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## Toronto pre-teen the youngest person in Canada to receive total artificial heart

Multiple heart surgeries and near-death experiences have earned 12-year-old Mariam Tamouss the nickname Mariam Miracle, says her mom.

And for good reason: About one year ago the now-driving pre-teen became the youngest person in Canada, and among the smallest in the world, to receive a device known as a total artificial heart.

Her doctors at Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children on Monday detailed their last-ditch measure to save her life when a previous transplant began to fail. It's all the more remarkable because such devices are only made for adults – the machine barely fit in Mariam's chest and after implantation her surgeon Dr. Osama Hongo says he left the cavity open for days because it "was just too big to close it right away."

Mariam's mother Linda Antouan Adwar recalls many tearful days praying for her daughter's recovery, and the elation she felt when she learned Mariam would be OK.

"She's a miracle. She's a strong girl. She loves life. She needs to be alive," says Antouan Adwar, describing a lively, active Grade 7 student who loves to swim, collect L.O.L. dolls and draw.

Mariam was born with two forms of congenital heart disease – Ebstein's anomaly caused a leaky valve and cardiomyopathy caused an ill-formed right ventricle.

She had open-heart surgery at the age of seven, but a steady decline at age



11 culminated in cardiac arrest in June 2021.

Antouan Adwar recalls the terrifying day Mariam suddenly collapsed at home. Her older brother administered CPR while they waited for an ambulance to SickKids. She was resuscitated and stabilized in intensive care but doctors recognized that her heart was giving out.

When it came time to remove her tubes run from the pumps, out of the chest and into a big wheeled console that operates 24/7 outside of the body.

Hongo recounts a 14-hour procedure in which he navigated scars from previous operations and had to place Mariam on a cardiopulmonary bypass machine for four-and-a-half hours.

When it was time to close and the reality of reverse-engineering a device meant for an adult came to the fore, he says. The cavity was covered with a temporary patch for five days until Mariam's body could adjust to the device and her blood pressure could stabilize.

"We really wanted to close because obviously it's hardware sitting in a chest so we can't afford having the infection. But in her case, that was just too big to close it right away," says Hongo.

After surgery, Mariam remained sedated on mechanical ventilation for 16 days. During that time, blood and fluid accumulated around the device,

## COVID cases soaring in Canada's LTC homes as country enters 7th wave. What can be done?

As a seventh wave of COVID-19 makes its way in Canada, long-term care facilities in some provinces are seeing a major spike in infections.

In Ontario, COVID-19 outbreaks in long-term care homes more than doubled in the first week of July, according to the province's public health unit.

A total of 42 outbreaks were reported in the long-term care sector during the week of July 3 to 9, according to the province's latest data.

That's a 110 per cent increase from the previous week's 20 reported outbreaks.

Ontario, like other provinces, is no longer reporting daily COVID cases. However, according to Dr. Kieran Moore, the province's chief medical officer of health, the seventh wave of the novel coronavirus could peak in Ontario within the next two weeks.

Following direction from the province's Minister of Long-Term Care, Paul Calandra, MPP for Markham-Stouffville, Ontario previously had a COVID-19 immunization policy in place for people working in, volunteering at, or visiting long-term care homes.

But, the policy was revoked in March, meaning this requirement no longer applies.

In Quebec, more than 25 per cent of patients in 38 out of 106 long-term care facilities are currently infected with the virus, according to the province's latest data. Between 15 to 25 per cent of residents in 19 other facilities are also infected.

"Quebec is in a seventh wave of COVID-19," Marie-Claude Lacasse, spokesperson for the province's public health department told Global News, noting cases are expected to stabilize within the next few weeks.

"Quebec public health has urged the population to be cautious in order to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus as much as possible,



particularly among the most vulnerable people," the spokesperson said.

A spike in infection among health-care workers has also increased "pressure" on the province's health network, according to the spokesperson.

British Columbia had four long-term care facilities with active COVID-19 outbreaks as of July 13, a spokesperson for the province's Ministry of Health confirmed to Global News.

"Over the course of the pandemic, several enhanced protective measures have been put in place to minimize the risk of introduction and transmission of COVID-19 in long-term care and seniors' assisted living residences," the spokesperson said.

"We will continue to maintain appropriate measures including enhanced screening protocols, masking requirements, infection prevention and control practices, testing, and outbreak management protocols, to protect those most vulnerable to serious illness from COVID-19."

In Alberta, COVID-19 outbreaks were reported at 12 long-term care facilities as of July 13, according to provincial data.

This includes five facilities in the Calgary zone and one in Edmonton.

Albertans can expect to see periods of increased transmission of both COVID-19 and other respiratory diseases like influenza," Charity Wallace, spokesperson for the government of Alberta told Global News.

"As we continue to live with COVID, vaccines will continue to be critical in protecting our health, our loved ones and the health-care system. This is why we continue to encourage Albertans to get every dose of vaccine that they are eligible for," they said.

In Nunavut, there are currently no outbreaks in long-term care facilities, the manager of communications for the territory's health department told Global News.

Latest numbers from Manitoba also

## The problem we have with inoculating people who are very elderly is their immune system just isn't often able to mount as robust a response. So let's inoculate the residents but the main thing is that the people around them are inoculated, too.

In Ontario alone, more than 96 per cent of eligible long-term care residents received third COVID-19 vaccine doses as of July 12, and more than 80 per cent of those eligible had received fourth doses, Mark Nesbitt, spokesperson for the province's Ministry of Long-Term Care told the Canadian Press this week.

By the same date, more than 88 per cent of eligible staff had received third doses.

A strategy harmful to residents is locking down long-term care facilities and preventing visitors, according to Furness.

"This is enormously punitive and it really is a last resort when you have decided you're simply not going to bother to do other things," said Furness.

This strategy took a toll on essential family caregivers who had their abilities of seeing and caring for their loved ones in these settings limited during lockdown, according to a recent study published in both the Journal of Gerontology and the International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-Being.

The study – authored by the University of Toronto's Charlene H. Chu and Amanda Yee, along with Ontario Tech University's Vivian Stanatopolous – found that poor technology, infrastructure and planning made it difficult for caregivers to care for residents properly, causing "collective trauma."

"This was a nightmare turned into a reality for many family members," Chu said in a statement published by the University of Toronto on July 8.

"In a sense, this is ground zero for the worst of COVID," he said.

To manage outbreaks in these facilities, it's about more than wearing a mask, according to Furness.

"We need to manage the air," he said. "We need filtration and ventilation measurements and we need it regularly."

Though when masking, wearing respirator masks, like an N95, is important for maximum protection, according to Furness.

"In this kind of environment where people are so vulnerable, it really matters. You could put nine cloth masks on your face and it won't work nearly as well as a respirator mask," he said.

Behind the COVID curtain: formerly confidential Alberta government documents made public

Another key strategy to prevent COVID-19 outbreaks in long-term care facilities is ramping up rapid testing for staff and visitors, according to Furness. Getting vaccinated is also crucial, he said.

"All vulnerable people should be cared for only by vaccinated people,"

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## When is the right time to apply for a Canadian passport? Your questions answered as delays persist

Aiden Ho, 7, and his brother Desmond, 5, would have been on their way to Hong Kong to visit their grandmother if only their mother, Janice Ip, had been able to get their passports processed.

Ip says she's been searching online for a month for an appointment at Service Canada centres and passport offices but hasn't found one within a 50-kilometre radius of her home in Ayrton, Ont.

"I kind of don't trust the system at the moment, but what can I do?" she said. "It's kind of a wait-and-see situation."

Ip is one of many Canadians weighing the odds of committing to travelling while Service Canada slows through an overwhelming demand for passports since pandemic restrictions were relaxed, forcing thousands to wait in line at centres across the country.

She says she won't risk losing her family's personal documents in the mail to apply for passports or spend

money on plane tickets she might not be able to use.

And taking a day off from work to line up isn't an option.

"We actually do not have the luxury of waiting in line just because of the nature of our work. We are not able to work from home," she said.

CBC News asked Families Minister Karina Gould, the minister responsible for passport services, how Canadians should approach passport applications in the upcoming weeks.

"Should I mail my passport application?"

"You're better off not mailing your passport application for the time being because of the 'huge backlog,' Gould said.

"For some people, mail is the only option, and we want to make sure that channel is available to them, but the passport system is really designed as an in-person service," she said.

Gould added that going in-person allows officers to review personal documents required for passport

applications, such as birth certificates and citizen cards, and return them immediately.

Why does the passport program phone line hang up so much?

Canadians have complained about being unable to reach Service Canada phone operators, after waiting for hours, only to hear an automated message that hangs up on them.

"Sometimes your cell phone provider, if you've been on hold for a period of time, will drop the call ... And that's not actually because of the government of Canada's system, because we take all of those calls on," Gould said.

A spokesperson for Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) says 135 officers currently work at the passport call centre, and an additional 40 officers from 1-800-O-CANADA - the general phone line for information on federal government services - provide support.

Service Canada put in place a

system in mid-April that plays a message when the lines are full instead of a busy signal or dropping calls right away. Before then, callers would be disconnected automatically when lines went busy.

The government agency received 949,921 calls between July 4 and July 10.

Gould says Service Canada expects 500 more passport officers to get to work and 383 citizen service officers who can support them in the passport process - by the end of July.

Will I get my documents in time for a trip this fall?

If you don't have urgent travel plans, waiting until September to apply for a passport would be the safest bet.

"The goal is that in four to six weeks, we will be through the hump of the backlog," Gould said.

She hopes that, by then, people who posted their applications will finally receive their passport and that Service Canada can meet its regular service standards.

"We need to do better and, quite frankly, modernize the way applications are made for passports," she said. "Some of these [measures to digitize the service] are going to take a couple of weeks and a couple of months to do because it's a change in the nature of the process."

## Patrick Brown announces he's running to be Brampton's mayor again



Patrick Brown announced he is running for mayor of Brampton again on Monday morning.

The city's incumbent mayor announced the bid just weeks after he was kicked out of the federal Conservative Party leadership contest.

Brown is seeking his second term as mayor after he was elected in 2018. His re-election bid comes at a time when Brampton city council is divided on his leadership.

"I just wanted to inform everyone that after talking to my family, we've decided to put my name in again for Mayor of Brampton," Brown said at the news conference.

"It's been the greatest privilege to serve the city over the last four years, and I'm looking forward to the next four years."

He joins Jeanine Chambers, Vidya Sagar Gauram, and Cody Vatcher in the race.

Brown cited funding for a new hospital, medical school, a transit facility, and electrified transit fleet among other economic development projects as things achieved under his tenure.

Brown also froze property taxes for four consecutive years in Brampton, a move that was popular with many voters.

"We've done a lot of great work in city hall," he said.

Brown disqualified from Conservative leadership race

On the social front, Brown noted his continued opposition to Quebec's Bill 21, citing his support for religious freedoms.

Earlier this month, Brown was disqualified from the Conservative party over allegations related to an apparent breach of the financing rules in the Canada Elections Act.

The Conservatives' leadership election organizing committee has been tight-lipped about the nature of the allegations, though Brown and his campaign have denied any wrongdoing. They are currently appealing the decision. A woman identifying herself as the whistleblower in the campaign says she personally discussed with Brown an arrangement for her to be paid by a private company, and that he approved.

Brown again said "there was no wrongdoing" in his federal campaign, but said he's focusing now on

of the "deliverables" identified in the expenses.

Five councillors wrote most of the money went to one firm, which employed six associates of Brown.

Brown responded that it's an attempt of councillors to distract from their contrary motion to fill a seat vacancy. The group of five councillors voted to appoint Elaine Moore, a former city and regional councillor, in former councillor Charmaine Williams' seat, after she was elected to Queen's Park in the last provincial election.

An Ontario judge quashed that appointment shortly after.

Brown, speaking with reporters after, welcomed the judge's finding. He alleged Moore's appointment was an attempt to "seize control" of city council and called it "egregious, wrong and illegal."

But the councillors that supported Moore's appointment hoped she would help "unearth" issues related to Brown at Brampton city hall as she's been critical of his tenure as mayor.

Brown briefly mentioned the conflict with other councillors in his speech.

"Court ruled that no councillor is above the law and the councillors that held the court to have broken the law," he said.

"We can never have councillors who think they're above the law."

Brown, a former leader of the Ontario Progressive Conservative party, has been mayor of Brampton since 2018. He resigned his PC leadership after allegations of sexual misconduct dating back to his time as a federal MP surfaced. Brown has denied any wrongdoing with respect to those allegations.

## Bank of Canada interest rate hike is a 'hammer to housing' market: BMO economist

A BMO Capital Markets senior economist says the Bank of Canada's recent move to increase its key interest rate is setting up the housing market for an even deeper correction next year.

Robert Kavcic says governor Tiff Macklem's surprise one-percentage-point rate hike last week was like taking a hammer to the housing market.

In a note to investors, Kavcic says the increase which prompted the commercial banks to increase their prime rates has made it more difficult to qualify for a mortgage under Canada's stress test rules.

The test sets the qualifying rate for uninsured mortgages at either two percentage points above the contract rate or 5.25 per cent, whichever is greater.

Kavcic says before the move, variable-rate borrowers were still qualifying at 5.25 per cent, but that has now shifted up to around six per cent, which he considers "a massive pill for the market to swallow."

Fixed-rate borrowers are qualifying around seven per cent, which he says will carve into their purchasing power too.

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## Cement shortages are putting pressure on Canada's construction industry

The concrete truck spatters out the last of its contents as it fills the backyard patio of a senior couple in Calgary. Emad Sleiman lets out a laugh that's a mixture of satisfaction and relief.

"We've got just enough," Sleiman's local business has been overrun with project requests this year, but his crew at Apex Concrete and Landscaping is having a major issue finding enough concrete.

Apex used to schedule concrete trucks based on the projects they had coming up. Now, they're looking any available concrete and trying to squeeze clients into those days. Some jobs are being pushed back weeks as they wait for materials and other Calgary companies, like Omega 2000 Cribbing Inc., are turning clients away.

"I don't know how other contractors are going to survive. I don't know how the suppliers [are] going to keep providing," said Sleiman.

The construction sector is having a boom year, as consumers and companies pour more dollars into building infrastructure. But cement, a key ingredient in making concrete, has become scarce, and the shortage-



caused by a confluence of increased demand, labour shortages, inflation and issues at major plants - is creating serious problems for the construction industry across the country.

Increased demand, shrunken concrete. One undisputed cause of the shortage is an increase in demand. "This is a good-weather summer. And people have put off building for a while, and the money has come from governments.... And now everybody wants to do everything all at once," Michael Veal, a professor of economics at McMaster University, said.

"It's not surprising that the economy takes a little time to get adjusted to this new level of rapid construction growth."

There are many reasons why supply is struggling to keep up with demand. BURNCO, a North American ready-mix concrete producer, says it's experiencing issues with supply chains (particularly with machinery, repairs, and maintenance) and global constraints limiting the amount of raw materials available to make cement. Canada imported about \$895 million in cement and concrete-related goods in 2021, according to Industry Canada, mostly from the U.S. and China.

The impact of higher rates will be felt most directly on the housing market, as variable rate mortgages are closely tied to the central bank's rate.

Canada's housing market was red hot for most of the pandemic, as record low rates fuelled demand and pushed prices up to their highest levels ever. But that direction turned in the first part of this year, as the central bank's signal that higher rates were coming took the wind out of the sails of insatiable demand.

Average prices have fallen since March across the country, the Canadian Real Estate Association found. Wednesday's rate hike will do nothing to reverse that trend.

Prospective home buyers must have their finances stress tested to ensure that they can withstand higher lending rates, and Wednesday's rate hike will raise that testing bar to about seven per cent for fixed rate loans, and six per cent for variable loans.

If borrowers don't pass the stress test, lenders are obligated to lower the amount they will lend to them, until they meet the bar.

Anyone who currently has a variable rate loan - and anyone looking to get one in order to buy - will likely notice their mortgage rates go up almost immediately.

Sleiman says that Apex is spending about 30 per cent more on its concrete than it did last year.

While the size of the hike was warranted given the unprecedented challenges facing the economy yesterday, "We're in a situation where we have supply chain disruptions, really high oil prices, pent up demand coming out of the pandemic," he said.

"We're in new territory here, so there's very little to guide us in the way of history. We're just going to have to feel the way forward."

Housing market will feel the pinch

## 'Be brave like Ukraine:' stick to sanctions in turbine strife, protesters tell Canada



Protesters called on Canada to "be brave like Ukraine" and uphold economic sanctions against Russia on Sunday, July 9, ahead of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's delivery of a message to the Prime Minister.

In a phone call between the leaders, Zelenskyy told Justin Trudeau that his stance on sanctions against Russia "must be principled" at a time when relations between Canada and the embattled country are somewhat strained by Canada's controversial decision to send parts of a Russian natural gas pipeline back to Germany.

Zelenskyy recapped their conversation in a short statement shared on Twitter, saying he thanked Trudeau for the continued powerful defence support Canada has offered this country but also raised the importance of upholding the sanctions.

"After the terrorist attacks in Vinnytsia, Mykolaiv, Chasiv Yar, etc. the pressure must be increased, not decreased," he said.

Trudeau reiterated Canada's support for Ukraine against Russia's military aggression, according to an official account of the discussion from the Prime Minister's Office.

The two leaders also talked about maintaining unity among their allies and imposing "severe costs" on Russia, the PMO said.

Canada agreed earlier this month to grant an exemption to the economic sanctions issued against Russia in response to the invasion of Ukraine.

The two-year waiver would allow six Siemens energy turbines, which were in Montreal for repairs, to be returned to Germany for use in the Russian state-owned Nord Stream 1 pipeline.

Trudeau has previously defended the decision and said Canada's Germany ally relies on the natural gas supply from the pipeline.

In a written and video address last week, however, Zelenskyy called the move "absolutely unacceptable."

Russian state-owned energy company Gazprom reduced gas deliveries from its Nord Stream 1 pipeline, which runs to northeastern Germany, by 60 per cent last month, citing turbine-related technical problems.

The decision has left several Ukrainian supporters who attended a rally in Ottawa Sunday afternoon in a state of disbelief.

Canadian-Ukrainian Yuri Kolomyets told the crowd of about 150 supporters assembled on the lawn of Parliament Hill that the decision will mean more oil and gas money for Russia to fund its attack on Ukraine.

"I guess it's okay to supply genocidal maniacs with the technology and the money, as long as it keeps German voters happy," Kolomyets told the crowd, eliciting cries of "shame" in response.

"It's not their children who are dying in the missile strikes,"

was "the right thing to do." The United States has also spoken up in support of Canada's decision.

The congress-based organization, the Ukrainian World Congress, has petitioned the Federal Court for a judicial review in hopes of stopping the turbines from making it to Germany.

"Both Canada and Germany, we feel, have been manipulated here by the Russians," said Ukrainian Congress national executive director Ihor Michalchyshyn ahead of the plea to the court.

The group contends Canada bowed to Russian blackmail and set a dangerous precedent that will lead to the weakening of the sanctions regime imposed on Russia.

"This is a decision that has angered Canadians and the Ukrainian government as well," Michalchyshyn said.

He said Ukrainian-Canadians involved in his group initially expressed surprise and disappointment when they learned that Canada would allow the turbines to be returned.

The government has also faced political backlash. In a video posted on Twitter Sunday, Alberta Premier Jason Kenney admonished the Liberals for helping to fund Russian oil and gas and allowing the country to continue to dominate the European energy market.

"Why do we have a government in Ottawa that is impeding efforts to export responsible Canadian energy to Europe while helping Vladimir Putin's Gazprom to continue to dominate European energy markets? It makes no sense," Kenney said.

The Ottawa chapter of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress planned the Parliament Hill protest to urge the government to revoke the waiver.

The protesters called for Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland, who defended the turbine decision last week, to answer to the Ukrainian community in Canada. They also demanded for the government to "stand with Ukraine."

Speaking to reporters in a teleconference after a meeting of 120 finance ministers in Bali, Indonesia on Saturday, Freeland said Germany's ability to sustain its support for Ukraine could be at risk if the turbines were not returned. She said a united G7 effort would be needed to support Ukraine and allowing the repaired parts to return to Germany

Foreign Affairs Minister Melanie Joly and Natural Resources Minister Jonathan Wilkinson have also been summoned to the committee to answer questions about the decision.

Echoing Zelenskyy's principled stand on sanctions, protester Oksana Bashuk Heprburn said Canada's strength is its values. Standing in front of the parliament buildings in a straw hat decorated with a ribbon in Ukraine's yellow and blue colours, she said Canada should stick to those values and stand by the sanctions.

## Bank of Canada hikes rate to 2.5%. Here's what it means for you

The Bank of Canada has raised its benchmark interest rate by the largest amount in more than 20 years, sharply increasing the cost of borrowing in an attempt to rein in runaway inflation.

Canada's central bank raised its benchmark interest rate Wednesday by a full percentage point to 2.5 per cent. That's the biggest one-time increase in the bank's rate since 1998.

The bank's rate impacts the rate that Canadians get from their lenders on things like mortgages and lines of credit. Two of Canada's big banks have already moved their benchmark rates in response, with Royal Bank and TD raising their prime lending rates from 3.7 per cent to 4.7 per cent as of Thursday morning.

The other major lenders are expected to follow suit in short order. All things being equal, a central bank cuts the lending rate when it wants to stimulate the economy by encouraging people to borrow and invest. It raises rates when it wants to cool down an overheated economy.

After slashing its rate to record lows at the start of the pandemic, the bank has now raised its rate four times since March as part of an aggressive campaign to fight inflation, which has risen to its highest level in 40 years.

Economists had been expecting the bank to raise its rate by three-quarters of a percentage point, but the full percentage point increase was ahead of even those high expectations. And even after this record-setting increase, more hikes are expected, because of how serious the spectre of stubbornly high inflation is.

Bank of Canada governor Tiff Macklem said the bank made the decision to raise its rate to 2.5 per cent to 4.7 per cent as of Thursday morning.

"We're in a situation where we have supply chain disruptions, really high oil prices, pent up demand coming out of the pandemic," he said.

"We're in new territory here, so there's very little to guide us in the way of history. We're just going to have to feel the way forward."

Housing market will feel the pinch

While the size of the hike was warranted given the unprecedented challenges facing the economy yesterday, "We're in a situation where we have supply chain disruptions, really high oil prices, pent up demand coming out of the pandemic," he said.

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