difficult to navigate and turned back the clock on our collective plans to return to a relatively normal life.

"Everyone needs this darned virus to go away," said Dr. David Naylor, who led the federal inquiry into Canada's national response to the 2003 SARS epidemic and now co-chairs the federal government's COVID-19 immunity task force. "But it's not done with us yet."

It was easy to think that once most of us rolled up our sleeves and did our part to get vaccinated and protect ourselves and our communities from COVID-19 that this would all be over, but the unfortunate truth is that we still have a ways to go.

"We need to rethink this," said Linsey Marr, an expert on virus transmission at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Va. "It is emotionally upsetting because we thought we saw the light at the end of the tunnel - but apparently the tunnel is longer."

Unvaccinated driving Canada's 4th wave
 "The hard truth is that despite our collective efforts to stave off another wave of the pandemic through widespread vaccination, Canada is continuing to see a troubling rise in COVID-19 levels across much of the country."

Why Canadians need to keep their guard up in the 4th wave - even if they're fully vaccinated

Over the past week, new COVID-19 cases have risen to an average of 2,848 per day - an increase of 29 per cent over the previous seven days.

Daily hospitalizations have also climbed 39 per cent week-over-week to an average of 917 across the country, while ICU admissions are also up by an average of 29 per cent per day in 340 over the past week.

That's despite having 66 per cent of the Canadian population fully vaccinated - a number that has plateaued in recent weeks, but is remarkably high nonetheless.

So why isn't that enough? The answer lies with those who haven't yet gotten a shot.

Since vaccines became available in December, just 0.8 per cent of cases, one per cent of hospitalizations and 1.4 per cent of deaths from COVID-19 have been in fully vaccinated Canadians, according to the latest available data from the Public Health Agency of Canada.

"When we look at where cases and certainly hospitalizations are showing up right now, we're seeing massive over-representation in unvaccinated communities," said Jason Kindrachuk, an assistant professor of viral pathogenesis at the University of Manitoba and Canada Research Chair of emerging viruses. "So the vaccines are working."

But there are still millions of Canadians who have yet to get vaccinated - either by choice or due to a lack of access or eligibility - and that's putting all of us at risk.

Unvaccinated Canadians pose risks to vaccinated
 The bottom line is the vaccines aren't perfect (and were never purported to be) and even the fully vaccinated are at some risk of COVID-19, which adds to the confusion of how Canadians should proceed in the weeks and months ahead.

Dr. Allison McGeer, a medical

Why Canadians need to keep their guard up in the 4th wave - even if they're fully vaccinated



microbiologist and infectious disease specialist at Toronto's Mount Sinai Hospital who worked on the front lines of the SARS epidemic in 2003, says the unvaccinated pose two different threats to vaccinated Canadians in the fourth wave.

"Firstly, they pose a direct risk of transmission, and while the vaccine is very effective at protecting you from serious illness and death - it's not 100 per cent. Nothing in life is 100 per cent," she said.

"The second thing that unvaccinated people do is they increase the spread of coronavirus in the population. So if you release restrictions, unvaccinated people contribute substantially more to the growth of transmission in the community."

To put it bluntly, the longer the remaining Canadians put off getting a shot - and until we can get kids under 12 vaccinated - the more the pandemic drags on.

And while we've come a long way since the beginning of the pandemic, we're still nowhere near where we need to be to control the delta variant.

Naylor says that even though Canada has vaccinated over 83 per cent of our eligible population over the age of 12 with one dose and more than 75 per cent with two, that's still not enough to stave off a fourth wave.

"That's very helpful and should mitigate the toll of the fourth wave compared to earlier waves," he said. "But it makes no sense to leave a lot of immunological room for this virus to spread and cause more harm."

Delta has changed the rules of the

Why Canadians need to keep their guard up in the 4th wave - even if they're fully vaccinated

game - raising the immunity threshold we need to hit, increasing risk in our day-to-day lives and meaning even fully vaccinated Canadians need to keep their guard up.

Ontario, a provincial government agency, said in a recent report that the delta variant has kicked the possibility of herd immunity further down the road - meaning we may now need an estimated 90 per cent of the population fully vaccinated to get there.

"Vaccines are not a panacea, but if everybody got vaccinated - this is done," said Raywat Deonandan, a global health epidemiologist and associate professor at the University of Ottawa. "Despite the fact these vaccines aren't perfect."

Delta changing rules of the game
 The challenge we face at this stage of the pandemic is that delta has changed the rules of the game - raising the immunity threshold we need to hit, increasing risk in our day-to-day lives and meaning even fully vaccinated Canadians need to keep their guard up.

But instead of coming together in a cohesive way, the country once again divided over vaccine passports, mask mandates and reinstating public health restrictions - leaving a patchwork system across the country that leaves room for the virus to spread.

Ontario and Alberta have vehemently rejected the idea of vaccine passports to date, although Ontario may soon change course, while British Columbia joined Quebec and Manitoba in announcing passports for the fully vaccinated in response to the fourth wave.

Saskatchewan announced this week that not only would it not be implementing vaccine passports - it also won't reintroduce indoor mask mandates or lower capacity limits on gatherings despite rising COVID-19 levels.

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Economic aid is Canada's leverage against Taliban: Garneau

Canada will use economic aid as leverage to help ensure the safe passage of those hoping to flee Afghanistan, Foreign Affairs Minister Marc Garneau said in an agreement with the Taliban was announced Sunday.

"We're working through various channels, along with many other countries, to speak to the Taliban and to get them to agree to a very fundamental demand, which is that all Afghans who wish to leave the country should be able to do so," Garneau told CBC chief political correspondent Rosemary Barton in an interview on Rosemary Barton Live Sunday.

Minutes after that interview, a joint statement by 98 countries, including Canada, said an agreement had been reached with the Taliban ensuring that departures from the country could continue.

"We have received assurances from the Taliban that all foreign nationals and any Afghan citizen with travel authorization from our countries will be allowed to proceed in a safe and orderly manner to points of departure



and travel outside the country," the statement said. The statement noted that countries "have the clear expectation of aid and commitment from the Taliban that they can travel to our respective countries," but departures would rely on the Taliban's holding to that agreement. The statement did not include any mention of consequences for breaking the agreement.

Asked earlier Sunday about how Canada could exert leverage on the group - which this country considers a terrorist entity - to ensure safe passage, Garneau said it was "primarily economic," citing recently announced humanitarian aid and development aid already committed to Afghanistan.

"There's all sorts of leverage with respect to the Taliban, who are now confirming the fact they're in charge and they're going to have to make the country work," Garneau said. Garneau said Canada is not in direct contact with the group that now controls Afghanistan, but is working through allies like the United States and France.

There are still thousands of people with links to Canada, including

citizens and permanent residents, still in Afghanistan, Garneau said, although he did not provide precise figures. Canadian evacuee missions from the Kabul airport ended Thursday, and U.S. President Joe Biden said he will stick to his Aug. 31 deadline for the end of U.S. operations.

CBC News learned Sunday that more people destined for Canada have been able to leave Afghanistan since Friday, according to a government source not authorized to speak publicly on the matter. Two planes originating from third countries also carrying people from Afghanistan were set to land in Toronto by the end of the day Sunday.

Current situation "very volatile": Garneau

Garneau said Canada is working with regional partners to help ease the way to Canada for those who might be able to leave Afghanistan for neighbouring third countries, such as Pakistan.

The government has told those hoping to leave Afghanistan and travel to Canada to stay in place and not attempt to reach the Kabul airport.

In an interview that aired Saturday on CBC's "The Hour," a man who worked as a contractor with Canada in Kandahar said it was unsafe to stay in place.

Board of Trade have also called for a vaccine certificate system as a way to avoid a fourth-wave lockdown.

While campaigning Friday, Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau said he would pay a billion-dollar fund to help provinces create their own vaccine passports, and called on Ford to "step up" and implement one.

"If a province requires that everyone at a local restaurant, gym or other non-essential business location be fully vaccinated and show proof of vaccination," Trudeau said, Ottawa would pay for the development and the rollout of that program.

"It keeps people safe. It encourages everyone to do the right thing. It keeps our businesses open and it keeps our economy rebuilding," Trudeau said.

In a statement following the news, Green Party of Ontario Leader Mike Schreiner called on Ford to "take politics out of vaccine passports" and act immediately to implement the program.

"This is an announcement that should have come weeks ago, but Ford was nowhere to be seen."

"Other provinces are well on their way to issuing vaccine certificates to protect residents and help small businesses stay open. But Doug Ford once again has Ontario playing catch up," he said.

Trudeau says he won't back down after protesters hurl death threats, racist and sexist slurs

For the second time in a week, Liberal Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has had a campaign event disrupted by protesters shouting obscenities, uttering death threats against the prime minister and hurling racist and misogynist insults at people of colour and women in his protective detail.

While making a stump speech to promote his party's climate change policies in Cambridge, Ont. Sunday morning, the Liberals were forced to delay Trudeau's appearance for an hour because of the disruptions.

Signs brandished by angry protesters displayed slogans such as "Who benefits from the lock down" and "The Liberals ruined the country," with one protester shouting through a megaphone decked out with the name, "InfoWars," a U.S.-based far-right conspiracy-theory website.

When the event did start, it was disrupted by hooting horns and foul and threatening language hurled from a crowd of people - almost all of whom were unmasked and were not maintaining physical distance from one another.

"No, I'm not going to back down on a message that Canadians know is the right path forward, and that's why Canadians need to choose to move Canada forward in this pivotal time," he would walk away from.

"I'm not going to back down on a message that Canadians know is the right path forward, and that's why Canadians need to choose to move Canada forward in this pivotal time," he would walk away from.

As he walked away, a woman in the crowd shouted a racist remark at a police officer of colour on Trudeau's protective detail, while another protester was heard making misogynist remarks to a female police officer on the detail.

"First of all, I want to thank the police officers, local and national, who do an amazing job in both keeping people safe and allowing Canadians to express themselves," Trudeau said. "That is what an election is all about. We may disagree with them, and of course, we will always condemn violence and hatred."

"This needs to make us ever more convinced of the importance of the choice in this election. Do we fall into division and hatred and racism and violence, or do we stay?" On Sunday, the Conservative Party

"We should be having a healthy



tweeted: "The threatening images and behaviour are disgusting. This needs to stop immediately. Canada is better than this."

Trudeau has been dogged by protesters at many of his campaign events in Bolton, Ont., Friday night when hundreds of angry protesters showed up at the Liberals' outdoor rally.

Among the protesters of Friday were anti-vaccination activists who shouted vulgarities at Liberal volunteers and carried anti-Trudeau signs and flags scrawled with obscenities. The crowd was frustrated with Trudeau's push to make vaccines mandatory in some settings and his support for provincial vaccine passports to restrict entry into some non-essential businesses.

Video footage from the event shows a handful of people with blue Conservative-branded T-shirts among the unmasked crowd assembled for the protest, which also included a strong contingent of people angry over the federal government's ban on flavours in smoking cessation devices, such as e-cigarettes.

Conservatives had protesters from volunteering in response to the behaviour, Conservative candidate Kyle Seeback said.

In the materials, she suggested federal Liberals would pursue a "climate lockdown" and said her constituents should make the upcoming election "a referendum on menelodowns."

Tories need to crack down on conspiracy theories: Trudeau

Gallant also released a video in June in which she asked: "How long do you think it will take for the Trudeau Liberals to start calling for a climate lockdown?"

Liberals shared a screenshot of Gallant's flyer online Sunday,

prompting the Conservative Party to allege that the Liberals have candidates who support "9/11 truster conspiracies."

In a tweet, the party highlighted a 2011 tweet from Toronto Centre Liberal incumbent Marci Ien, in which she said "Loose Change 9-11: An American Coup," a 9/11 conspiracy theory documentary, "really makes you think about what really happened on September 11, 2001."

The tweet came to light in the Toronto Centre by-election last October. Ien, a former journalist, tweeted at the time "I've spoken often with the families of 9/11 victims and shared their stories as a broadcaster - and I'll also do everything I can as an MP... to help keep Canadians safe from such tragedies."

"O'Toole wouldn't tell reporters if the founder's comments acceptable and instead pivoted to promoting his platform, which includes a plan to fight climate change."

"We're running on a plan to get our country back on its feet, not on things that happened months or years ago," he said.

Shortly after O'Toole's statement was released threatening to turf people from caucus if they didn't support the Conservative climate plan, Gallant tweeted that she is proud to run on the Conservatives' recovery plan platform "in its entirety."

Conservative campaign spokesperson Corey Hann said party officials spoke with Gallant Sunday about the views she expressed in the video and that she removed them as a result of that conversation. Gallant posted the tweet after the party asked her to publicly confirm her support for the party platform, he said.

Asked about Gallant earlier Sunday, Trudeau said it was "extremely disappointing" to see elected politicians "peddle in conspiracy theories."

"It's not enough for leaders like Erin O'Toole to simply distance themselves from those comments. He has to flat-out condemn them and then correct the record," he said.

Drawing a link to the aggressive protests outside of this event, Trudeau said the Conservative leader can help people "shouting out here today" understand they are misinformed on matters such as climate change and vaccines.

"We know they don't listen to me. Perhaps they will listen to Erin O'Toole," he said. "That's the choice that Erin O'Toole needs to make right now around Cheryl Gallant and all of these conspiracy theories being peddled."

Ontario to institute vaccine passport system, sources say

Ontario will announce a form of proof-of-vaccine certification - commonly known as a "vaccine passport" - for the province, sources tell CBC News. The plan is expected to be revealed early next week.

Sources with knowledge of the plan spoke on condition of confidentiality because they weren't authorized to speak publicly.

The implementation of the COVID-19 vaccine passport will be discussed at a cabinet meeting scheduled for Tuesday. Sources say that while some cabinet members are opposed to a vaccine passport, the program will go ahead.

The possibility of a vaccine passport for Ontario was first reported by Global News.

Pressure has mounted on Premier Doug Ford's government in recent weeks to institute some sort of vaccine passport as the province navigates a fourth wave of the pandemic driven by the delta variant.

Many local medical officers of health, as well as mayors of some of

Ontario's biggest cities and independent medical experts, have publicly joined the chorus, saying a clear, effective province-wide system is needed to avoid confusion and curb the current wave.

Quebec and B.C. already have created smartphone-based vaccine passports that people can use to prove their COVID-19 immunization status in commercial or public spaces - everything from bars and restaurants to bowling alleys and hockey rinks - where provincial law will soon require proof of a shot before entry.

Manitoba has also announced plans for a vaccine mandate that will restrict restaurants, fitness centres, theatres and ticketed sporting events to people who show proof of vaccination.

Ford has resisted passports. The provincial government had said as recently as Wednesday that it was not planning to implement vaccine passports in Ontario.

A spokesperson for the minister of health told CBC News earlier this week that Ontario would not be moving to a system similar to Quebec's, following comments by the Eastern Ontario Health Unit's Medical Officer of Health Dr. Paul Roumeliotis that seemed to suggest otherwise.

Until now, Ontario has resisted the idea, with Ford saying he doesn't want a "split society."

The province has also said Ontarians have the option of printing out their electronic vaccination receipts if needed, though critics have pointed out that printouts can easily be forged.

On Wednesday, Peel Region's medical officer of health also threw his support behind a vaccine certificate program, saying he was exploring local options in case the province didn't step up with one. Toronto Mayor John Tory similarly said earlier this month that he supports such a program.

Business groups such as the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business and the Toronto Region

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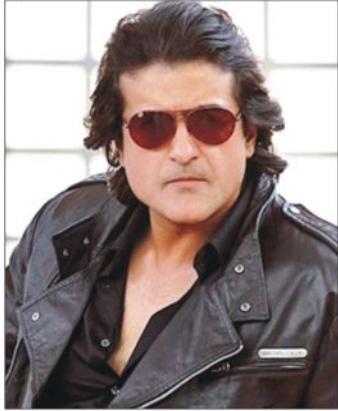
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NCB arrests Armaan Kohli for illegal possession of cocaine

Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) has arrested actor Armaan Kohli for illegal possession of drugs, on August 29. On Saturday, August 28, the actor's residence was raided after which the same evening, he was taken to NCB office for questioning. According to the reports, on Saturday, a team of the anti-drugs agency had intercepted one major drug peddler, Ajay Raju Singh. He was in possession of illegal drugs. The same day, the agency launched a follow-up operation after interrogation of Singh. Following his inputs, the agency headed to Armaan Kohli's house. As per reports, a small quantity of cocaine was recovered.



Shraddha Kapoor to get married to Rohan Shrestha soon?

Rumours of actor Shraddha Kapoor's wedding to celebrity photographer Rohan Shrestha have been floating around for while now. Now, Shraddha's aunt Padmini Kohli and cousin Priyanka Sharma have reacted to these rumours. "I am going to say no comments, main kya bolun yaar (what should I say). But yes, if you say looking forward to it, then obviously, weddings are good to look forward to. The more the merrier, why not?" Priyanka told a leading entertainment portal. Earlier this year, Shraddha Kapoor and Rohan Shrestha had even attended Priyanka's wedding ceremony in Maldives. Shraddha's aunt was equally reticent to talk about the rumoured wedding. "Marriage, wow! That's a strange question. Agar waise haq mil khabar mil jai (if the plans to get married, you'll come to know)," she said. Earlier, Rohan's father Rakesh Shrestha had said that he would



support the couple if they planned to tie the knot. "If they decide to marry each other, I will happily do everything for them. The word 'objection' does not exist in my dictionary. And let me tell you, I call Rohan as 'My Dream', I rarely address him as 'Rohan'," he said.

Shilpa Shetty Kundra shares a quote on mistakes

Ever since Shilpa Shetty Kundra's husband businessman Raj Kundra has been put into judicial custody for his involvement in pornography racket, the actress' life has come under the scanner. Off late, Shilpa has been sharing several messages from a book which have inspirational quotes. The actress today shared an inspirational quote about mistakes and how they are a part of our lives. The picture she posted from the book begins with a quote from Sophia Loren that says, "Mistakes are part of the dues one pays for a full life." The excerpts from the book further throws light on accepting the mistakes, "We can't make our lives interesting without making a few mistakes here and there. We hope that they won't be dangerous mistakes or mistakes that hurt other people. But we can see our mistakes as things we'd like to forget or as our most interesting, challenging and stimulating experiences. Not because of the mistakes themselves but because of what we learned from them." Shilpa Shetty sharing this page from the book also added a sticker to it which says - 'Made A Mistake But It's Okay. Shilpa had recently shared quotes on faith and how not to give up. Through these book quotes, the actress has been softly voicing her feelings and emotions. The actress with two children in tow, is facing the storm in her life with dignity. She has got back to work and started judging the dance-rally show which she has been a part of in Hungama 2 which lasted the same week as she faced the upheaval in her life.

India all-rounder Stuart Binny announces retirement with immediate effect

India all-rounder Stuart Binny has announced his retirement from international and first-class cricket. Binny played 6 Tests, 14 ODIs, and 3 T20Is for the country and he also recorded figures of 6-4 in an ODI match against Bangladesh in his career. "I would like to inform you that I have decided to retire from first-class and international cricket. It has given me tremendous joy and pride to have represented my country at the international level," said Binny in an official statement. "I would like to acknowledge the huge role that the BCCI has played in my cricket journey. Their support and faith over the years has been invaluable. My cricket journey would not have even started had it not been for the Karnataka state and their support. It has been an honour to captain and win trophies with my state," he added. Further in his statement, Binny



Stuart Binny was picked for India's ODI team for the tour of New Zealand in 2014. He played his first ODI during that tour. On June 17, 2014, Binny scalped six wickets conceding only four runs surpassing Anil Kumble to have the best bowling record for every Indian bowler. He made his Test debut against England in the tour of England 2014 and he then made his T20 debut for India against Zimbabwe in 2015.

In 'good mind space', fit-again Shreyas Iyer ready to convert DC's IPL dream into reality

Shreyas Iyer did feel "low" at times during an intense rehabilitation period after his shoulder surgery but a fit-again stylish Mumbai batsman is now gearing up to realise an unfinished dream of winning his maiden IPL title with the Delhi Capitals. Shreyas, who led DC to their first IPL final in 2020, missed the first part of the post-pause IPL due to surgery. Rishabh Pant had captured the side back then. "Unfortunately, IPL had to be stopped mid-season, but I have presented me with the opportunity again and I will, as a player and as someone who understands the DNA of our team, do everything in my role to see the dream of our fans come true," Shreyas told PTI in an exclusive interview. When asked if he is game about playing under Pant's leadership, the dashingly right-hander did not give a direct answer. "I would reckon our first half performance this season is a result of the environment we had

created in 2019 and 2020. Last year, we came so close to winning IPL," Shreyas said. "Over the last two years, we have transformed DC into a warrior side. That has come from the system and process we had put in place and thanks to the management in trusting my abilities to be able to deliver for the team," feels Shreyas. He feels that leadership role in Capitals did help him become a more astute cricketer since he improved man-management skills and temperament. "Captaincy at Delhi Capitals has made me a better cricketer. I look at things, situations, the sport differently. It has improved my managerial skills as a leader. Ricky Ponting has been very supportive on that," he said. While playing IPL, Shreyas would obviously also have one eye on the T20 World Cup equal where he would probably fight it out with Ishan Kishan and Suryakumar Yadav, both of whom have had

Inzamam-ul-Haq wants Virat Kohli, Cheteshwar Pujara, Ajiinkya Rahane to get big hundreds

Former Pakistan captain Inzamam-ul-Haq has said that Team India will come under pressure if their senior batsmen such as Virat Kohli, Cheteshwar Pujara and Ajinkya Rahane continue to fail to get big scores. Kohli and Pujara have not scored a century for over two years while Rahane's last one came in December last year. Pujara scored 91 in the second innings in the third Test at Headingley while Kohli scored 55. Inzamam's remarks came after India were bowled out for 78 on Day 4 of the third Test against England at Headingley, losing the match by an innings and 76 runs. In a video on YouTube channel, the Pakistan great said, "If you look at Team India's batters, Virat Kohli hasn't scored a hundred in nearly two years. The case is the same with Cheteshwar Pujara and Ajinkya Rahane is also struggling. Youngsters have been hitting the team out of difficult situations in recent times. "Rishabh Pant scored a lot of runs, Ravindra Jadeja also contributed and (Ravichandran) Ashwin as well. The young guys have contributed a lot more in comparison to the experienced guys," Inzamam said. The cricketer-turned-expert also felt that from the Australia series, lower-order batters have been contributing more for India.

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Canadian Citizen
Contact: 647-529-3166

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437-770-4404

MATRIMONIAL
My brother 31, 58, Canadian citizen, Sunni Muslim, BSc from Pakistan working in Toronto. My sister 32, 54, Canadian citizen, BSc from Manitoba University, medical student Caribbean School.
Contact #204-963-9830

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Please contact for more info
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Federal health agency first in Canada to suspend COVID briefings during election

The decision to suspend regular COVID-19 briefings by federal health authorities is out of step with the decisions taken by other Canadian jurisdictions that have held elections during the pandemic, an observer for CBC News reveals.

While some of five provinces and one territory that went to the polls since March 2020 excluded politicians on the campaign trail from the briefing spotlight, they all continued to hold regular briefings to update residents on the evolution of the virus in their jurisdiction.

The absence of COVID-19 briefings by the Public Health Agency of Canada sparked controversy with this week, with the Conservatives calling on Interior Minister Pierre Poilievre to investigate what they described as a breach of the caretaker convention, which dictates that public servants should not act as caretakers during elections, continue as usual and do not anything that could influence the campaign.

"The decision on how to communicate with Canadians is entirely within Dr. Tam's purview," said Bajaj.

He said Charette has received the Conservative Party's letter calling for an investigation "and will respond in due course."

The controversy over the briefings comes as PHAC issued an update yesterday, saying the seven-day average for COVID-19 rates in Canada had risen 29 per cent in the past week and the number of people being treated for COVID-19 in hospital was up 39 per cent.

As the COVID-19 drags on, the number of elections called under pandemic conditions has been gradually rising at the same time as governments have to keep citizens informed of the progress of the virus.

In the Nova Scotia election held earlier this month, briefings by health officials continued, said Kristin Lipscombe, media relations adviser for Nova Scotia's Department of Health and Wellness.

"When our officers arrived they located a suspect with the assistance of mall security," Li said. "After a brief pursuit, the individual has been arrested and a loaded firearm has been recovered."

One suspect arrested, police looking for second suspect

The male suspect who was arrested at Allen Road and Highway 401, was placed on lockdown.

Duty Inspector Andy Singh said a male suspect is in custody while police are looking for another suspect who was involved.

Police announced Monday they have charged a 21-year-old Toronto man with a host of firearms charges, and three counts of assault.

At approximately 3:38 p.m. on Sunday, police received reports of "multiple gunshots heard" in the area, Const. Alex Li told reporters at the scene.

"Crowds were seen screaming and fleeing," Li said of the initial reports. He called it an "ongoing and active" scene, but assured that it is

Toronto man, 21, facing charges after gunfire at Yorkdale Mall

Toronto police have arrested and charged a man after gunfire was reported inside Yorkdale Mall on Sunday afternoon.

There were no reports of injuries resulting from the shooting, Const. Alex Li told members of the media at the scene. Police said a loaded Glock-19 firearm and ammunition has been recovered and the mall, located at Allen Road and Highway 401, was placed on lockdown.

Duty Inspector Andy Singh said a male suspect is in custody while police are looking for another suspect who was involved.

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Over 300 Ontario physicians sign open letter to Ford demanding pay increases for nurses

TORONTO — Hundreds of Ontario emergency room physicians have signed an open letter to Premier Doug Ford demanding that the province increase the pay of critical care nurses and repeal Bill 124.

The letter, released Monday, claims that emergency departments across the province "are in crisis."

"This time, it is not an issue of a lack of beds or ventilators. It is because we are losing our acute care nursing colleagues in droves," the letter reads.

"Several have died, hundreds have become ill with COVID and now nurses are leaving their profession in unprecedented numbers due to burnout, PTSD and the utter disrespect they face from the Ontario government."

Bill 124, introduced by the Ford Government in 2019, is meant to "ensure that increases in public sector compensation will reflect the fiscal situation of the province," the government says.

The Bill limits regular annual salary increases for nurses to one per cent for each 12-month period.

"Nurses across the province say that Bill 124 is interfering with their ability to collectively bargain and to acquire the pay increases they feel they deserve."

"Nurses have not received an increase in their salaries on par with inflation for over a decade. This is unacceptable in the context of the sacrifices they have made to care for patients during this pandemic," the letter continues.

"Nurses' collective bargaining is limited by the fact that they cannot strike because they are essential workers. They can, however, leave the profession and many are voting with their feet, quitting in unprecedented numbers."

Statistics Canada data from earlier in this year echoes this statement. According to the agency, the health-care and social assistance sectors had more vacancies than any other sector in January 2021.

"Additionally, health-care workers reported working more hours in April



COVID-19 pandemic.

2021 than during the first wave of the pandemic in April 2020.

Ontario registered intensive care unit (ICU) nurse Brigit Unaiha told CTV News Toronto last month that "nurses are low."

"There are not enough ICU nurses in Ontario and [many] existing, experienced nurses are taking some time off or people are just quitting because of the stress of the pandemic and very, very poor working conditions," Unaiha said.

"We are taking on more than we can handle because these are our patients, and life-support machines and life-saving medications, so like, you have to."

Last month, an Ontario union representing over 60,000 front-line health-care workers delivered a separate letter to Premier Doug Ford, calling on his government to "introduce a universal minimum wage of at least \$35 per hour for [registered practical nurses]."

"A new \$35 per hour universal minimum wage for RPNs and the elimination of Bill 124 would begin to address the retention and recruitment crisis facing all sectors of the health system," SEIU healthcare president Shaheen Stewart wrote.

When reached for comment in response to SEIU's demands, Ministry of Health (MOH) spokesperson Alexandra Hilkene told CTV News Toronto that the "government is incredibly grateful for the contributions of Ontario's health care workers and the critical role they have played throughout the

What to do when your PR card expires outside Canada

PR cards cannot be re-issued outside Canada, but Permanent Resident Travel Documents (PRTDs) can.

A permanent resident (PR) of Canada might leave Canada for some time. If that person wants to return, they must present their PR card, which confirms their PR status.

Most PR cards last for five years, although some last for less. If a PR card expires, that does not mean a person has lost PR status. However, it means they cannot use their card to re-enter Canada. The only exception is if they are travelling by private car.

A person can only apply for a PR card from within Canada. This means that if a person is outside Canada when their PR card expires, they cannot apply for a new one. Instead, they have the option of applying for a Permanent Resident Travel Document (PRTD). If the PRTD is approved, the PR card then use the PRTD to re-enter Canada. The PRTD is usually valid for six months after it is issued. It can only be used once. As soon as a person is back inside Canada, they should apply for a PR card.

To apply for a PRTD a person must have Canadian PR status. They must also currently be outside Canada. The cost to apply is \$50 CAD.

Normally, a person applies for a PRTD by mail through the nearest Canadian Visa Application Centre (VAC). The government website provides a searchable list of VACs, and other resources for permanent residents overseas.

Due to COVID-19, some VACs are not accepting PRTD applications. Some VACs may even be entirely closed. The government often lists of VACs and which services are

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