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Canada trucker protest: Ottawa declares emergency

Police keep a watchful eye on protesters in Ottawa on Sunday. The mayor of Canada's capital, Ottawa, has declared a state of emergency in response to more than a week of truckers' protests against Covid-19 restrictions.

Jim Watson said the city was "losing this battle" and "completely out of control".

He added the protest posed a threat to residents' safety. There have also been reports of racial attacks.

Ottawa's centre has been paralysed, with vehicles and tents blocking roads.

The "Freedom Convoy" was sparked by the introduction last month of a new rule that all trucks must be vaccinated to cross the US-Canada border, but the protests have morphed into broader challenges to Covid-19 restrictions.

The protesters have since gathered in central Ottawa near Parliament Hill, and their demands have grown to include ending all such mandates nationwide and opposing the government of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

Speaking to Canadian radio station CFRK, Mr Watson said the protesters were behaving increasingly "insensitively" by continuously "blaring horns and sirens, [setting off] fireworks and turning it into a party".

"Clearly, we are outnumbered and we are losing this battle," he said, adding: "This has to be reversed - we have to get our city back."

The mayor did not give specific



details about what measures he might impose, but police said on Sunday that they would step up enforcement, including possible arrests of those seeking to aid the protesters by bringing them supplies like fuel, toilet paper and food.

A state of emergency will give the city additional powers, including access to equipment required by frontline workers and emergency services.

Media caption: The protests began as a movement against vaccination requirements. Many Ottawa residents have objected to the demonstrations.

Complaints range from idling trucks that impede traffic and makeshift wooden structures in city parks to lost income and fears of harassment and even violence.

Police have said they are concerned about how the convoy has attracted far-right and extremist elements, and on Sunday confirmed they were dealing with more than 60 criminal investigations, with alleged offences

including "mischief, thefts, hate crimes and property damage".

"There have been racist signs, there have been a lot of reports of people being assaulted and harassed if they wear a mask," Stephanie Carvon, Ottawa resident and former national security analyst for the Canadian government told the BBC.

She added that some organisers of the protest held extremist views, but had "successfully framed their actions in the name of the pandemic and ending the mandates, so they've earned the sympathy of a lot of Canadians who may not necessarily realise where this has come from".

One demonstrator who drove for hours to join the protest in Ottawa, Kimberly Ball, told the AFP news agency that the protest was "about our freedom".

"A couple of people we know, friends, lost their jobs because of these mandates," she said, adding she had concerns about the safety and effectiveness of Covid vaccines.

Covid-19 vaccines have cut the risk of severe illness in those infected with the virus and serious side effects are extremely rare. More than 80% of the eligible population is fully vaccinated and a recent poll showed a majority of Canadians favoured imposing more restrictions on the unvaccinated.

A recent opinion poll by Abacus Data suggested 68% of Canadians felt they had "very little in common" with the protesters, while 32% said they "had a lot in common" with the trucks.

Weeks after being named the minister in charge of Canada Post, Filomena Tassi polled Canadians to see how they felt about making some radical changes to the Crown corporation.

Those changes include shutting down rural post offices, ending all home delivery in favour of community mailboxes, and cutting back mail delivery to three times a week.

The poll was put in the field in mid-December, six weeks after Tassi was named minister for Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) and three weeks after the Crown corporation said it lost \$264 million on revenue of \$5.4 billion in its third quarter, the most recent quarter for which financial results are available.

It was clear from the content of the poll questions that Tassi's office was keen to explore ways to cut costs and reduce losses.

But the very fact that Tassi was even asking those questions has angered the union representing 61,000 postal workers.

"We're really concerned and disappointed the government is actually taking a poll right now about reducing postal services when the public is actually asking them to have more services, not less," said Jan Simpson, president of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW).

"Postal workers have been working throughout the entire pandemic and for them to have this poll currently is very insulting to us."

Simpson said CUPW was not informed or consulted about the poll and, coincidentally, it was doing its own poll in December asking

Federal government asked Canadians about radical changes to mail delivery

Canadians about Canada Post.

"They want us to expand services," Simpson said.

A spokesperson for Canada Post itself said it neither initiated the polling nor participated in it and directed questions about the poll to the government.

The questions that Tassi's office had asked about Canada Post were part of the weekly polling program done by the Privy Council Office, the department that supports the work of the prime minister.

The PCO poll includes some standard questions each week, such as asking Canadians what their most important issue is and whether they think the government is on the right track. But government departments often include their own questions in the PCO weekly poll and that's what PSPC did for the week ending Dec. 12.

The PCO polling data was obtained by Global News using the federal Access to Information law.

In the poll, respondents were given a menu of five options and were asked if they supported or opposed "making the following changes to reduce costs":

- close rural post offices
- move remaining door-to-door home deliveries to community mailboxes
- reduce the frequency of mail delivery from every day to three times a week
- increase the cost of stamps
- use more automation to replace Canada Post workers

The poll found strong opposition to the idea of closing rural post offices while a plurality supported replacing workers with machines.

But a majority did support cutting back mail delivery to three times a week, and a plurality supported ending home delivery in favour of community mailboxes as well as raising the price of stamps.

"The Liberals ran a campaign in 2015 to restore door-to-door mail delivery from the cuts by the Conservative government and here they are exploring ways to cut services to Canadians," said Gord Johns, the New Democrat MP for the B.C. riding of Courtenay-Alberni and



his party's critic for public services and procurement.

"Canada Post clearly demonstrated how important of a role they play for Canadians. They help Canadians stay home and lower the spread. They should be treated as heroes. Instead, the government is looking at ways to cut services to Canadians when they should be looking at ways to better support Canada Post."

Tassi was not available for an interview but her communications director, James Fitz-Morris, confirmed that it was her office - not the Crown corporation itself - that asked that a series of questions about Canada Post be inserted into the PCO's weekly polling program.

Fitz-Morris cautioned against reading anything into the set of questions submitted.

"The questions asked do not constitute an indication of future direction or policies," Fitz-Morris said in an email statement.

"To better inform discussions and future work concerning this crucial Crown Corporation, our office requested public opinion research on basic questions to gain a better understanding of Canadians' views of and relationship with Canada Post."

Respondents were also asked, "Do you believe the Government of Canada should continue to provide financial support to Canada Post or should Canada Post be restructured in a way to break even?"

The live-agent telephone poll of 1,000 Canadians found 39 per cent chose "ending financial support" and 50 per cent chose "restructure."

And yet, the government of Canada has not provided any financial support to the Crown corporation for decades. As the Crown corporation notes in its financial statements, "the operations of the Canada Post Group of Companies are funded by the revenue generated by the sale of its products and services, not taxpayer dollars."

That point was also made by Simpson, the CUPW president.

"I want to be very clear: Canada Post is self-funded and it's not funded by taxpayers' dollars," she said. "I don't know why the government is trying to mislead the Canadian public like this."

Canada Post has not yet posted its full financial results for 2021 but it did post a loss of \$570 million on revenue of \$9.3 billion in 2020. But from 2016 to 2019, the Crown corporation finished each year in the black, including in 2017 when it posted a profit of \$231 million.

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Milk prices soar across Canada as record price increases for farmers kick in

Canadians are paying more for milk this week.

Step price increases, which took effect at many grocery stores on Tuesday, are as high as 15 per cent in some provinces and coincide with a spike in the price farmers are paid for the milk they produce.

This dramatic price hike will affect everyone who consumes milk, but it will hurt low-income and food-insecure families most, consumer advocates say.

"If families start being unable to provide milk to their kids or they start rationing it or diluting it, you're going to start to see an increase in health concerns," said Arianna Scott, CEO of Alberta Food Basics.

Global News reporters in multiple provinces compared the price they paid for a four-litre bag of jug milk this week with the price they paid in January.

In Toronto, the price jumped to \$5.39 from \$4.69 at two grocery stores: NoFrills and Loblaw's, which



are both owned by Loblaw Companies.

That's a 14.9 per cent increase. At Longo's, the price increased to \$5.49 from \$4.79.

In Halifax, the price at Atlantic Superstore, also owned by Loblaw's, went to \$6.29 from \$5.79. That's an 8.6 per cent increase.

And in Calgary, the price at Superstore went to \$5.39 from \$4.65. That's a 15.9 per cent increase. Price hikes were the same at grocery stores

in B.C.

Jeff Doucette, general manager of Field Agent Canada, a digital marketing company based in Calgary that tracks the price of milk across Canada, said this week's increase is the "biggest we've seen in one stroke" since it began reporting on milk prices in 2015.

"Supermarkets are not going to eat the price increase that dairy farmers are passing along to them," he said. Doucette said other supermarkets

which had not yet put their prices up to match Loblaw's would likely do so in the coming weeks.

Multiple requests for comment from Loblaw's, Longo's, Walmart and Sobeys went ignored.

A spokesperson for Metro, which also owns Food Basics, refused to answer questions, saying: "Metro does not comment on future pricing or pricing strategies."

The government didn't answer any questions about the increased cost of dairy and whether it was justified given the economic strains many Canadians are facing due to rising inflation and the ongoing pandemic.

Why Canadian milk prices are rising

The Canadian Dairy Commission announced in November that farmers would receive an 8.4 per cent increase to the price they're paid for the milk they make beginning Feb. 1.

This is the largest annual increase in history and nearly twice the previous amount.

The price increase is meant to offset rising costs for dairy farmers, especially feed costs, which the commission said have gone up by as much as 30 per cent over the past two years. The commission said the price hike is also meant to give farmers a chance to recuperate some of the higher costs associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Supermarkets are not going to eat the price increase that dairy farmers are passing along to them," he said. Doucette said other supermarkets

'He really was the best': Alberta wife mourning after firefighter husband killed

The family and community of a Castor, Alta., man are in mourning after he was killed on an icy road while responding to a vehicle rollover late Friday night.

Stephen Rayfield, a volunteer firefighter, was responding to a call close to the town of Castor at around 8:30 p.m. Friday. The volunteer fire department serves the town and parts of Paineshear County.

Castor is around 138 km east of Red Deer.

"He just really was best," said his wife Cheryl Rayfield. "I know everyone always says it, but he just put everyone else first all the time. He was just to make such a difference in his life to others."

She says her husband was a hero, a "night in shining armour," to both her and her six-year-old son Sawyer. Cheryl and Stephen met in 2010 in Britain, where they are both from. In 2013, they got married and moved to Canada to start a life together.

They were in the process of obtaining Canadian citizenship so they could continue their lives together in Castor.

The night of the rollover, Cheryl says she didn't wait her husband to get to the call but Stephen was adamant he had to attend because someone could be hurt and could need help.

Stephen grabbed his keys and left. Not long after that, Cheryl said the doorbell rang and her heart sank.

"I was like, 'This isn't good.' There was a voice in my head that was like, 'Don't open the door,' and, 'Nothing is going to be the same again.'"

Atorn devastated Cheryl says the fire department were just like a family, especially when they were new to Alberta and they didn't know many people.

Richard Elhard, mayor of the town, said he received a call on Friday at about 8:30 p.m. that a "horrific accident" had taken place.

Road conditions were extremely icy at the time and fire crews were travelling out to a motor vehicle accident. The driver of that vehicle was taken to hospital with minor



injuries.

Due to the ice, one of the fire trucks lost control and rolled.

The town's fire chief, Patrick Kelly, was also injured in the accident.

"The community is just devastated," Elhard said.

Elhard said Rayfield worked for a wind farm just west of town. RCMP Sgt. Patrick Lambert said it's difficult to see first responders become the people being responded to themselves.

"Those atmospheres and environments are not something that we want to deal with," he said.

"However, we recognize as men and women and Albertans within the first responder field, that at any time we may be called upon to provide support, medical assistance, or be the responder to one of our fellow partners."

A big part of the community The fire department in the community just recently moved into a new fire hall. Elhard said Rayfield was integral to the opening of the new hall.

Just recently, the firefighters in the community held a cash fundraiser and requested Elhard come down to make the draws. Rayfield had his phone out and was filming fire chief Kelly and the mayor.

"We were giving him the gears about what a poor circumstance he was, and the guys were all kibbitzing around," Elhard said. "That's the last time I spoke with him."

Rayfield himself posted on the Facebook page on Jan. 26 for the Castor fire department, sharing the news of the opening of the new fire hall.

"Big massive thank you to everyone that has helped make this

happen," he wrote. "It means a lot to us all."

Elhard said in the coming days he's sure the mourning fire crew and Rayfield's family will be supported by the community. Because of COVID-19, he's unsure exactly what form that community support will look like at this time.

"But this community, for sure, will stand behind them," he said. Brian Starbuck, national president of the Canadian Volunteer Fire Services Association, said losing any volunteer firefighter is a "huge tragedy."

"In the fire industry, we're a big family. When we have a tragedy with our own family, it's a shock for all of us across Canada," he said.

"I'm not just his immediate family, but also his department and the rest of the firefighters, it's a brotherhood and a sisterhood, and it's as close as everybody."

Kelly, the town's fire chief, was transported to hospital in Red Deer. He has since been able to return home.

CBC News was able to reach the wife of the man in the first vehicle who firefighters were responding to, Leanne Gould.

Neither Gould nor her husband wanted appeal on camera, but she said he was released from hospital the next day with bruises and scrapes and they are both "heart sick" over what happened.

She said they will never have the words to express their gratitude to the first responders involved.

Cheryl Rayfield is asking people to remember Stephen as someone who made a difference a hero who made a difference to the people around him and died doing something he really loved.

WestJet cuts 20 per cent of flights in March, calls for reopening timeline

WestJet Airlines Ltd. has cancelled 20 per cent of its flights in March, extending schedule cuts from February amid ongoing COVID-19 restrictions and uncertainty that continues to delay demand.

Interim CEO Harry Taylor says travel advisories and testing requirements were meant to be temporary, but that after two years the industry crisis has come to a head.

"It is disappointing that Canada remains stagnant in its approach and continues to make travel inaccessible and punitive for Canadians and inbound tourists," he said Monday in a release.

WestJet is calling for periodic testing upon arrival only, rather than mandatory molecular testing before takeoff and after landing for fully vaccinated international passengers.

The Calgary-based company also demanded an end to quarantines for travellers awaiting results when they return from abroad.

Canada remains the only G7 country to require pre-departure and on-arrival molecular testing, Taylor noted, and said the federal government must outline a flight path for travel and tourism recovery.

Thousands of flights cancelled since November

Since early November, WestJet and budget subsidiary Swoop have cancelled 11,285 trips for March, or 48 per cent. Air Canada has scrapped 16,617 or 41 per cent since mid-October, according to flight data firm Cirium.

More cuts may be on route across airlines, as passengers hold off on ticket purchases until closer to the departure date to ensure pandemic measures don't cur their travel plans.

Doug Ford's government wants housing built quickly, but this project is in limbo

A housing project that the City of Toronto describes as urgent is sitting in limbo nearly a year after council asked Premier Doug Ford's government to fast-track approval.

City council aimed to have construction on the supportive housing project in the north Toronto neighbourhood of Willowdale completed before winter set in. Last March, the city asked the province for a ministerial zoning order (MZO) to shorten the planning approval time frame.

The MZO has not come.

The Ford government is on a big push to boost Ontario's housing supply by getting municipalities to speed up development approvals, so housing advocates are wondering why the province isn't green-lighting this particular project.

Meanwhile, the studio-sized components for the modular housing project are ready to be assembled, but sit surrounded by locked fencing at a

Toronto Transit Commission parking lot.

During an interview at the storage site, the NDP's housing critic, Jessica Bell, gestured toward the snow-covered units and called the scene "symbolic of Doug Ford's approach to homelessness and housing in general."

"The reason why these homes are sitting empty is because Doug Ford is refusing to say yes to a City of Toronto request," said Bell.

"If we'd built these homes, then we would have 59 individuals and families moving into them," Bell said. "They wouldn't have to be living in parks and shelters, and they'd be able to rebuild their lives, raise their families and live in a safe and warm home this winter."

The modular housing project would see a three-storey building with 59 studio apartments built on Cummer Avenue in Willowdale. It is partly funded by the federal

government's Rapid Housing Initiative.

Coun. Ana Baillo, chair of Toronto's Planning and Housing Committee, is struggling to reconcile the provincial government's hurry-up approach to most development with its slow pace of approving this particular affordable housing project.

"We've been waiting," said Baillo in an interview. "When we have a provincial housing summit that is all about speeding the approval of housing, we don't understand why this one is taking so long."

Ford's cabinet minister with the power to grant the MZO, Municipal Affairs and Housing Minister Steve Clark, was unavailable for an interview.

"We expect that city councils have taken their due diligence and have conducted proper consultation in their communities before any request for an MZO comes to the minister for consideration," said Clark's director of

communications Zoe Knowles, in an emailed statement.

"The minister was not satisfied that proper consultation with impacted members of the community had been completed by the City of Toronto. As such, further consultation is needed," Knowles added.

MZOs are a tool that allows the province to expedite zoning changes without the usual requirements for public consultation. The government has faced criticism for granting MZOs for far larger developments with little or no public consultation.

The Ford government has issued 72 MZOs since taking office, four times as many as Liberal governments did during the previous 15 years. The bulk of them came at the behest of city councils, and while many are for housing projects, some have been for commercial developments.

The city councillor for the Willowdale neighbourhood where the modular housing would go, John Filion, is on record as supporting the project.

However, the local MPP, Progressive Conservative Stan Cho, asked Clark to hold off granting the fast-track zoning order.



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India beat England by 4 wickets to win U-19 World Cup title for fifth time in West Indies

Riding on half-centuries by Nishant Sindhu and Shaik Rasheed and clinical bowling performance from Raj Bawa and Ravi Kumar, India clinched a record-extending 5th U-19 World Cup title after beating England by four wickets in the final of the 2022 edition of the tournament at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium, here on Saturday.

This is India's record fifth title in the tournament's history and came after previously winning it in 2000, 2008, 2012 and 2018. The Yash Dhull-led India U19 finished the tournament with an unbeaten run in the West Indies, flaunting the strength of the assembly line of Next-Gen-Indiactickers.

With this, Dhull joins the illustrious list of captains -- Mohammad Kaif (2000), Virat Kohli (2008), Umeshak Chandra (2012), Prithvi Shaw (2018) -- who have lifted the U19 trophy for India in the past.

A superb bowling performance by Raj Bawa (5/31) and Ravi Kumar (6/34) helped India bowl out England



for 189 despite a fighting fifty by James Rew (95). In reply, Shaik Rasheed (50 off 84) and Nishant Sindhu (50 not out off 54) smashed fifties while Raj Bawa (35 off 54) also played a vital knock and helped India chase the target in 47.4 overs, with four wickets to spare.

Chasing a challenging target, India were off to a poor start as left-arm pacer Joshua Boyden removed Angkrish Raghuvansi for zero in the very second delivery of the innings. After losing Raghuvansi early, Shaik Rasheed and Haroon Singh didn't take too many risks and batted cautiously. The duo took India to 331 after 10 overs as England used

HBL Pakistan Super League: Multan Sultans maintain perfect record, easily beat Peshawar Zalmi

KARACHI: Multan Sultans maintained their perfect record in the seventh edition of the HBL Pakistan Super League as they beat Peshawar Zalmi by 57 runs here at the National Stadium on Saturday.

Zalmi managed to score 165-8 in 20 overs as they failed to even get close to the mammoth 224-run target set by the defending champions, thanks to Mohammed Rizwan's 82 off 53 (eight fours and six) and Tim David's late onslaught.

Leg spinner Irfan Tahir (3-25) and pacer Shabaz Khan (3-41) were the pick of the bowlers for Multan, who won their fourth match in a row. Any chances of winning went out of Zalmi's reach after the tenth over, which saw Shaik Malik dismissed off Tahir with the Peshawar outfit needing 139 as the asking run-rate rose.

Lata Mangeshkar passed away

The Nightingale of India, legendary singer Lata Mangeshkar breathed her last due to multiple organ failure today, leaving the entire nation bereaved. She was 92 years of age. The news of her passing away was confirmed by her sister Usha Mangeshkar. On Saturday (February 12), her health condition had deteriorated following which she was put on a ventilator. Dr Prati Samdani who was treating her, had revealed that she was under observation of a team of doctors.

The singer had contracted COVID-19 in January following which she was admitted to Breach Candy Hospital in Mumbai. She was also diagnosed with pneumonia and was shifted to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). A few days ago, her doctors had informed that she had been cured of COVID-19 and pneumonia. However on Saturday, her health condition grew critical again. She suffered multiple organ failure last night and breathed her last at 8.12 am.

Lata Mangeshkar was born in 1929, the eldest daughter of Deenanath Mangeshkar, a Marathi and Konkani musician and his wife Shewanti. Lata was named Hema at her birth but her parents later renamed her Lata after a female character, Lata, in one of her



most popular plays. She was the oldest child of the family. Menka, Asha, Usha, and Hridaynath -- all her own siblings too are accomplished musicians and singers. Lata sang the song Neechi Ya Gula, Kaha Saari Mani Haasi Bhaari, which was composed by Sadashivrao Nevkar for Vasant Joglekar's Marathi movie Kiti Haasal (1942), but the song was dropped from the final cut. Her first Hindi song was Mata Ek Sapoot Ki Duniya Badal De Tu for the Marathi film Gajabahu (1945). She recorded songs in over thirty-six Indian languages.

Lata Mangeshkar was the winner of four Filmfare Best Playback Singer Awards, winning them for Aaja re pardesi (Madhumati, 1958), Kahin deep jale kahin dil (Bees Saal Baad, 1962), Tumhi mere masdar, tumhi

No boundaries, zero censorship to be expected from Kangana Ranaut's bold reality show Lock Up

Earlier this week, ALTBalaji & MX Player announced that Kangana Ranaut will be stepping into the digital world as a host for the upcoming reality show 'Lock Up'. Interestingly, since it is arriving on a never-seen-before reality show, 16 controversial celebrities will be put together in a lock-up for months and will be stripped of their amenities.

Interestingly, since it is arriving on the digital platform, we can expect a lot of juicy content.

At the trailer launch, Ekta Kapoor said that one can expect the upcoming reality show to be 'full of controversies'. She said with a laugh, "This is Kangana's lock-up. She will be in charge here. She has had a lot of FIRs coming her way. Now she can issue some. She will be writing the contestants and finalizing them."

"I would like to believe (am focused on the good part of every situation and not the bad. But that's not how life works. You have to deal with the bad part. I don't mind dealing with sh*t if I have to be on top," Kangana Ranaut said at the press conference.

"Our winner will not be a goodie-goodie. That person does not carry the burden of being liked or not. They will be brutally honest."

According to a source close to the upcoming reality show, "There won't be any boundaries. There won't be censorship. The audience can expect a lot of juicy content since it is coming on a digital platform and with a format that has never been done before. Living upto the name Lock Up! Badaas Jai, Aayachari Kheh, all eyes will be on the participants 24x7 and it can get raucous, bold, brutal, and more."

At the press conference, Ekta said that she won't be the show's concept is straightforward. She said, "In the last two years, there are few celebs who haven't heard the word FIR, legal fees.

Indian team wears black armbands to pay respect to late Lata Mangeshkar

The members of the Rohit Sharma-led Indian cricket team wore black armbands in the T20I against the West Indies to pay respect to the legendary singer Lata Mangeshkar, who died on Sunday morning in a Mumbai hospital.

Mangeshkar, 92, one of the biggest music icons of the country, died due to multiple organ failure earlier in the day, according to her sister Usha Mangeshkar and doctors treating her.

"The Indian Cricket Team is wearing black armbands today to pay their respects to Bharat Ratna Smt Lata Mangeshkar ji, who left for her heavenly abode on Sunday morning. The queen of melody, Lata did loved cricket, always supported the game and backed Team India," the BCCI tweeted.

Earlier in the day, the BCCI, in another tweet, wrote: "The BCCI joins the nation in mourning the loss of Bharat Ratna Smt Lata Mangeshkar ji. The queen of melody



celebrated the country for decades. An avid follower of the game and an ardent supporter of Team India, she helped create awareness using music as a medium (#RIPLataji)".

A Gujarat Cricket Association (GCA) official said that the Indian flag will be flown at half-mast over the stadium and there will be no

Priyanka Chopra bags another Hollywood film, to star opposite Anthony Mackie

Priyanka Chopra seems to have bagged another desired international project after featuring in the Hollywood film The Matrix Resurrections. This time Priyanka will star in Kevin Sullivan's action film, Ending Things opposite Anthony Mackie.

The news was reported by a leading Hollywood news website. It also reported the possible storyline, "A hit-woman who wants out of the assassin business tells her 'business' partner that she's ending their personal relationship as well. But she comes to realise she doesn't want to end that part of their bond. In order to survive the breakup -- and their last job together -- they must join forces for one last night out." However, no information on Priyanka or Anthony's roles has not been disclosed yet.

Priyanka has recently completed the shooting for the thriller series Citadel. She will also be seen in Jim Strouse's

Priyanka Chopra bags another Hollywood film, to star opposite Anthony Mackie

directorial Text For You. Priyanka is also going to produce a movie with Amazon studio on the life of Ma Anand Sheela. As far as Hollywood is concerned, Priyanka will feature alongside Alia Bhatt and Katrina Kaif in Farhan Akhtar's Joe & Zane.

Anthony Mackie is popular for starring in several Marvel movies including Captain America: The Winter Soldier, Ant-Man, Captain America: Civil War, Avengers:



Infinity War and Avengers: Endgame. Priyanka and Nick had surprised everyone less than two weeks ago when the couple shared the news that they were expecting a baby via surrogacy. Sharing the news on social media, they wrote, "We are overjoyed to confirm that we have welcomed a baby via surrogacy. We respectfully ask for privacy during this special time as we focus on our family. Thankyou so much."

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Freedom Convoy: Trudeau calls trucker protest an 'insult to truth'

Supporters of the "Freedom Convoy" rallied outside Canada's Parliament in Ottawa over the weekend.

Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has slammed protesters in the capital city against Covid-19 vaccine mandates as "an insult to memory and truth".

Protesters are demonstrating for a third consecutive day over a cross-border vaccine mandate for truckers imposed by the Liberal government.

Ottawa police asked the public to avoid the downtown area on Monday, citing "traffic, noise and safety issues".

Some downtown stores, including a shopping mall, will also be closed.

Demonstrators at the so-called Freedom Convoy have been mostly peaceful but the behaviour of some members of the crowd has been strongly criticized.

Police have opened investigations into several reported incidents, including footage of a woman dancing on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at the National War Memorial.

Nazi symbolism was seen on protest signs, some likening Covid-19 health measures to Jews under Nazi persecution. Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies criticized the use of those symbols as "a heinous form of Holocaust distortion".

Mr. Trudeau said: "Freedom of expression, assembly and association are cornerstones of democracy, but Nazi symbolism, racist imagery and desecration of war memorials are not."

The prime minister refused to meet protesters.

"This is not the story of our pandemic, our country, our people," he said. "My focus is standing with Canadians and getting through this pandemic."

But Candice Bergen, deputy leader of the Conservative Party, said the truckers and their supporters "have had enough of lockdowns and broken promises".

"They deserve to be heard and they deserve respect," she wrote on Twitter.

On Monday, Mr. Trudeau also announced that he has tested positive for Covid-19 but is "feeling fine". He said he would continue to work remotely this week while following public health guidelines.

The convoy began as a call to end a vaccine mandate imposed by the federal government on 13 January that would require unvaccinated Canadian truckers returning from across the US border to quarantine once they return home.

But it has since grown into a push to end all vaccine mandates nationwide and what supporters see as government overreach of Covid-19 restrictions.

At an invite-only weekend news conference, Benjamin Dichter and Tamara Lich - the two organizers behind the page - said they aimed to create a "logistics nightmare" to put pressure on the Canadian government.

The crowd of demonstrators - the truckers and their supporters - were estimated to be in the thousands on Saturday as they gathered around parliament. The crowd has since thinned but many protesters have indicated they plan to stay on until their demands are met.

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

South Korea will no longer use GPS monitoring to enforce quarantines and will also end daily checkup calls to low-risk coronavirus patients as a fast-developing Omicron surge overwhelms health and government workers.

The speed of transmissions has made it impossible to maintain a tight and proactive medical response, Jeong Eun-kyong, the country's top infectious disease expert, said Monday.



The Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency reported 38,691 new cases of the virus - a nine-fold increase from the levels seen in mid-January, when Omicron became the country's dominant strain. Jeong said the country may see daily jumps of 130,000 or 170,000 by late February.

South Korea had been seen as a success story during the earlier part of the pandemic after it contained infections and hospitalizations more effectively than most countries in the West. Health authorities worked closely with biotech companies to ramp up laboratory tests for people in their 60s or older and those with pre-existing medical conditions.

"We are planning to transition toward an anti-virus strategy that's concentrated on maintaining essential social functions while dealing with huge numbers of infections and people placed under quarantine," Jeong said during a government briefing.

What's happening across Canada

In Central Canada, venues across Quebec's cultural sector are set to partially reopen Monday as the province eases health restrictions put in place to contain COVID-19. Places of worship, entertainment and sports venues are allowed to reopen after being shut down since December, with capacity limits in place and proof of vaccination required for entry.

The shift came as the province on Monday reported 2,425 hospitalizations - up by 14 from a day earlier - with 178 people in the province's intensive care units. A COVID-19 update posted online showed an additional 20 deaths.

Both Quebec and Ontario are engaged in gradual easing of restrictions, but the mayor of Quebec's largest city wants more detail from the province on how, exactly, that process will unfold.

Maya Violante-Platts said Montreal is a "cultural metropolis" and economic engine - adding that businesses and the cultural sector need more information to plan for spring and summer.

In Ontario, long-term care residents can start taking social trips and see more caregivers as of Monday. The loosened visitor restrictions come after more than a month of strict rules aimed at slowing the Omicron variant.

Starting Monday, the number of designated caregivers per resident increases from two to four, though only two can visit at a time. Residents who have had at least three doses of COVID-19 vaccine are now allowed to resume social day trips.

The number of people in hospital due to COVID-19 in the hard-hit province fell Monday by 75 to 2,155, according to Ontario's COVID-19 dashboard. Health officials said 486 people were in the province's intensive care units. The update came as the province recorded 11 additional deaths.

In Atlantic Canada, Newfoundland and Labrador officials are easing some COVID-19 restrictions as of Monday. The shift allows businesses like gyms and restaurant dining rooms to reopen with capacity restrictions.

In the Prairie provinces, starting this week, Saskatchewan will stop issuing daily reports of COVID-19 cases, which has become known as the province's COVID-19 dashboard. It will instead shift to reporting the information weekly on Thursdays.

The province announced the decision last week as part of a number of changes it says are occurring as Saskatchewan prepares to manage COVID-19 in the long term. Premier Scott McEwen has said the Saskatchewan Party government will remove pandemic restrictions soon, but he hasn't released a date.

In the North, health officials in Yukon said as of Monday, young people between the age of 12 and 17 can receive a booster dose of COVID-19 vaccine, provided they are

six months past their second dose.

"Immuno-compromised children aged five to 11 who have already received their primary series will be able to receive a third dose," a statement from territorial officials said.

What's happening around the world

As of early Monday morning, roughly 395.2 million cases of COVID-19 had been reported worldwide, according to Johns Hopkins University's coronavirus tracking tool. The reported global death toll stood at more than 5.7 million.

In the Asia-Pacific region, authorities in China's southwestern city of Baishui ordered residents to stay at home from Monday and avoid unnecessary travel as they enforced curbs that are among the toughest in the nation's tool box to fight rising local infections of COVID-19.

The outbreak in Baishui, which has a population of about 3.6 million and borders Vietnam, is tiny by global standards, but the curbs, including a ban on non-emergency trips in and out, follow a national guideline to quickly contain any flare-ups.

The effort takes on extra urgency during the staging of the Winter Olympics, which began on Friday and run until Feb. 20, as well as a busy travel season for the Lunar New Year holiday.

Meanwhile, Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said on Monday he wants to speed up the country's COVID-19 booster shot program to one million shots a day by the end of the month - about double the current pace.

In the Americas, Honduran President Xiomara Castro has tested positive for COVID-19, she said on Sunday, adding that she has mild symptoms and will be working in isolation.

In Africa, South Africa is seeing more cases of the BA.2 sub-variant of Omicron and is monitoring it, but there is no clear sign that BA.2 is substantially different from the original Omicron strain, a senior scientist said. Health officials in South Africa on Sunday reported 1,752 new cases of COVID-19 and 18 additional deaths.

Nigeria has received two million doses of the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine from Finland, Greece and Slovenia, with more EU donations set to arrive in the coming weeks, government officials said on Monday. The vaccines are currently in a cold room at the airport of the west African nation's capital, Abuja.

"This batch of vaccines will expire in August 2023. So we have ample time to administer [the shots]," Faizal Shabshah, executive director of Nigeria's National Primary Health Care Development Agency, told reporters at an airport news conference.

New Brunswick MP defends his support for truckers protesting COVID rules

New Brunswick Conservative MP Jake Stewart is defending his support for protesting truckers in Ottawa, saying he didn't encounter any of the "repugnant and despicable" behaviour that marred the movement.

The former provincial cabinet minister and first-term MP for Miramichi-Grand Lake said he only met about 20 truckers on the outskirts of the capital leading up to the start of the protest.

"Pretty much all of the ones I met were actually vaccinated and they were more interested in mandates and lockdowns than they were vaccinations," he said in an interview with CBC's Information Morning Fredericton recorded on Friday and broadcast Monday.

He said he didn't see any swastika-bearing protesters that have been shown in news reports.

"I didn't notice anything like that where I was, but I obviously know some of these things happened," he said.

"Negative ideology will always find a way to attach itself to something like this."

Stewart at first questioned the fact some of the protest organizers espoused white nationalist and Islamophobic views. "Has that been proven?" he asked.

Stewart said he did not agree with racist or Islamophobic views and said truckers he knew in Miramichi-Grand Lake are good people.

"So clearly there's a large amount of truckers in this country who don't know what you're talking about right now," he said. "Maybe they're just finding us out."

He blamed Prime Minister Justin Trudeau for provoking the more extreme elements of the protest by generalizing about the market.

He accused Trudeau of calling "every one of them" racist before the protest even began.

"I think that did add to it and I think that may be potentially brought out

some of those more negative elements."

Trudeau said Jan. 26 that "the small fringe minority of people who are on their way to Ottawa who are holding unacceptable views" did not represent the vast majority of Canadians willing to get vaccinated to protect each other.

The protest has been pegged to federal policies that require cross-border truckers to be vaccinated to enter Canada. The U.S. has the same requirement.

Conservatives including Stewart argue this disrupts supply chains, including for food. But experts say with the vast majority of truckers vaccinated, shortages of some grocery items have been caused by a combination of factors.

Stewart wouldn't say whether he voted for the removal of Conservative leader Erin O'Toole last week. MPs voted 73-45 to replace O'Toole.

The vote took place under rules established by the Reform Act, which gives party caucus in the House of Commons the power to vote out their leaders without the involvement of grassroots party members.

Stewart described the experience as "kind of surreal" and unlike anything he's seen during 11 years in provincial politics, where caucuses don't have the power to oust a leader.

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