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Canada opens new economic immigration streams for skilled refugees and other displaced people

Ottawa-Refugees and other displaced individuals are forced to restart their lives when they flee their home country, but they should not have to start from scratch, particularly when it comes to acquiring skills, training, experience and education. Through the Economic Mobility Pathways Pilot (EMPP), Canada is tapping into talent that is too often overlooked by creating more opportunities for skilled refugees and other displaced individuals to immigrate and to use their education, training and experience to continue their careers in Canada.

The Honourable Sean Fraser, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, announced today that Canada has launched two new EMPP streams, fulfilling a commitment made on March 27, 2023. Candidates can also continue to apply through existing regional EMPP economic pathways.

These new immigration streams provide Canadian employers with the opportunity to access a talent pool of skilled refugees and other displaced people from around the world. This access allows Canada to not only increase its economic immigration and fill in-demand jobs, but also to complement its existing humanitarian commitments.

By implementing efficiencies and improvements learned through collaboration with partners during the rollout of the first EMPP streams, newcomers using the EMPP will now be able to move to Canada and start working here more quickly. These new streams also reduce barriers to access since candidates do not need Canadian work experience to apply. Of the two new streams announced today, one is tailored to candidates who have a job offer from a Canadian employer and the second is available to highly-skilled refugees without job offers.

Through the EMPP Federal Skills Job-Of-Fit Stream, Canadian employers can hire qualified candidates to fill a wide range of in-demand jobs, including nurse aides, personal support workers, long-term care aides, software engineers, web designers, mechanical and electrical engineers and technicians, logistics and warehouse workers, tourism and hospitality workers, and truck and delivery service drivers.

The EMPP Federal Skills Without a Job Offer Stream recognizes that certain candidates have skills that are in high enough demand that they will find work after they arrive in Canada. EMPP gives refugees and other displaced people the chance to make

the most of their skills to improve not only their lives and those of their families, but also the communities and workplaces that welcome them.

Expanding and scaling up the EMPP is part of Canada's ongoing efforts to embrace its role as Chair of the Global Taskforce on Labour Mobility by modelling labour mobility programs for like-minded countries, and to make Canada's immigration system more responsive to the needs of our economic and humanitarian commitments.

Quotes:

"Helping employers access a new global talent pool is another way we are using our immigration system to address ongoing labour shortages. Finding these skilled workers among people who happen to be displaced abroad and lack a durable solution is a real challenge. Canada's solution that we are promoting globally. Canada will continue to develop and scale up these types of innovative measures that allow us to welcome more vulnerable people, while helping businesses find the skilled workforce they need to grow."

- The Honourable Sean Fraser, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship

Canada's population surpasses 40 million

Canada's population has surpassed 40 million people, according to Statistics Canada. The federal statistics agency's "population clock" uses modelling to estimate Canada's population in real time. The counter hit the 40 million mark just before 3 p.m. ET on Friday.

"This is an exciting milestone for Canada," said chief statistician Anil Arora in a media statement. "It is a strong signal that Canada remains a dynamic and welcoming country, full of potential."

Matii Siemiatski, director of the Infrastructure Institute and a professor at the department of geography and planning at the University of Toronto, said the population milestone presents opportunities and challenges for Canada.

"This is a recognition that we're a country that's been growing for some time, that we are a country that continues to attract people and is an attractive place for newcomers," he said.

"We are in a crunch. We haven't been building enough units across the country, especially at the affordable levels," he said.

But Siemiatski said attracting more skilled labour can also bolster the workforce needed to build more housing.

Canada's population topped 30 million in 1997 and could reach 50 million as early as 2043 if current trends continue, Statistics Canada said.

"From an economic perspective, newcomers have been really important



both to fill jobs that are here and to connect us with the economies out into the wider world," he said.

But a growing population also presents challenges, particularly with housing, Siemiatski said.

The average price of a Canadian resale home has increased four months in a row this year, according to the Canadian Real Estate Association. The average selling price of a home in April - the month for which the most recent data is available - was \$716,000.

Siemiatski said Canada urgently needs to build more housing to accommodate Canada's growing population.

"We're in a crunch. We haven't been building enough units across the country, especially at the affordable levels," he said.

But Siemiatski said attracting more skilled labour can also bolster the workforce needed to build more housing.

Canada's population topped 30 million in 1997 and could reach 50 million as early as 2043 if current trends continue, Statistics Canada said.

Russia says relations with Canada close to 'being severed' as Ottawa seizes cargo plane

Moscow is warning that relations with Canada are "on the verge of being severed" after the federal Liberal government moved to forfeit a massive Russian cargo plane.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau visited Ukraine on the weekend, where he announced that Canada officially seized an airplane that had been sitting on the tarmac at Toronto's Pearson International Airport since February 2022.

"We perceive this act as cynical and shameless theft," Russia's foreign ministry said in an English-language statement posted Tuesday.

A year ago, Canada became the first G7 country to enact a law that allows Ottawa to not just seize assets held by sanctioned people, but to forfeit the money and have it diverted to victims of a sanctioned regime.

The law remains unused but Trudeau said Ottawa plans to begin a process to either transfer the plane to Ukraine or sell it for money that would support the country's recovery.

"We're going to do it as quickly as possible, but I can tell you the Ukrainians are very pleased that the path has started," Trudeau said Saturday.

The Russian-registered Antonov AN-124 is owned by the firm Volga-Dnepr, which Canada sanctioned in April. It is one of the largest aircraft in the world and Ottawa fears Russia could use it to deliver military supplies for its war

on Ukraine.

The government officially seized the aircraft through a June 8 cabinet order.

"I think there was pressure on the government to do something about it because effectively it couldn't be moved, because Russian aircraft are prohibited from Canadian airspace," said William Pellerin, an Ottawa-based trade lawyer with the firm McMillan LLP.

He said the owners can launch a court challenge of the seizure up until the time Ottawa files a formal court application to forfeit the asset. At that point, the firm would receive written notice and have a chance to challenge the application.

"It's fair to say that this opens us up to reprisals. I think it's well-known that the government of Russia has sanctioned a number of Canadians," said Pellerin.

Moscow said it is prepared to retaliate over "stolen Russian property," it noted the plane landed in Toronto in order to deliver COVID-19 testing kits.

"The Russian side warns that the practical implementation of this decision will entail the most serious repercussions for Russian-Canadian relations, which are already on the verge of being severed," the ministry wrote.

"We reserve the right to retaliate in line with the reciprocity principle," Moscow and Ottawa have

summoned each other's ambassadors numerous times, with Canada angling Russia is committing war crimes and spewing homophobic rhetoric on social media. The Kremlin, meanwhile, says Canada isn't adequately protecting its Ottawa embassy.

"It's not surprising that Russia is taking this retaliatory stance," said Pellerin, who advises Canadian and international firms, but not Russian firms, on navigating the sanctions regime.

"Canada's approach to seizure and forfeiture is the first of its kind globally. It is certainly the case that Russia would be deeply concerned if other countries followed Canada's approach."

Meanwhile, Ottawa has yet to follow through on a promise six months ago to try seizing funds it says are held by Russian oligarch Roman Abramovich. No application had been filed in any provincial court as of last month.

A Senate report last month warned that the legislation could put Canadian companies abroad at risk and could undermine the rule of law if the provisions aren't enforced through due process.

"The government of Canada should proceed prudently with respect to any forfeiture process," the report argued, adding that working in lockstep with allies could "mitigate any unintended consequences."

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Statement from Minister Fraser concerning reports of international student fraud

Today, the Honourable Sean Fraser, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship (IRCC), issued the following statement:

"There have been recent reports of international students and graduates facing removal from Canada, after letters of acceptance submitted as part of their study permit application were determined to be fraudulent.

Many of these international students sincerely came to Canada to pursue their studies at some of our world-class institutions and were shaped by host actors who claimed to be helping them in their immigration application process. Other foreign nationals had no intent of pursuing higher education, and used fraudulent acceptance letters to take advantage of Canada's immigration system. Within this cohort of individuals,

some have been involved in organized crime.

"I understand that this situation is distressing for those affected by unscrupulous actors, and I want to assure them that their well-being is of paramount importance. As a result, I have already struck a taskforce of my officers and have asked them to work closely with the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) to identify the victims of fraud; that is, those students who came to study here in Canada and did exactly that.

"I want to make it clear that international students who are not found to be involved in fraud will not face deportation. The Immigration Refugee Protection Act offers me discretionary authority which I believe should be exercised in the present context. Therefore, if the facts of an individual case are clear that an

international student came to Canada with a genuine intent to study, and without knowledge of the use of fraudulent documentation, I have provided instructions for officers to issue a Temporary Resident Permit to that individual. This will ensure that these well-intentioned students and graduates can remain in Canada, and ensure that they are not subject to the 5-year ban from re-entering Canada that normally follows in cases of misrepresentation. While this process runs its course, preliminary Temporary Resident Permits will be issued if they are required in order to prevent an imminent deportation for anyone under review.

"Further to my instructions to officials, Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) has been working even closer with Designated Learning Institutions (DLIs), provinces and territories, and organizations representing Canada's colleges and universities to better detect and combat fraud, and uphold the integrity of our immigration programs. We are taking every opportunity to crack down on dishonest and fraudulent consultants who seek to abuse Canada's immigration system and take advantage of those seeking to visit, work, study or settle here in Canada.

"The Government of Canada's focus is on identifying those who are responsible for the fraudulent activity and not on penalizing those who may have been affected by fraud.

"We recognize the immense contributions that international students make to our country, and we are committed to providing a path to Canada that is honest and transparent. All applicants must continue to ensure that, before applying for a study permit, they do their research, have an acceptance letter from a DLI, and refer to the official website to get information about our programs. If you believe you have been deceived by an unscrupulous consultant, we urge you to come forward and report fraud."

Canadian real estate news for June 16: Canadians behind on car loans, the lowest mortgage rates and more

As Canadians fall behind on credit cards, are mortgages next?

The strain of large debt loads and high interest rates is obvious in credit cards and vehicle loans: delinquency rates for both are now higher than they were before the pandemic. While they are still relatively low - less than 1 per cent - the trajectory has economists worried that mortgages, a lagging indicator, could be next.

Mortgage delinquencies remain at record lows thanks to the extraordinary steps lenders have taken to shield borrowers from the pain of higher rates, such as allowing homeowners to add unpaid interest to a loan's principal or stop paying down the principal altogether. But both measures extend the amortization period of a mortgage, creating risks down the road.

The kick-the-can approach is coming under increased pressure. This week, Canada's banking regulator called on financial institutions to tackle mortgage extensions "before levels of borrower stress become unmanageable."

Wildfires, natural disasters expected to send the cost of home insurance soaring. Wildfires across Canada are expected to contribute to higher home insurance prices across the country, as extreme weather events continue to hit insurers. The insurance industry has seen natural-disaster claims more than quadruple since 2008.

DBRS Morningstar analyst Marco Alvarez said in a research note the increase in this year's extreme weather and natural catastrophe losses - along with high inflation - will push home

insurance prices higher everywhere. "No single event will impact the price of insurance premiums, but insurers track the ongoing trends over time, including when wildfire events happen," Craig Stewart, vice-president of climate change and federal issues at IBC said in an interview. "As an insurer price risk, we have seen in recent years that Canada is a riskier place to insure."

In the last eight days, mortgage rates are up in every term tracked, writes Robert McLester, except the 10-year fixed, which no one wants anyway. With at least 20 bps of increases in almost every instance, that means new borrowers are paying at least \$11 more per month, per \$100,000 borrowed, than they did at the

beginning of last week. This is a tough time to buy a home. Here are 5 ways Canadians are squeezing into new mortgages. Driving the spread is the market reaction to our inflation-prosecuting central banks. Aside from the Bank of Canada's Jan 25 bps rate hike on June 7, it and the U.S. Federal Reserve have signalled that more hikes may be on route. Bond yields, which usually drive fixed mortgage rates, have run higher as a result.

Sitting 300 feet back from the main road you'd be forgiven for thinking this Hamilton home was an industrial building with its dark exterior and disheveled simple millennial profile. A blank brick wall of the garage (the door for which is on the side closest to the main entrance) practically shouts "nothing to see here." But step inside, and you'll find a house that is filled with elements that play off each other: The wide-plank oak floors have a warm rusty stain that transition to slightly darker walnut cabinets under the counter tops in the kitchen.

The house, which sits on 82 by 482 foot lot, features four bedrooms, and glassed-in combination gyms, yoga studio in the basement, a warm rustic patio with outdoor space and barbecue area, along with a new heated pool.

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Why the U.S. Fed rate hold is good news for the loonie - and the Bank of Canada

The U.S. Federal Reserve's decision to hold interest rates steady at the Bank of Canada reignites its rate-hike cycle could be good news for the Canadian dollar and the inflation fight north of the border, according to a BMO economist.

Benjamin Reitzes, BMO's managing director of Canadian rates and macro strategist, tells Global News that even temporarily divergent rate paths from the central banks would be a boon for the loonie, which in turn could limit how restrictive the Bank of Canada needs its policy rate to be.

The U.S. Fed's decision to leave rates unchanged on Wednesday - its first pause after 10 consecutive hikes - comes a week after the Bank of Canada said it would raise its policy rate to 4.5 per cent by the end of the year.

Some economists and big banks, including BMO, are calling for another rate hike from the Bank of Canada in an upcoming decision in July. Market odds are leaning that way as well, Reitzes notes.



The Fed also signalled two small rate hikes could be in the cards for the rest of the year following its pause in June.

Central banks on both sides of the border are "almost entirely" dependent on the kinds of economic data they see in their inflation and labour market reports over the next few months, Reitzes says.

TD Bank senior economist James Orlando said in a note to clients on Wednesday that if the U.S. economy slows according to TD's forecasts in the latter half of the year, it could be

counterpart, Reitzes explains. Global investors tend to flock to currencies backed by higher central bank rates, driving up the demand and value of that currency.

The Canadian dollar hit a four-month high ahead of Wednesday's rate decision from the U.S. Fed, according to Reuters, which said strength in oil prices was giving another boost to the loonie. The Canadian dollar held steady at around 75 cents to the U.S. dollar Wednesday afternoon following news of the pause.

That's great news for Canadians who are vacationing south of the border this summer, as a stronger loonie increases their spending power, Reitzes says.

But it also affects the costs of imports from the U.S., which can take some of the pressure off inflation, he adds. "Things like food prices and other imported goods would come down a little bit, help battle inflation that much more," Reitzes says.

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Neha Kakkar Is Separating From Hubby Rohanpreet Singh? Singer REACTS Amid Their Divorce Rumours, Shares Romantic PICS From Vacation

Reports claiming trouble in Neha Kakkar and Rohanpreet Singh's marriage have been doing the rounds for quite some time now. It all started after fans noticed Rohanpreet was missing from the photos of Kakkar's 35th birthday celebration and in no time fans started speculating if the couple is heading for divorce. Amidst all such rumours, Neha has shared their romantic photos from vacation.



On Friday, Neha posted a couple of her and Rohanpreet's lovey-dovey photos and wrote in the caption, "Back in town from the Best holidays spent with Hubby!! @rohanpreet Singh". It is clear that Rohanpreet could be seeing kissing wifey Neha on her cheek as they pose for the camera. Other shots showed

them smiling. While the kala chashma singer looked pretty in a black dress, Rohan complimented her in white t-shirt. Neha's post has indeed put a rest to their separation rumours. Neha's brother and singer Tommy Kakkar reacted, "Kime Pyaree dano." Events fans showed love on the couple. One user said, "Made for each other #rohanpreet." Another fan commented, "Nasur in lga thuthutha

Bigg Boss OTT 2: Contestant Aaliya Siddiqui Reveals Nawazuddin Siddiqui Is Taking Care Of Kids In France

Nawazuddin Siddiqui and his estranged wife Aaliya Siddiqui finally seem to be on good terms as she has now revealed that their kids, Shora and Yashvi, are now with the actor. The kids seem to be enjoying their vacation as Nawaz has taken them on holiday in France. Aaliya also pointed out that the actor has been supportive of her decision to enter Bigg Boss 2.

Aaliya entered the Bigg Boss house as a resident and she plans to kickstart her career with Salman Khan's show. During her entry into the BB house, Aaliya spoke about how Nawazuddin Siddiqui and she drifted apart over the years. The Bigg Boss OTT contestant said that their minor issues blew up and they had to end their relationship. She said that their minor issues blew up and they had to end their relationship.

Salman Khan also said that Nawaz had helped her in the movie. Aaliya Siddiqui also added that he has become supportive after their whole personal life was dragged into the media. She was always ambitious and wanted to build her own career. She said she feels the time is perfect now.

Aaliya Siddiqui was also asking about her new boyfriend. She said that she has had feelings for someone after many years and she is now sharing it with people. Aaliya Siddiqui said women are judged immensely when they decide to move on. Even Poja Bhatt agreed at the same, reported BollywoodLife.

Interestingly, Salman Khan also spoke to Shora and Yashvi and both looked happy to interact with the supervisor.

England struggling at 28-2 in their second innings as rain halts first Ashes Test

BIRMINGHAM, Australia captain Pat Cummins starred with both bat and ball as the Ashes holders had the better of a rain-marred third day in the first Test against England in Birmingham on Sunday. The lower-order batsmen made a useful 38 in a total of 386 that left Australia just seven runs behind on first innings. And the fast bowler then dismissed Ben Duckett before England also lost their other opener, Zak Crawley, in a dramatic 20-minute play between the bowlers. England were 28-2 in their second innings, a lead of just 35 runs, at stumps after a huge downpour at 14:50 GMT had sent the players from the field.

They had made steady progress when an initial rain delay stopped play for a hour-and-a-quarter. But after the match resumed in overcast skies, with the Edgbaston floodlights piercing the gloom, conditions were now highly in favour of World Test champions Australia's pace attack. And they made the most of a brief 22-half session by taking two wickets for no runs as England slumped from their lead.

An inspired spell from Ollie Robinson ensured that Australia did not go past England's total on Day 3 of the Edgbaston Test. The pacer bagged three wickets, including the important one of Usman Khawaja, to bowl Australia out for 386. With an umbrella like field setting in front of the batter, Robinson forced Khawaja to try something different and the left-hander ended up being bowled.

The angry celebration that followed, with Robinson hurling abuse at Khawaja, didn't make for a pretty picture. The bowler, who appeared to have told better "F*** off, you f***ing prick, I've defined myself and said that brought in some 'bustle' to the game."

"It's my first home Ashes and to get the big wicket at the time was special for me. I think Uzy played unbelievably well. And to get that wicket for me at the time as a team was massive," said Robinson after the third day's play on Sunday (June 18).



27-0 to 27-2. Cummins led the way, with Duckett edging the 30-year-old low to all-rounder Cameron Green, who dived forward to hold his latest excellent catch in the gully. Helpful conditions - Australia bowl under heavy cloud cover in the first Ashes Test at Edgbaston. Three balls later, Scott Boland had Crawley caught behind off a superb full-length delivery that angled in and sniggled to take the edge. Ollie Pope and star batsman Joe Root, whose unbeaten 118 was the cornerstone of

England's first-innings 393-8 declared, were both yet to get off the mark when the umpires finally abandoned play for the day at 17:13 GMT.

Usman Khawaja's epic innings: Earlier, England finally saw the back of Usman Khawaja but only after his punishing 141 had effectively turned the first of a five-match series into a one-innings show-down. Australia, bidding for a first Ashes series win in England in 22 years, resumed on 31.1-5. Khawaja was then 126 not out.

Australia in the past. "I think when you're in the heat of the moment and you have the passion of the Ashes that can happen. I think we've seen Ricky Ponting, other Aussies do the same to us. So just because the shoe's on the other foot, it's not received well."

Alex Carey, meanwhile, said he wasn't aware of what happened and that he was only informed of the incident before he came out to address England players at the hands of

Hathurisingha pleased with youngsters stepping up

Bangladesh head coach Chandika Hathurisingha said their mammoth victory over Afghanistan in the one-off Test series is more than a Test win.

Bangladesh defeated Afghanistan by 546 runs to write their name in the record books, registering the third highest win in Test cricket in terms of margin of runs.

Hathurisingha was especially pleased with the manner the youngsters stood up to achieve the success. Bangladesh were missing two of their stalwarts as Tamim Iqbal and Shakib Al Hasan were out due to injuries. Despite their absence, Bangladesh came up with a clinical display on the green-top wicket that is not used often in Bangladesh.

"I don't know whether you all have seen and actually I have put it on social media saying that it is more than a Test win. What I meant was, the way we prepared for this game, which we haven't done before - like how we prepared for the fast and green wicket, and so I thought that big win for us to play on that type of wicket and then come out with flying colours," Hathurisingha said on Sunday (June 18).

"So I think it's just more than a Test win as well as the new heroes emerged from the performance of that Test match. If the conditions help and the condition is conducive to positive batting, we will definitely do that. That's how we trained and we have given freedom them to score runs. The name of the game is scoring runs."

"If the conditions are difficult, yes, we will be smart enough to bat the way the conditions allow us to bat. In the same way we first got credit to [Najm-ul-Hossain] Shanto how he battled in the two first innings and especially the first two hours - he and [Mahmudul Hasan] Joy - the way they battled, calmed the nerves of everybody in the dressing room. So if the conditions allow us we will definitely push the boundaries."

Hathurisingha said he is impressed with the new opening pair of Zakir Hasan and Mahmudul Hasan. Both of them scored half-centuries in their comeback match, though it was overshadowed by Najm's hundreds in both innings along with Mominul Haque's first Test ton after 262 matches.

Karan Johar to be honoured at British Parliament for his contribution to entertainment industry

Filmmaker Karan Johar will be honoured at the British Parliament in the presence of Lords and Members of Parliament for his invaluable contribution to the global entertainment industry next week, Tuesday 20th June 2023. The event will take place at the Palace of Westminster, which serves as the meeting place for both the House of Commons and the House of Lords, the two houses of the Parliament of the United Kingdom.

Johar has a special relationship with the United Kingdom having filmed many of his productions such as Kuch Kuch Hota Hai, Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham, and Ae Dil Hai Mushki across the country. In 2012, he was appointed as a Goodwill Ambassador for Visit Britain for a special campaign to attract and invite people to visit and explore the country. His blockbuster



movies Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham and My Name is Khan became the highest-grossing Indian films at the UK Box Office upon their respective theatrical releases, setting new records. He currently heads Dharma Productions, one of India's top film production studios, behind films such as Brahmastra Part One: Shiva, Sooryavanshi, Braahmabullai, Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani, and Kabhi Alvida Naa Kehna. This year marks his 25th anniversary working in the global entertainment industry, which will be celebrated with his next film starring British India-born actress Alia Bhatt and Ranveer Singh, titled Rocky aur Rani Kii Prem Kahani, releasing in UK cinemas and globally this summer on 28th July 2023.

I don't care how it's perceived - Robinson on Khawaja send-off

An inspired spell from Ollie Robinson ensured that Australia did not go past England's total on Day 3 of the Edgbaston Test. The pacer bagged three wickets, including the important one of Usman Khawaja, to bowl Australia out for 386. With an umbrella like field setting in front of the batter, Robinson forced Khawaja to try something different and the left-hander ended up being bowled. The angry celebration that followed, with Robinson hurling abuse at Khawaja, didn't make for a pretty picture. The bowler, who appeared to have told better "F*** off, you f***ing prick, I've defined myself and said that brought in some 'bustle' to the game."



"I don't really care how it's perceived to be honest. It's the Ashes, it's professional sport. If you can't handle that, what can you handle?" Robinson said it was the passion of the Ashes that brought about the send-off to Khawaja, pointing towards similar treatment received by the England players at the hands of

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647-544-3868 | UN745@hotmail.com

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My brother 31, 5'8, Canadian citizen, Sunni Muslim, BSc from Pakistan working in Toronto. My sister 32, 5'4, Canadian citizen, Bsc from Manitoba University, medical student Caribbean School.

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289-933-2863

E-Mail: hamza_raees@hotmail.com

MATRIMONIAL

My brother 31, 5'8, Canadian citizen, Sunni Muslim, BSc from Pakistan working in Toronto. My sister 32, 5'4, Canadian citizen, Bsc from Manitoba University, medical student Caribbean School.

Contact #204-963-9830

Fatal bus crash prompts calls to make Highway 1 intersections safer

When Justin van Damme heard a bus full of seniors crashed on a Trans-Canada Highway intersection near Carbery, Man., last week it was like he was transported back in time. He was just 12 years old when his mother sat him and his sister down to break the news - their grandparents had died in a car crash at an uncontrolled Highway 1 intersection. "It was very surreal," van Damme said. "You don't expect to lose them both at once."

The Winnipeg musician's grandparents, Percy and Noreen Shephard, were out for an afternoon drive that day in 1999, heading south toward Highway 1.

The couple crossed the westbound lanes of the Trans-Canada but were hit as they drove across the eastbound lanes. Twenty-four years later, the news of a similar crash on Highway 1 at Highway 5 - short drive east of where his grandparents died - hit van Damme hard. "It brought all those feelings rushing back in," he said. Percy Shephard was a former



Anglican minister "with a booming voice and a great sense of humor," van Damme said, adding his grandmother, Noreen, was incredibly kind. "And the two of them, just so in love," he said. Last week's crash, which killed 15 people on the bus and injured 10 others, also got van Damme thinking about how highway intersections can be safer so that tragedy doesn't strike again. "At some point you do have to recognize that there's a trend," he said. "It's maybe frustrating that it keeps happening, but frustrating is probably not a strong enough way to say it when you see a trend of something

there, and it's not a pleasant intersection."

At-grade intersections, like the one where the bus crashed last week and van Damme's grandparents died, are commonplace in the Prairies but Henry said they shouldn't be part of the Trans-Canada Highway.

"That's something that bothers me," he said. "I want interchanges so that it's much safer." And if nothing changes, Henry said the tragedies will continue. "There's going to keep being fatalities. There's fatalities all around these highways," he said. But David Phillips, who has been a truck driver for about 32 years, said making changes to Highway 1 intersections wouldn't necessarily mean less deaths.

"No matter what you put there, it's not gonna change anything because about the driver that's behind the wheel," he said. And the cost to potentially make them safer also might be worth it. "You're talking billions of dollars because you would have to do them at every single intersection that crosses the highway," Phillips said. Following Thursday's crash, Manitoba's Infrastructure Minister Doyle Prentiss said his team will look into the incident and make any improvements needed. "This is presented as somewhat counterintuitive results, that an increase in government spending can lower inflation," Tombe said. However, Tombe cautioned against drawing any definitive conclusions from research findings. "Certainly, it's interesting. That's a valuable contribution. But no single paper is the end of the conversation," he said. Williamson agreed, noting that the paper doesn't look at government transfers, such as the payments sent out during the COVID-19 pandemic. But the idea that government policy can reduce inflation by easing supply is not new. Former Bank of Canada governor Stephen Poloz has argued that the federal budget, which focused heavily on growing the green economy, could actually help reduce inflation by expanding the economy's productive capacity. And Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland has been quick to quote Poloz in defence of her spending plans. As to what draws the current bout of high inflation in Canada and what role government spending had to play, Tombe said that's still an open question. "We will be studying this period for decades to come," Tombe said.

Ontario expanding 'strong mayor' powers to cities across province

The provincial government is expanding strong mayor powers to more cities in Ontario, a move that previously fuelled controversy when legislation was passed to boost municipal powers in Toronto and Ottawa last year.

At an announcement Friday, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Steve Clark said the province is giving what's been dubbed "strong mayor" powers to 26 other municipalities including Oakville, Milton, London, Windsor, Hamilton and Niagara Falls. The heads of those cities are set to get the new powers as of July 1.

Clark said the move is intended to help regions get ahead in the ground faster to help deliver to the province's goal to build 1.5 million homes by 2031. "The 26 municipalities that are set to receive these powers are among the largest and fastest growing in our province," Clark said. "Our government is determined that these municipalities are set up for success and that they have the necessary tools to deliver on the housing commitments they have made." However, projections in Ontario's spring budget for housing starts showed the target of 1.5 million homes slipping further out of reach with each passing year. Nearly 100,000 homes were built in the province in 2022, but the forecast shows the number of housing starts in the next few years struggling to crack 80,000 annually, projections that were even lower than in last year's budget. The announcement came after a meeting with Ontario's Big City Mayors (OBCM), a group consisting of 29 mayors leading cities with populations of 100,000 or more. Three municipalities of the 29 OBCM members did not make it onto the list including Newmarket, Chatham-Kent and Thunder Bay. "It's pretty simple, we extended strong mayor powers to every community that enacted a housing pledge," Clark said when asked why those three cities were not included. "But we're certainly giving them and other municipalities the opportunity." Toronto, Ottawa first to receive powers. In December, Toronto and Ottawa were both given strong mayor powers



as part of Bill 99, also known as the Better Municipal Governance Act. Former Toronto Mayor John Tory expressed support for the new powers at the time, while Ottawa Mayor Mark Sutcliffe said he was not interested in using them. The powers include allowing mayors to propose housing-related bylaws and pass them with the support of one-third of councillors, as well as override council approval of bylaws, such as a zoning bylaw, that would stymie the creation of more homes. Strong mayors also have responsibility for preparing and tabling their city's budget, instead of council, and hiring and firing department heads. At the time of the original announcement, 13 Toronto city council members asked the province to halt the bill's legislation, citing concerns they were consulted and adding that council and residents should decide any changes to the governance of the city. Clark wouldn't say if all 26 mayors actually want to use the strong mayor powers. With the June 26 Toronto byelection less than two weeks away, several Toronto mayoral candidates have vowed not to use them. Premier Doug Ford previously said Toronto and Ottawa would act as a "test area" before the powers were expanded to other municipalities. Following the province's announcement, Brampton Mayor Patrick Brown said the new powers will help fast-track the city's goal of building more homes. "I am grateful the Premier has made it easier to implement our respective agendas," Brown said in a statement. However, some mayors said they have no plans to use the powers. "In eight-point five years as mayor I would be hard-pressed to think of a time when I ever would have used this particular tool because my

Hardeep Singh Nijjar: Khalistani leader shot dead inside gurdwara in Canada

A fugitive Sikh separatist wanted by India's government was shot dead by two unidentified men at a temple in Canada. Hardeep Singh Nijjar, chief of the Khalistan Tiger Force, reportedly carried a bounty of the 1m (US\$36) for information leading to his arrest over the 2021 killing of a Hindu priest in Punjab 2021. Nijjar, 46, was accused of training and funding members of the separatist group, and had been declared a terrorist by India. Moment IDF soldiers raid house of gunmen who shot dead British-Israeli family. He was found dead inside a car with bullet wounds in the parking lot of Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara in Surrey, British Columbia, at 8.30pm local time on Sunday. The Khalistan movement is a Sikh separatist movement that calls for a sovereign homeland for the religious community to be carved out of India's Punjab state. On Sunday, a group of Sikhs raised pro-Khalistan banners and staged a roadblock in front of the gurdwara. India's National Investigative Agency had filed a first information report and declared a bounty against Nijjar for his separatist activities. The cash reward announced in July last year came nearly three weeks after the investigative agency filed a charge sheet against him and three others in connection with the attack on a Hindu priest. He was also associated with another separatist group, Sikh for Justice. His name was included in the list of wanted men and was handed over to Justin Trudeau during the prime minister's visit to India in 2018, the Indian Express reported.

High government spending means more inflation? It's complicated, economists say

Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre's attempt to block the federal government's budget bill from passing earlier this month is the latest example of government spending coming under scrutiny amid high inflation. And while most fiscal experts agree that government spending can fuel inflation, economic research suggests the link between the two is more complex. The leader of the opposition demanded the federal government present a plan to balance its budget, or his caucus would filibuster the bill. He argued that by running deficits, the government was driving up inflation and forcing the Bank of Canada to keep interest rates high. His demands were ultimately not met and the budget bill passed in the House of Commons. But the scrutiny on government spending is far from over as inflation remains elevated and the Bank of

Canada is at risk of raising interest rates again after hiking its key rate to 4.75 per cent earlier this month. At the same time, economists say government spending can affect both demand and supply in the economy, making its total impact on inflation more difficult to read. Western University economics professor Stephen Williamson said the notion that more government spending equals more inflation is "something you might teach in, like a second-year (university) class." "If more complicated," he said. There are competing theories on the issue, he says, with mixed findings in economic literature. Take, for example, a new study from the Bank of Canada that looks at U.S. data on inflation and government spending. It found a rise in government expenditure can actually push down inflation. The study published earlier this month - co-authored by the central bank's Yixi Xie and Cheng Liu from the National University of Singapore - focuses specifically on government spending on goods and services, leaving out transfer payments to people and businesses. "Our results run counter to the conventional wisdom that fiscal expansions are inflationary," the authors wrote. "We find that inflation falls following an increase in government expenditure and that the effect is relatively persistent, lasting for about one and a half years." The researchers suggest that a rise in government spending can reduce inflation by boosting employment levels, therefore increasing supply in the economy. University of Calgary economics professor Trevor Tombe said that according to this theory, people choose to work more when government spending rises because they anticipate taxes to rise as well.

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