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Inspiring hope and creating opportunities for refugees

Ottawa, The Honourable Sean Fraser, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, the Honourable Mélanie Joly, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Honourable Harjit S. Sajjan, Minister of International Development and Minister responsible for the Pacific Economic Development Agency of Canada, today issued the following statement:

"Today, on World Refugee Day, the global community honours the strength and courage of millions of refugees, while showing empathy and understanding for their plight. In Canada, we have a proud history of resettling the world's most vulnerable people, and refugees play an essential role in building and strengthening our communities. To celebrate this year's World Refugee Day theme, Hope Away From Home, we are focusing on the opportunities Canada provides refugees and displaced people that inspire hope.

"The number of displaced people globally continues to grow at an unprecedented rate. Canada continues to be a leader on the world stage, with resettlement programs that save lives by offering safe havens in Canada. For the fourth year in a row, we were the top resettlement country in the world, welcoming over 47,500 refugees from over 80 countries in 2022. To date, we've resettled more than 80,000 Syrian refugees and over 33,000 Afghans fleeing persecution from the Taliban. We remain on track to resettle at least 40,000 vulnerable Afghans by the end of this year, which is one of the largest

Emergency rooms across Canada are facing a growing crisis - staffing shortages, burnout, worsening wait-times, closures, a lack of adequate funding and a surge of patients seeking urgent care, all threatening to overwhelm a system on the brink of collapse.

This isn't the same type of pressure they faced during the COVID-19 pandemic, but doctors and nurses across the country who report to CBC News say the current strain on ERs can feel worse now than it was during the past few years.

Dr. Yogi Sahgal, an ER physician at Dr. Everett Chalmers Regional Hospital in Fredericton, said his emergency department narrowly avoided disaster a few weeks ago when multiple critically ill patients arrived in a packed waiting room at the same time.

If those patients had come in just three hours later, he would have been forced to call a Code Orange - typically reserved for extreme situations like plane crashes - where every available health-care worker in the community is called in to try to help keep patients alive.

"We would have been scrambling to get as many of the interventions done with each of the patients that were simultaneously crashing with basically no staff," he said.

"Thankfully, I think all of them did well in the end. But again... had it been in the next shift - who knows what would have happened?"

Unfortunately, the situation can be dire for some, with reports from Quebec, Alberta, Manitoba, British Columbia, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia during the past year of patients tragically dying after waiting for hours in crowded hospitals, unable to get

Why ERs are under intense pressure across Canada - and how to help fix them

between June and August alone.

And a hospital in Prince George, B.C., was forced to call a Code Orange this week after a nearby fatal bus crash involving 30 people pushed staff beyond capacity; the city asked anyone without life-threatening injuries to avoid visiting the ER.

"Canadians are rightfully concerned, and so are we. No one should lose a loved one because they couldn't get timely medical attention," the office of federal Health Minister Jean-Yves Duclos said in a statement to CBC News.

"The last few years have presented unprecedented challenges for our health-care system. Health workers, including those that work in hospitals and emergency rooms, are overwhelmed. Patients also feel the strain when they cannot access the care they need."

Data from the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) shows 90 per cent of patients were seen by a doctor within four hours in ERs between March 2021 and April 2022. That's a jump from a wait of up to three hours between 2017 and 2018.

For patients who were admitted to hospital, 90 per cent were able to get a bed within 41 hours in the period between 2021 and 2022, up from 33 hours in 2017 to 2018.

The longest wait time - up to 74 hours - was in Prince Edward Island's ERs in 2021 to 2022.

A new editorial in the Canadian

Medical Association Journal is calling for "practical and immediate steps" to be taken to "mitigate harms caused by long wait-times for emergency care" and "protect the emergency health-care providers" shouldering the crisis.

"One of the things that front-line providers are extremely good at doing is creating workarounds, so the impacts of parts of the system that are falling apart are not felt by the patient," said Dr. Alike Lafontaine, president of the Canadian Medical Association.

"What you're really seeing in the last couple of years is an inability of front-line providers to do that anymore, either because they themselves feel such a heavy burden that they physically, emotionally and mentally just can't do it, or that the stresses of the system are too great."

Peggy Holton, a nurse at Surrey Memorial Hospital with decades of experience, said it's important for Canadians to understand that the unsustainable pressures facing ERs are affecting patients, as well as health-care workers.

"We're very resilient as nurses and doctors - we're a very good team. But the constant demand has certainly taken its toll. It's morally and ethically very demanding on patients and on the health-care staff," she said.

"Sometimes the demand is just so high that we can't get to everybody. And so it's causing a lot of mental and moral distress... to the point where that's why people are leaving."

Part of the problem, Holton said, is nurses aren't brought to the table to discuss solutions, but they're on the front lines of the crisis and often the first place where anger and abuse is directed in a dysfunctional system.

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Uh-oh. More good news that may be bad for your economic health

At first glance, the reappearance of "sold over asking" real estate signs may seem like an encouraging signal for the Canadian economy, especially for highly invested homeowners who have watched prices fall from last year's highs.

But a growing number of economists worry that a series of recent indicators, the latest being Wednesday's rise in Canadian retail sales, may instead be a red flag for central bankers, goading them into more rate hikes that could ultimately make many Canadian feel miserable.

With each new smidgen of optimistic data, money market traders point to a rising chance that central bankers will raise rates again. A growing number of Canadian bank economists agree there will be another rise in interest rates when the Bank of Canada's Tiff Macklem announces his rate hike on July 12.

Rate hike bakod? "We expect that there is a 25-basis-point hike baked in for

July," said RBC economist Carrie Freston on Wednesday, using economist-speak for a quarter percentage point, shortly after the retail figures came out. That will mean more pain for short-term and floating-rate borrowers, whose interest costs rise with the Bank of Canada's overnight rate.

What's a s p e n d i n g slowdown? Retail sales suggest Canadians aren't ready to quit shopping.

Borrowers looking for longer-term fixed-rate loans are more directly affected by the Federal Reserve, the U.S. central bank that passed last week after 10 consecutive rate increases while warning that two more quarter-point rises are likely before they're out.

Fed chair Jerome Powell reiterated that warning in front of a hostile U.S. congressional committee on Wednesday.

The fact is very few people, including members of Congress, like

rising interest rates. Stock prices, which have recently been on the upswing, slumped after Powell spoke.

The continued surge in the price of everything, long after prices were supposed to be contained by rising interest rates, is not just a U.S. and Canadian phenomenon. As the Wall Street Journal reported this week, "inflation around the world just won't go away."

Buyout global outlook

Policymakers worry that the effect of rate hikes are ebbing, the Journal reported. A decline in house prices seems to have stopped and unemployment has begun to fall again.

"Canada, Sweden, Japan and the U.K. skirted recessions after growth unexpectedly rebounded," said the Wall Street Journal report. "Business surveys suggest a relatively buoyant outlook."

In the U.S., there have been many reports that a persistently rising stock market is making the Federal Reserve

nervous. In the Journal's words, a rising market was telling Powell, "You haven't done enough."

BMO's chief economist, Doug Porter, echoed that point in a recent market review.

"The Canadian housing market is sending the Bank of Canada the same message," he wrote, noting that sales have now rebounded to last year's levels, and prices are rising, too. "Thus, we're seeing the return of 'sold over asking' signs."

"We suspect that for all the Bank [of Canada]'s talk about Q1 GDP [economic growth], April CPI [inflation] and a strong job market, the rekindling in the housing market really hit a nerve," said Porter.

And that may mean containing rate hikes until house buyers feel the effect. Conventional economic tells us that if interest rates go high enough, even with a housing shortage, eventually no one will be able to afford a loan to pay high house prices. But evidently, we have not reached that point.

More spending, but no catch-up? The latest retail data does indicate that some consumers are beginning to feel the pinch as borrowing costs and prices outpace incomes.

Canada will soon end 'inefficient' fossil fuel subsidies. But what does that mean?

Canada has for years forked over billions of dollars in subsidies to oil and gas companies — an approach that critics say flies in the face of the country's climate goals, and impinges on efforts to turn toward renewable energy sources.

Now, the federal government is preparing to release a new policy that will put an end to "inefficient fossil fuel subsidies," a commitment Canada made more than a decade ago.

A spokesperson for Environment Minister Steven Guilbeault said the new policy will be released in July. "But the strength of that commitment, environmental groups say, will hinge on how exactly the terms 'inefficient' and 'subsidy' are defined."

Julia Levin, associate director of national climate for the advocacy group Environmental Defence, said Canada has an opportunity to become a global leader in reducing fossil fuel subsidies if it's done right.

"If it's a strong assessment framework, it sets a great precedent. It kind of cements a bit of climate leadership for Canada," she said in an interview.

"If it's weak, it sets an incredibly dangerous precedent." Where in Canada sit with fossil fuel subsidies? Canada has routinely ranked near or at the top of the developed world when it comes to subsidies for oil and gas, according to environmental groups.

G20 countries, including Canada, committed to eliminating such subsidies in 2009, but did not give a firm timeline of when it would happen or what that commitment would include.

The Liberals later committed to a 2025 target end, in the last election campaign, moved that up to 2022. The long-anticipated policy comes as the oil and gas industry racks up record profits.

The five largest companies in Canada's oil sands made about \$35 billion in profits in 2022. The parliamentary committee on environment released a report last week laying out recommendations for the phase out of subsidies and public financing.

The report included 21 recommendations, the first of which was for the government to "continue



steps to eliminate subsidies and applicable public financing" by the end of the year, while at the same time giving "careful attention to and mitigation of any potential social and economic impacts."

Another recommendation was to ensure that any existing subsidy "facilitates the transition toward a low-carbon future" and is consistent with the country's climate goals.

While non-binding, the federal government must table a response to the report — and advocates are hopeful it will put additional pressure on them to act. The NDP also issued a statement last week calling on Guilbeault to eliminate subsidies.

"Canadians are increasingly concerned about the devastating impacts of wildfires, flooding and extreme weather events on their communities, their homes and their livelihoods. They want bold action to tackle the climate crisis," said Laurel Collins, the party's environment and climate change critic.

In a statement, a spokesperson for Environment and Climate Change Canada said the details of the policy will be provided at the time of the announcement and noted that it "has already made progress on phasing out tax measures that are inefficient subsidies."

What exactly is a fossil fuel subsidy? There's no agreed upon definition in Canada of what a fossil fuel subsidy includes — which is why determining how much the government does out remains a source of heated debate.

Environmental Defence recently calculated that the federal government provided more than \$20 billion in loans and financial support to oil and gas companies in 2022. The list includes:

"\$12 billion in loans and financial support for the Trans Mountain pipeline."

"\$500 million in loans to the Coastal Gas Link Pipeline."

"\$100 million to help with decarbonization projects."

"\$78 million to help the oil and gas sector grow and reduce its greenhouse gas emissions."

"\$20 million to help oil and gas companies reduce their methane emissions."

The Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP), on the other hand, has maintained that the oil and gas industry is not subsidized at all.

In a brief submitted last year to the parliamentary committee, CAPP argued that tax breaks it gets are part of the tax system, "therefore not subsidies."

Last month, more than 100 environment and civil society groups wrote an open letter to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau calling for a "robust" definition of the term subsidy.

The signatories, which include Environmental Defence, want the government to follow the lead of the World Trade Organization, which says a subsidy is, simply put, a "financial contribution" that "confers a benefit." Under that definition, a subsidy would include everything from direct transfers to foregone revenue to loan guarantees.

When a subsidy is "inefficient" there is also no agreed definition for what constitutes an "efficient" or "inefficient" subsidy. The G20 statement from 2009 did say that inefficient fossil fuel subsidies "encourage wasteful consumption, reduce our energy security, impede investment in clean energy sources and undermine efforts to deal with the

threat of climate change."

Levin and other advocates say subsidies should only be considered "efficient" — and therefore an acceptable form of government funding — if they align with Canada's Paris agreement goals.

That means subsidies shouldn't support new or updated fossil fuel infrastructure, or delay the transition to renewables, according to signatories of the letter to Trudeau last month.

The parliamentary report released last week doesn't give a clear recommendation on how to define the term.

But it calls on the government to adopt a "broad, internationally recognized definition of a fossil fuel subsidy" and a "definition of 'efficient,' in the context of fossil fuel subsidies."

Public financing included?

In its memo to the parliamentary committee, CAPP argued that eliminating public financing for oil and gas would "work against government commitments to meet their targets and obligations under the Paris Agreement given that government funding helps improve industry emissions performance."

But Brown Tucker, who tracks public financing of oil and gas companies at the advocacy group Oil Change International, is hopeful the new policy will include all forms of public financing (such as government loans or loan guarantees) in order to ensure fossil fuel projects don't get an advantage over renewable sources of energy.

Canada put an end to international public financing of oil and gas companies last year, something Tucker said was a good first step in cutting back on government support of the industry.

She said tax breaks and more direct support for oil and gas have also been scaled back, but that support shows up in other ways, such as clean up for oil-spilled wells and carbon capture storage.

"For the public, it can sound actually exciting or often is branded as a climate solution, where what we see in practice is that money goes to a fossil fuel company that frees up money elsewhere in their budget and in their expenses," she said.

"It's still a handout and it's just letting them off for the costs of clean-up that they should be able to cover themselves."

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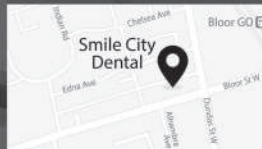
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Avengers action coordinator Chris Barnes roped in to work on Salman Khan's Tiger 3

The producers of the upcoming Salman Khan and Katrina Kaif film Tiger 3 have hired renowned Hollywood action coordinator Chris Barnes, who previously worked on Marvel's monumental smash Avengers: Endgame.

Chris Barnes is a seasoned action movie maker who specialises in maritime action, according to his boss. Chris has also contributed to major Hollywood blockbusters like Avengers: Infinity War, The Bourne Ultimatum, I Am Legend, Joker, Doctor Strange, and Spike Lee's Fur from London.

A source revealed: "YRF Spy Universe is the coolest film franchise that we have in India today and Tiger 3 will bring its own, unique flavour to the spy franchise that will be remarkably distinct from Pathaan or Warfranchise."



"Action is the mainstay for these action admirers and of course YRF and Manoj's team are going to go all out to give audiences a film that will give you a genuine thrill but they will not miss their intention to give people a never seen before theatrical experience."

Tiger 3, the third movie in the Tiger franchise following the two massive hits Ek Tha Tiger and Tiger Zinda Hai, is a part of the renowned blockbuster-producing YRF Spy Universe. In Tiger 3, Katrina Kaif plays the super spy Zoya, and Emman Hashmi plays the bad guy. It will premiere around Diwali.

Did you know Ranveer Singh stole his mother's diamond earrings for Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahani?

Ranveer Singh is back with another vibrant film to showcase his colourful and eccentric style in Karan Johar's romantic drama Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahani.

The film recently released its trailer, showcasing Alia Bhatt's stunning sarees and Ranveer's stylish stunts, which garnered fans' attention. During an episode of Koffee with Karan last year, Ranveer was the same stunts and shared that he had taken the diamond earring from his mother, but later replaced it with a bigger one.

Interestingly, he continued to wear the earrings during the filming of Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahani, and glimpses of them were also captured on the trailer.

Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahani marks Karan Johar's return as director after seven years. Announcing the trailer, Karan wrote, "Presenting to you the film glimpse of a piece of my heart... #RockyAurRaniKiiPremKahaani! I'm thrilled and super excited to see... and give love!"

The film features Dharmendra, Jaya Bachchan, and Shabana Azmi along with Alia Bhatt and Ranveer Singh and is slated to hit the cinemas on July 28.

Eden Gardens in the fray to host World Cup semifinal



Ahead of the 2023 World Cup schedule launch, information trickling in from the International Cricket Council and the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) is that there may have been a last-minute change to the largely anticipated programme. Chibuzza understands that one of the semifinals may go to a centre in the East, most probably to the Eden Gardens in Kolkata.

Initially, there were talks of Wankhede (Mumbai) and Chapek (Chennai) as venues for the last four matches. Then Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bangalore cropped up as one of the options; and now just hours before the final unveiling of the schedule, Kolkata has emerged as an option on the table alongside Mumbai and Chennai.

The semifinal matches, though, most probably will be hosted across Mumbai and Kolkata.

The decision to allot a semifinal to the Eden was finalised at a meeting of the state associations of the cities that will be hosting the World Cup with the BCCI and International Cricket Council (ICC) officials on Monday (June 26). There were 12 associations who attended the meeting.

One of the reasons for moving a semifinal from Chennai to Kolkata was former's weather. In October-November, the region experiences North-East monsoon in those months and the BCCI/ICC felt the city may not be the best option for a knockout game. The Tamil Nadu Cricket Association (TNCA) will, however, get a guaranteed game of the World Cup. Its representative was at the Mumbai meeting. The associations were also explained about operational functions expected of a host association.

Zimbabwe stun West Indies, Netherlands knock Nepal out of World Cup qualifiers

HARARE: Zimbabwe stunned West Indies by 35 runs in a crucial World Cup qualifying triumph on Saturday while the Netherlands ended Nepal's hopes of reaching the global showpiece for the first time. The Dutch side's seven-wicket win guaranteed a Super Six place and also meant that both Zimbabwe and two-time champions West Indies were assured of their places in the next round. However, Zimbabwe will have the advantage of taking the two points from Saturday's win with them into the next stage which features the top three sides from the two groups of five. Zimbabwe, put into bat, made 268 with Sikandar Raza top scoring with 68 from 58 balls, hitting six fours and two sixes.

Ryan Burl added a crucial 50 with five fours and a six after Zimbabwe had been 112-4 at one stage while skipper Craig Ervine made 47 at the top of the order. In reply, West Indies were well-placed at 143-1 before they lost seven wickets for just 99 runs. opener Kyle Mayers top scored with 56 off 72 balls featuring eight fours and a six. In the middle order, captain Shai Hope (50), Nicolas Pooran (34) and Roston Chase (44) all got starts but Tendai Chatara (3-52) and man of the match Raza (2-36) applied the brakes as the West Indies were dismissed for 233 in the 45th over.

"We did feel that we were maybe 20-30 short of what would probably be a winning score," said Ervine. It is always going to be tough mentally. We have talked about treating every game and opposition the same. Today has been quite an emotional day for everybody and it is not a long time before we have to come back and play again on Monday." Hope admitted that fielding left them down. "Too much is on my mind right now, not sure if I can explain it.

Emergency Teaser OUT: Kangana Ranaut Drops NEW Teaser As She Turns Into Indira Gandhi! Asks If She Was A Protector Or Dictator!

Kangana Ranaut's 'Emergency' sent tremors across the country with her impeccable performance as India's first female Prime Minister - Indira Gandhi. The first look for the film was dropped shortly after the film went on floors. Now, on June 24, the actress dropped a brand new teaser along with the release of the much-anticipated movie. The film is all set to hit the theatres on November 24, 2023.

The leading lady, Kangana Ranaut, is back with yet another hand-biting video unit announcing the release date for her next directorial. The striking announcement video also marks 48 years since the Prime Minister had a state of emergency declared across the country.

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If and when I get a turn, I'll be ready to go: Starc

Mitchell Starc has said that getting dropped, especially in England, is "not something new" to him but he's ready to go to pick for the second Ashes Test against Australia at Lord's. The left-arm fast bowler didn't feature at Edgbaston last week, with the selection panel preferring in-form Scott Boland over him, but a couple of weeks into the Ashes series and what's expected to be a more bowler-friendly surface in London, Starc's been making a strong case for selection.

"I'm used to it now coming to England. It's a squad mentality, much the same as last time," Starc said about his non-selection for the Ashes opener. "I have been around long enough, been dropped enough. Probably been dropped the most in this squad so it is not something new to me. It probably won't be the last time either."

"In terms of the team, I haven't got any indication either way about selection for Lord's. Your guess is as good as mine until the selectors decide."

"I have different skills that fit into this bowling group so if and when I get a turn, I'll be ready to go. If not this week, then I'll get ready for Headingley," Starc said he feels in better rhythm now than last week and it's about getting some game-time. "I probably came into that game (Edgbaston) feeling pretty good, but my rhythm wasn't quite there," Starc said. "So it's been a nice couple of weeks of work now to work back into that rhythm."

"I think we are all probably better for the run after that Test final at The Oval and I certainly feel less chanky now than I did through the game. So yeah, hopefully the result is some good stuff if and when I play. It's all in good order. It's just about getting some time in the middle when my chances come."

Starc, who saw England's all-out approach from the sidelines last week, could be expected to be the problem-solver on the field on Wednesday but he's not fidgeting over this latest approach by England.

"They have brought an overly aggressive head space to Test cricket," Starc opined. "The way they are approaching it, there is going to be a reaction when you are either bowling or facing that. I think that is natural but we will stick to our guns and I am sure they will as well."

"Just because they are scoring at a higher rate or trying to score at a higher rate doesn't mean you go to one-day cricket. There are plenty of ways to skin a cat as we say last week in the way they approached it so opposed to the way we did."

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TSB launching investigation into Polar Prince, support vessel for Titan submersible

The Transportation Safety Board of Canada says it is launching an investigation into the operation of the Titan submersible by the Polar Prince support vessel off the coast of Newfoundland near the wreckage of the Titanic.

In a media release issued shortly after 4 p.m. NT on Friday, the TSB said the investigation is "in accordance with the Canadian Transportation Accident Investigation and Safety Board Act and international agreements."

As the investigative authority of Canadian vessels, the TSB said it will conduct "a safety investigation regarding the circumstances of this operation conducted by the Canadian-flagged vessel Polar Prince."

A team of TSB investigators is in St. John's to gather information, conduct interviews and assess the final incident that claimed all five lives of the crew members aboard the Titan.

In the coming days, we will



The Polar Prince support vessel is seen in the waters off the coast of Newfoundland near the wreckage of the Titanic.

co-ordinate our activities with other agencies involved," the TSB wrote in its release. "This is all the information available at this time. Updates will be provided as the investigation progresses."

Headlines: All Canadian rescue vessels involved in the search for the lost submersible Titan are now returning to base, after coming to the conclusion on Thursday that the sub and its five crew were lost.

It's now time for those four Canadian ships to "regenerate" search and rescue capability and prepare for future search and rescue events," reads a statement from the Joint Rescue Command Centre.

The Polar Prince, a Newfoundland vessel tasked with towing the Titan submersible out to sea last weekend, is also coming home, after a harrowing week searching around the Titanic's wreckage.

It had also been carrying family members of some of the five missing crew.

The vessel is majority owned by Miswpukek Horizon, a company

founded by the Miswpukek First Nation.

"It's going to be rough on the [Polar Prince crew]," said Miswpukek Chief Mikel Joe on Friday. "They're looking after the ship, they're looking after themselves and they're looking after the family that's on board. My heart goes out to them. To all of them. It's a loss of life, and it's never easy on family."

The U.S. coast guard believes the debris field for the Titan was found within 200 metres of the Titanic. It believes the submersible imploded under the pressure of the water on its way down, killing the five men instantly.

"The extent of Canadian assistance with recovery and salvage is currently being discussed," reads the JRC statement.

Pain is personal for M'Kenzie chief Joe understands the pain more than most.

He lost his eight-year-old son in a drowning incident 53 years ago. Joe travelled to St. John's this week to be close to the search, and couldn't help but feel the pain of his own loss.

Joe had a feeling of sadness. Heart-wrenching sadness for the family that was out there, and the family that was waiting for them to come home," he said. "I know how that feels."

for asylum as a refugee.

"But now many Sikhs are concerned."

Nijjar was organizing an unofficial referendum for an independent Sikh state at the time of this death. His supporters allege he was a target as a result of that political organization.

The Indian government had offered a reward of one million rupees, or about \$15,000, last July for information that could lead to Nijjar's arrest or apprehension, and the country's counterterrorism body referred to him as a "fugitive terrorist" who led a conspiracy to murder a Hindu priest.

However, none of those allegations were tested in court, nor were there any criminal charges against him in the matter.

has contacted CSIS and the Consulate General of India for comment on Nijjar's death.

India's National Investigation Agency accused Nijjar in a 2020 document of "trying to incite Sikhs to violence for religious."

Sunday's funeral was followed by a private family gathering at the Valley View Funeral Home, also in Surrey. Hundreds of mourners marched the five kilometres from Nijjar's quarters to the funeral home.

"There is a long history of violence against Sikhs in India," Grewal said. "As a result, Sikhs come to Canada

Will the Bank of Canada hike rates again? This week will decide

Anyone worried about interest rates, economic growth and jobs numbers is bracing for a busy and consequential week. Canadians will be hit by a tsunami of economic data over the next 10 days.

The latest inflation numbers, data on how much staff Canada's economy is cranking out and a key reading on the mood of consumers won't just tell us how the economy has performed through the first half of the year, they'll set policy decisions that will dictate how the rest of the year will unfold.

"I would say it's very important," said RBC economist Carrie Freestone.

Freestone said she believes the Bank of Canada will probably raise rates when it meets on July 12, but that this week's data should tell us all we need to know about the bank's decision.

"We think they're gonna go 25 (basis points). They could have to hike higher if we're in a situation where expectations are not met," she told.

The Bank of Canada has been aggressively raising interest rates in an attempt to rein in inflation. The theory is that as rates rise, consumers are squeezed by higher debt payments.

With more money going toward servicing their debt, Canadians have less of it to spend anywhere else.

That leads to slow down the economy and bring down prices - which is exactly what the Bank of Canada is trying to accomplish with rate hikes in the first place: bring down inflation.

The problem is through most of this year, economic data have come in hotter than expected.

Gross domestic product, the total value of all goods and services produced by the country's economy, grew at an annualized rate of 3.1 per cent in the first quarter of 2023.

Canadian employers have added more than 230,000 jobs so far this year.

And just last week, retail sales figures showed Canadian consumers were still spending at rates that just don't show an economy that is slowing.

"In some ways it feels like in the Road Runner when Wile E. Coyote runs off a cliff and he just hasn't looked down yet," said Randall Bartlett, the senior director of Canadian economics at Desjardins



Group: Households are getting more and more squeezed, but they're continuing to behave in a way that doesn't necessarily reflect that reality of higher borrowing costs and higher inflation," said Bartlett.

And that's why this week's data are so important.

Prices continue to rise, but slower. Economists surveyed by Bloomberg say year-over-year inflation numbers will show a sharp deceleration in price growth. Inflation peaked last summer at 8.1 per cent. Prices continue to rise, but at a steady slowdown.

Then last month, Statistics Canada said prices began to accelerate again. The year-over-year, headline rate jumped from 4.3 per cent to 4.4 per cent.

This week, economists expect some solid progress in the fight to rein in inflation. RBC's forecast shows headline inflation likely fell to 3.6 per cent.

"It's a huge drop," said RBC's Claire Fan. "But a lot of that decline can be explained away by lower energy prices."

Last May, gas prices were climbing inexorably toward a peak above \$2 per litre. Compare that to gasoline prices in May of this year, where they were hovering between \$1.50 and \$1.60.

Fan says that drop will help temper consumer spending. But she says the Bank of Canada is looking for a sustained drop in a measure of inflation that economists call the core rate because it strips out volatile items like gasoline and food, which tend to move up and down a lot.

She says the central bank will be watching GDP numbers closely as well.

Her forecast shows economic growth in April will come in flat. But Fan says that month saw a strike by the Public Service Alliance of

Montreal public health says air quality at least 5 times worse than early June

Smoke from fires burning in northern Quebec has coated Montreal, again, leading to poor air quality that is five to six times worse than in early June, according to a medical director at Montreal Public Health.

Environment Canada reported that the air quality health index (AQHI) for Montreal was 10+ on Sunday, which corresponds to a "very high risk" level. It went down to nine on Monday, which corresponds to a "high health risk."

The poor air quality prompted the city of Montreal to shut down outdoor sport facilities, including parks and wedding pools, until noon Monday. The city also cancelled outdoor cultural activities. Municipal day camps are staying open while prioritizing indoor activities.

Wildfire smoke spreads fine particles in the air that can get in people's lungs and make it difficult to breathe. Breathing in these particles can lead to chest pain, headaches and a general feeling of being unwell.

David Kaiser, a medical director at Montreal Public Health, said in an interview that people with heart and lung conditions are particularly vulnerable, but with this much smoke and pollution in the air, everyone can feel its effects.

"So you go for a jog yesterday morning or this morning, you may start to feel some chest tightness, some shortness of breath. That's a sign that probably should stop, get inside, take a break because like I said, at these levels anybody can start having those impacts," said Kaiser.

Stay indoors, wear a mask. Kaiser recommends people stay inside with doors and windows shut and the air conditioner running if possible. Avoiding exposure is key, he says.

Environment Canada recommends using an air purifier with a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter air inside and wearing a well-fitted respirator-type mask outside.

Thousands attend funeral for slain Sikh leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar in Surrey, B.C.

Thousands attended the funeral of slain Sikh leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar on Sunday at the gurdwara where he was gunned down a week earlier in Surrey, B.C.

His death has sparked fear and outrage in much of B.C.'s Sikh community.

Nijjar, 45, was shot dead in his truck on June 18 in the parking lot of the Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara, of which he served as president.

He had been very active with Sikhs for Justice, a group advocating for Khalistan - an independent Sikh state in present-day India.

"For a Sikh, their gurdwaras are a place of worship, community," said Jatinder Singh Grewal, a director of Sikhs for Justice, in an interview outside the gurdwara.

"To target the president at the gurdwara is a message that they will target us anywhere... We will target you to the centre of your identity."

Many attending the funeral Sunday waved yellow "Khalistan" flags as loved ones and associates of Nijjar spoke of his movement's aspirations - which India has branded extremist.

Supporters paying their respects, including some Sikhs who travelled from outside the province, described the father as peaceful, humble, and loved in the community.

"It was really important for me to bring my family, my kids here," Aakashan Singh told CBC News, flanked by his two sons. "[Nijjar] really championed the cause of human rights, and he had a great contribution to society. He helped the community a lot during COVID times, and he was really respected away from us."

"Moving forward, we won't be scared, we will voice our opinions." A memorial has been erected in the gurdwara's parking lot at the place Nijjar was killed.

Investigators with the Integrated

Homicide Investigation Team have said they are still looking for two "heavier-set" male suspects in the shooting.

Many attendees at Sunday's funeral said they are still looking for two "heavier-set" male suspects in the shooting.

While police have acknowledged the allegations of interference stemming from the attack, investigators said they have not found such a link to India at this point, and believe there is no danger to the broader Sikh community in Canada.

A report released earlier this month by Canada's national security adviser named India as a major actor in foreign interference - including election meddling and disinformation campaigns on social media.

"There is a long history of violence against Sikhs in India," Grewal said. "As a result, Sikhs come to Canada

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