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Canada's inflation rate slows to 3.4%, lowest level in almost 2 years

Canada's inflation rate decelerated to 3.4 per cent in the year up to May, Statistics Canada said Tuesday, led by sharply lower gasoline prices.

That's a significant slowdown from the 4.4 per cent pace seen in April. Gasoline prices were the single biggest reason for the deceleration. If gasoline is stripped out, the inflation rate would be 4.4 per cent.

Gasoline prices being down, on average, by more than 18 per cent compared to the record highs they were hitting this time last year was enough to drag down the overall inflation rate just by itself.

But beneath the headline slowdown in consumer prices, many facets of the cost of living are still increasing at an eye-watering pace.

Grocery prices went up at an almost nine per cent pace. That's barely lower than the 9.1 per cent pace clocked in April, and still almost three times the inflation rate.

Food prices have been increasing at a faster pace than the official inflation rate since last 2021.

But putting food on the table isn't the only household expense that's getting harder to do. The cost of keeping a roof over one's head continues to rocket higher, too. The mortgage interest cost index rose 29.9 per cent in the year up to May. That's the fastest pace on record, and it's happening because the Bank of Canada has been aggressively hiking its lending rate in an attempt to cool demand.

That's been a direct hit on anyone with a variable rate mortgage, where the cost of servicing the loan has been



skyrocketing all year. Even fixed-rate loans are having to renew and lock in at much higher rates than they were paying before.

More expensive mortgage costs are the single biggest factor influencing the inflation rate, the data agency said. If mortgage costs are stripped out of the numbers, Canada's headline inflation rate would have been 2.5 per cent. That's down from 3.7 per cent in April.

Another term hike possible

Trading in investors knows as swaps imply investors think there's about a 50/50 chance that Canada's central bank will raise its benchmark lending rate from 4.75 to five per cent when it meets next month - and if they don't it's a virtual lock that it will happen in September.

Leslie Preston, an economist with TD Bank, noted that if you strip out volatile items like gasoline and mortgages, underlying inflation at around 3-4 per cent is still probably warm enough that the Bank of Canada

Canada, Sweden, Ukraine and the United Kingdom say they'll continue their efforts to hold Iran legally accountable for shooting down Flight PS752 and killing the 176 people aboard by referring the matter to the International Court of Justice.

The four countries, which make up the International Coordination and Response Group formed to seek accountability and reparation for the victims' families, announced the move Thursday after the deadline passed for Iran to submit to arbitration under the Montreal Convention.

The convention requires parties to prohibit, prevent and punish certain offences involving aircraft, including the unlawful and intentional destruction of an aircraft in service. Canada, Sweden, Ukraine, the U.K. and Iran are all parties to the convention, which was signed in Montreal in 1971.

The response group triggered the convention process in December, giving Iran six months to signal it would participate in arbitration. Iran did not do so.

"Accordingly, the Coordination Group intends to pursue our collective effort to ensure Iran is held accountable for the unlawful downing of Ukraine International Airlines Flight 752 by referring the dispute to the International Court of Justice as soon as is practicable," the group said.

Foreign Affairs Minister Mélanie Joly met with the families of the victims Thursday morning to update them on the response group's next steps.

"These families deserve transparency, accountability and justice and we will not relent in our efforts to seek it through international law," Joly said in a media statement. "Impunity is not an option for the insurance regime."

Canada, allies taking Iran to International Court of Justice over downing of Flight PS752



permanent residents and others with ties to Canada.

The families of the victims of Flight PS752 began their fight for compensation in 2020. Last year, an Ontario court awarded them \$107 million, but lawyers wanted that actually getting Iran to pay the damages would be very difficult. Iran did not defend itself in court, making its default judgment.

Lawyers representing the families went to court seeking permission to seize three properties in Ottawa and withdraw money from bank accounts at the Royal Bank of Canada and Scotiabank maintained by Iran.

The lawyers argued that Iran's rights to diplomatic immunity ended a decade ago when Canada expelled Iranian diplomats from the country. In January, the Ontario Superior Court of Justice ruled that the victims' families cannot seize those properties or bank accounts on Canadian soil because the federal government considers those assets the property of the Islamic Republic of Iran, protected under international law.

Since the fall, Canada has imposed sanctions on 163 individuals and 192 entities in Iran, including the IRGC and members of the regime's security, intelligence and economic bureaucracy.

Canada calls on Israel to reverse thousands of West Bank settlement approvals

The Canadian government has joined a chorus of allies condemning Israel's approval of more than 5,700 settlement units in the occupied West Bank, a move that comes amid surging violence in the region. In a joint statement with her Australian and U.K. counterparts Friday, Foreign Affairs Minister Mélanie Joly says she is gravely concerned by the move.

"The continued expansion of settlements is an obstacle to peace and negatively impacts efforts to achieve a negotiated two-state solution," says the statement.

"We call on the government of Israel to reverse these decisions." On Monday, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's far-right coalition government approved more than 5,700 new settlement units in the West Bank.

Much of the international community sees the settlements, built on land captured by Israel in the 1967 Middle East war, as illegal and inflammatory.

Their presence is one of the fundamental issues in the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The temperature has been on the rise over the past 15 months amid Palestinian street attacks and Israeli settler aggression.

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Harassment complaints at House of Commons rise more than 60% year over year: report

The number of allegations of workplace violence and harassment in the House of Commons almost doubled year over year and is now more than six times higher than it was two years ago, according to a newly published parliamentary report.

In 2022-23 there were 13 complaints made, eight of which were made against someone who does not work for the House of Commons, such as an outside consultant.

Of the remaining five cases included in the report, four were made against an employee or colleague of a Member of Parliament, while one complaint was made against an MP.

The report does not detail which allegations were made against which people. But it does say that of the 13 complaints four were for sexual harassment, three for harassment, two for violence, including psychological violence, and one for discrimination.



There were also three complaints that involved more than one of the above offences.

In January 2021 the House of Commons implemented a new workplace harassment and violence

prevention policy strengthening reporting requirements, and mandating MPs and staff take part in training sessions on workplace conduct.

The training covers several forms of harassment and violence prevention and also covers the abuse of power by MPs.

The report said that the increase in the number of cases in the most recent year reflects a "heightened awareness" of the responsibilities people working on Parliament Hill have to report incidents that have developed since the implementation of the new policy.

Previous years
The report said that one of the complaints remains open, two were not accepted because they did not meet the criteria. The remaining 10 were resolved through negotiation, or other means that are not specified.

"I want to reassure Canadians that it is a good policy, it is a good opportunity. It will deliver significant (emissions) reductions," said Bob Larocque, president and CEO of the Canadian Fuels Association, which represents companies that process crude oil and bring products to the market.

There won't be much of a change to pump prices across the country on July 1, experts say, although there will be a noticeable increase several years down the road.

That's in addition to existing provincial and federal taxes on fuel, which are likely to entice more drivers to make the switch to electric vehicles.

The price impacts of the regulations will largely be based on how refineries and the fuel industry decide to comply, which experts say remains a big unknown.

Industry on board
The clean fuel standard kicks in on Canada Day, but the requirements to comply are relatively easy for refineries and fuel importers.

Add in the fact that many provinces already have clean fuel or fuel-burning regulations in place, and experts aren't predicting an immediate change to pump prices.

"The policy has a pretty soft start because what it's requiring is to some extent even less than what is actually being required of other pre-existing policies," said Michael Wolinetz, a partner at Vancouver-based Navis Research, which provides consulting services on energy and the environment.

Canada will soon have new rules for clean fuel. Here's what they'll cost when you fill up

As the calendar flips to July, a long-awaited federal policy will kick in aimed at cutting the amount of pollution from cars and trucks, while trying to keep prices at the pump affordable.

The clean fuel regulations were first proposed in 2016, but they've faced dog-in-the-bush opposition the way.

Although the new policy faces political opposition, it has received support from several environmental groups. Industry likes it, too.

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"We're not expecting the policy to



have any real bite until around 2025," by 2030.

One of the reasons industry likes the policy is because the federal government isn't mandating a specific method to reduce pollution from the transportation sector, but instead leaves it largely up to individual companies to choose how they want to comply.

Companies have to achieve carbon emission reduction targets each year by earning credits through improvements to production facilities (such as building a carbon capture and storage facility at a refinery), lowering the carbon intensity of the actual fuel (by adding more ethanol, for instance) and by offering electric vehicle charging and hydrogen vehicle fueling.

There's also a credit trading system that allows companies to spend more and more, then the cost starts to get pretty steep," said Ross McKelvie, an economics professor at the University of Guelph in Ontario, who has co-authored a study modelling the economic effects of the clean fuel regulations.

Ottawa is OK with high pump prices down the road, he said, because "they just want to try to get people to switch over to EVs."

Tailpipe emissions on the rise
The federal government's focus on reducing the carbon intensity of fuels is understandable, considering how emissions from the transportation sector have increased by 16 per cent since 2005.

Overall, tailpipe emissions from all of the cars, trucks, SUVs and freight vehicles are a major obstacle toward Canada reaching its climate targets.

Environment and Climate Change Canada estimates a price increase at the pumps by 2030 of anywhere between six and 13 cents per litre for gasoline. That's on top of the 37 cents the carbon tax could add to a litre of gasoline by 2030, as well as all of the other federal and provincial (and some municipal) taxes charged on the purchase of gasoline and diesel.

There's also the volatility of oil prices to consider and the cost of producing and transporting fuel. Add it all up and experts say the pain at the pumps could drive a large rise in electric vehicle sales over the next decade.

"(On) July 1, people aren't really going to notice anything. But every year, as that target begins to bind more and more, then the cost starts to get pretty steep," said Ross McKelvie, an economics professor at the University of Guelph in Ontario, who has co-authored a study modelling the economic effects of the clean fuel regulations.

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The demand for ethanol could soar, especially as more U.S. states adopt their own clean fuel policies.

"You do face the difficulty that all of a sudden, everyone is looking for the (same) product at once," said the University of Guelph's McKelvie. "Most of the risk here is in the direction of cost surprises to the upside, rather than the downside."

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VFX causes a delay for Ranbir Kapoor and Sandeep Reddy Vanga's Animal; now set to release in December

"Animal is among the most ambitious film produced by Bhushan Kumar and Muneer Khan, and they are standing by the director, Sandeep Reddy Vanga, as he needs more time to give a world-class product. Sandeep is a perfectionist and wants to release an uncompromised product on the VFX front. The teams were working day and night to complete the film, but the action scenes are so grand that it is not possible to have their best version ready by August 11. After seeing the vision for Sandeep, and the output that would have been ready by August 11, the producers along with Ranbir Kapoor took a collective call to delay the film to December," revealed a source. The tentative date for the Animal release is December 1, which is 3 weeks after Tiger 3 and 3 weeks before Dunki. "The team believes that arriving on December 1 will give the film a 3-week window as no other film would want to come in the middle of the event saga - Tiger 3, Animal, and Dunki. It's a well-strategized date that they locked, and a 4-month delay will give the makers enough time to complete the VFX work," Animal



stars Ranbir Kapoor, Rashmika Mandanna, Anil Kapoor and Bobby Deol in lead. A T-Series Production, Animal will now release on December 1, 2023.

Karan Johar's dream of posing in the mountains has come true with Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani



Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani has gotten fans excited for more than one reason. Not only is Karan Johar back in the director's seat after a long time and it marks his 25th year in the industry, but the ensemble cast, classic Bollywood romance, and stellar cast have also grabbed everyone's attention. Their first romantic number Tum Kya Mile recently dropped and needless to say, it has got fans swooning to its in true blue Bollywood style. Numerous reels of fans recreating their version of the song have surfaced online since then, but what caught our attention yesterday is Karan Johar who put up a video where he is seen posing in the mountains while the song is playing in the background. He captioned it with, "My bachpan ka scene posing in the mountains has come true thanks to #tumkyamile. PS: Forgive the overacting!" Indeed, in classic Karan Johar style!

Rashid's return boosts Afghanistan ahead of Bangladesh ODIs



Rashid Khan surely makes a lot of difference to the Afghanistan group as his presence boosted the morale of the squad ahead of the ODI series against Bangladesh. The atmosphere was a lot more vibrant compared to the one that prevailed during the one-off Test recently but Afghanistan lost by 546 runs in the Ashes absence.

The Afghanistan Cricket Board decided to rest him for that contest to give him time to recover from his back pain but his absence was very glaring during the game. The squad returned to UAE following the Test series and had a two-week preparation camp before arriving in Bangladesh that was attended by Rashid, Mohammad Nabi and Mujeeb Ur Rahman, the trio that has played a crucial role behind most of the ODI series written by the Afghans. "At ZACS during the training session, Rashid turned out to be the center of attraction making most of the calls in the nets even though he was not allowed to have a look at the pitch despite making a request," He (Rashid) took it very sportingly as we added that they have learnt their lesson in the Test series. "The Test game gave us a lot of lessons. So we now will prepare now. We had a camp in Abu Dhabi for the last 14 days. So we are prepared for everything that was missing in the Test. Still, some of the ODI players were not part of the Test team. We don't know what is going to happen. We have prepared for everything." Hashmatullah pointed out that Bangladesh are a very formidable unit in the ODI format but he backed his own side's recent improvements in 50-over cricket. "Bangladesh always plays good on their home ground. They also did well in last couple of years in ODIs. But still, we also have played good cricket in the last two years," he noted.

Injured Lyon ruled out of the remainder of Ashes 2023



Australia offspinner Nathan Lyon has been ruled out of the remainder of Ashes 2023 with a calf injury. The 35-year-old suffered the injury, one he described as a "decent tear", while fielding on the second day of the Lord's Test. He didn't bowl in the match thereafter but hobbled out to bat and added 15 runs for the final wicket with Mitchell Starc in the second innings. Australia went on to win the Test by 43 runs to go 2-0 up in the series. Incidentally, this second Test of the series had been Lyon's 100th in now for Australia. Only five players before him - Alastair Cook, Allan Border, Mark Waugh, Sunil Gavaskar and Brendon McCullum - had managed this feat - a testament to a player's consistency as well as physical conditioning. In Lyon's absence, Australia are certain to bring in offspinner Todd Murphy into the XI for the Headingley Test that starts on Thursday (July 6). The 22-year-old enjoyed a breakthrough debut test of India earlier this year, taking 14 wickets from four Tests at an average of 25.21. This included seven for his debut in Nagpur. Meanwhile, Australia have missed back-up batter Matt Renshaw from the squad for the third Test in what should be a vote of confidence in the team's batting as well as in the form of opener David Warner, who scored an important 66 on the second day of the Lord's Test. However, Renshaw will remain in the UK as standby. Among the bowlers, Mitchell Neer holds on to his place in the 16-man squad.

CONFIRMED! Varun Dhawan to headline Atlee Kumar's next; action-entertainer to release on May 31, 2024

Penned and helmed by acclaimed filmmaker Kalees, known for his expertise in delivering gripping narratives, the movie is set to be a high-octane rollercoaster ride filled with thrilling moments and jaw-dropping sequences. With a proven track record of creating engaging stories, Kalees is poised to bring his creative vision to life on the silver screen once again. The project will be jointly produced by Muneer Khan and Priya Allee. Adding to the excitement, the film will be presented by Allee, a name synonymous with blockbuster hits. As a renowned director and producer in the industry, Allee's involvement in the project guarantees a grand cinematic experience that will leave audiences on the edge of their seats. Upcoming directorial venture, Jawan starring Shah Rukh Khan, Nayanthara and Vijay Sethupathi. Meanwhile, Varun Dhawan has a bunch of projects in his kitty including his OTT debut series, Citadel India.

Afghanistan are formidable in one-day format' - Hathurusingha

Bangladesh head coach Chandika Hathurusingha admitted on Monday (July 3) that Afghanistan will be a formidable side in the one-day format even though the hosts crashed their way in the one-off Test match recently. Bangladesh defeated Afghanistan by 546 runs last month at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium but the visitors have now returned for the white-ball series by bolstering their strength after including Rashid Khan and other leading stars. "Yeah, we love to do that (win the ODI) like the way we won the Test series) but it's a different format and different team as well. We will be very pleased to go with the Test match win, but this is totally a different game," Hathurusingha told reporters at the ZACS on Monday. "They have been playing good cricket lately. They have a very good bowling unit. They now returnees have established in the last couple of years as well. They are a pretty formidable team in the one-day format." Hathurusingha also added that this series will be an ideal preparation for the two huge upcoming assignments - Asia Cup and the World Cup. "I don't think we have played a lot of cricket leading up to now," he pointed out. "So, we have this series and the Asia Cup then a couple of practice games before the World Cup as well. So, we have a lot of cricket coming up. This is really an ideal preparation for us leading up to the Asia Cup and the World Cup." Hathurusingha revealed that they are closely monitoring the condition of ODI skipper Taimur Iqbal, who missed the Test series due to a back injury. "I'm not going to discuss someone's medical history here, but he has been training for the last two days. He is good so far. We are closely monitoring his progress as well as how he recovers after training," said Hathurusingha. He added that the doors are open for cricketers if they can avail their opportunity in the upcoming Emerging Teams Asia Cup, slated to be held in Sri Lanka. BCB opted to include several players that have been on the periphery of the national team over the years like Soumya Sarkar among others. BCB also included players like Zakir Hasan (Vice Captain), Sheikh Mahol Hossain and opener Muhammad Naim in the Emerging squad as well. "Definitely, there is a chance if someone does well in the Emerging Asia Cup. If you look at our combination, we have put some players in that squad as well. Not keeping to U-23 as usual because this year that tournament (Emerging Teams Asia Cup) opened up without age limits," he said. "I think all the countries in Asia are using that (tournament) as a bit of testing ground to give players opportunity to show their form. Same time, we have a very good set of team at the moment. So, if someone scores runs, they put their name for selection."

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As housing costs soar, some financial analysts advise to scrap the 30% rule

If you have ever applied for social housing or a mortgage, or even tried to figure out your budget, you have probably come across this figure: 30 per cent.

That's the often-cited maximum percentage of your income that you should spend on a home. But in an era where the average one-bedroom apartment in Vancouver rents for \$2,787 a month, is that number still realistic?

It depends on who you're asking. But generally, the answer is: sort of.

"The benchmark doesn't apply anymore," said Credit Canada CEO Steve Selley by email.

"Housing costs have increased dramatically, everywhere. And so individuals need to look at their own specific situation and determine how to best allocate limited resources."

A useful benchmark?

The Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation began adopting the rule in 1986.

"The 30 per cent threshold continues to be a useful benchmark to consistently measure housing affordability in Canada and other parts of the world, including in the United States and Australia," CMHC said in an email.

However, the corporation says it introduced the "housing hardship concept" in 2020 to acknowledge that, for some households, keeping housing costs still isn't enough to cover all their essential needs.

Cunching of budgets

Let's take a moment to look at some numbers.

If you were single and living on your own in Vancouver, you would need a salary of \$9,000 a month, or \$108,000 a year, to pay for an average one-bedroom and keep it to 30 per cent of your income before taxes.

Meanwhile, the average income for those 15 and older, according to Statistics Canada, is \$62,250. That number is a bit irrelevant, because not everyone needs or wants to rent a one-bedroom apartment, but it gives a sense of the discrepancy.

So what should people in middle- and lower-income brackets do to help prevent spending too much on housing?

Not always attainable

The answer, according to finance specialists like Anne Arbour, director of strategic partnerships and education at the Credit Counselling Society, is to ditch the 30 per cent rule.

"It is a really difficult number and has been for quite some time, to be honest," Arbour said.

"In today's age of inflation and ... very high housing costs, it isn't always attainable."

Arbour says the 30 per cent rule used to be the 25 per cent rule when she first studied economics "a thousand years ago." And she wouldn't be surprised if it continued to creep higher.

Port union warns Ottawa to 'stay out of our business,' as strike talks fail to reach deal

Negotiators attempting to end a strike by more than 7,000 port workers in B.C. failed to reach a deal Sunday as the union representing striking workers warned Ottawa to refrain from interfering.

Portworkers across B.C. walked off the job Saturday morning in a wide-ranging job action that could impact worldwide shipping and the Canadian economy.

On Sunday afternoon, the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) warned Ottawa against contemplating back-to-work legislation or imposing a contract, saying it would shatter "labour peace" in the province.

The strike affects about 7,400 terminal cargo loaders and 49 of the province's waterfront employers at more than 30 B.C. ports including Canada's busiest, Vancouver.

The union accused its employer, the B.C. Maritime Employers Association, of pushing for Ottawa to impose a deal, a move federal Labour Minister Seanam O'Regan said he is not contemplating.

"Labour peace in this industry comes from government staying out of the business between a union and their employers," ILWU Canada president Rob Ashton told reporters in Vancouver. "The federal government must stay out of our business."

O'Regan was in Vancouver throughout the weekend, saying he planned to remain during the talks. But in a statement his spokesperson said the bargaining table is where such disputes must be resolved.

According to the B.C. Maritime Employers Association (BCMEA)'s website, its members contribute \$2.7 billion to the national GDP.

By Sunday evening, both sides failed to reach an agreement after two grueling days in bargaining. One of

Google to remove news links in Canada in response to online news law

Google said Thursday it will remove Canadian news content from its search, news and discover products after a new law meant to compensate media outlets comes into force.

The move to pull news from the world's most popular search engine could have a devastating impact on Canadian media outlets, which often depend on third parties like Google to get content into the hands of readers.

The decision comes after the government's contentious C-18 legislation passed Parliament last week. The bill has been criticized by top giants like Meta and Google who say it's unfair to impose what amounts to a tax on links.

Some smaller media outlets and experts have blasted the regime because they claim the bulk of the financial benefits will accrue to a handful of large media players.

"We're disappointed it has come to this. We don't take this decision or its impact lightly and believe it's important to be transparent with Canadian publishers and our users as early as possible," said Kent Walker, the president of global affairs at Google and Alphabet.

"The unprecedented decision to put a price on links (a so-called 'link tax') creates uncertainty for our products and exposes us to uncapped financial liability simply for facilitating Canadianians' access to news from Canadian publishers."

The government and larger media outlets, including the newspaper lobby group and broadcasters like the CBC and CTV, have said social media companies should compensate news outlets for the use of their content.

"Deeply irresponsible"

Heritage Minister Pablo Rodriguez suggested Thursday he has no intention of backing down from this fight with the American web giants that control so much of what Canadians read and watch.

"Big tech would rather spend money to change their platforms to block Canadian firms accessing paid front ends in the labour movement. The Canadian Labour Congress said in a tweet Saturday "it stands in solidarity with the ILWU Canada in their fight to protect union jobs and secure a strong collective agreement." And the B.C. Federation of Labour also stated its support on Twitter.

Instead, Arbour suggests people look at their budget as a whole and determine what their needs and obligations are - a task that would likely not look the same for all households.

"It's easy to focus on just one number. But you've got to take a look at everything in balance," she said.

"We'll have different needs. We'll have different priorities and different obligations."

For some families, that might mean spending more on groceries. For others, a higher percentage of the household budget might go towards student loans.

And if anyone is really struggling to put the pieces together, Arbour suggests reaching out to organizations like the Credit Counselling Society to get some fresh eyes on their budget.

"A good aspirational rule?"

Steve Bridge, a Vancouver-based financial planner with Money Coaches Canada, agrees, but says the 30 per cent rule is a good benchmark to start from.

"It may not be an applicable rule for a lot of people, but I think it's still a good aspirational rule," Bridge said. "It allows us to afford everything else in our lives."

disruption.

A spokesperson said the strike could cost the economy up to \$5.5 billion for every week workers are off the job.

"We can't let this drag on," said Matthew Holmes, a senior vice president with the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, on Sunday. "We need the government to intervene, and we need them to intervene quickly ... and force back-to-work legislation if that's required."

"A fair and balanced deal?"

However, O'Regan said only bargaining between parties at the negotiating table will end the crisis.

O'Regan said on Twitter on Sunday that "the best deals for both parties" are reached at the table, and that federal mediators were assisting during the talks.

Contracting out, port automation and cost of living are key issues behind the union's job action, according to the ILWU.

The job action has gained support from others in the labour movement. The Canadian Labour Congress said in a tweet Saturday "it stands in solidarity with the ILWU Canada in their fight to protect union jobs and secure a strong collective agreement." And the B.C. Federation of Labour also stated its support on Twitter.

eligible news business if it regularly employs two or more journalists in Canada, operates largely within Canada and produces content that is edited and designed in this country.

Google and Meta have signalled they'd rather get out of the news-posting business altogether rather than deal with this process.

In a separate statement, a spokesperson for Google Canada said the government's legislation "will make it harder for Canadians to find news online, make it harder for journalists to reach their audiences, and reduce valuable free web traffic to Canadian publishers."

But Google signalled it may be willing to change course if the government addresses some of its concerns.

"We hope that the government will be able to outline a viable path forward," said Google spokesperson Stacy Parry.

CBC/Radio-Canada could be a beneficiary of the new federal regime because it operates one of the largest news sites in the country and links to its content are regularly shared on other platforms.

Under the new law, CBC is required to provide an annual report on any compensation for news it receives from digital opinions.

"We all depend on an open Internet. It would be unfortunate if the digital platforms used their dominance to deny Canadians access to news and information. We encourage Canadians to go directly to the websites and apps they trust for their news," said Leon Mar, a spokesperson for CBC/Radio-Canada.

OpenMedia, an advocacy group that has attacked the bill in the past, said Thursday that Google's decision is "exactly what we warned Heritage Minister (Pablo) Rodriguez about."

"Unfortunately, the way this bill was written made news blocking inevitable," said Matt Hatfield, the group's campaign director.

"Instead of funding a much-needed sustainable building model that would support quality and diverse news, C-18's failure will make it even more difficult for Canadians to access the news they need on the platform they use."

Michael Geist is a Canada research chair in internet and e-commerce law at the University of Ottawa and a former critic of the bill.

He said Rodriguez, the minister who shepherded this legislation through Parliament, "did not take risks of the flawed Bill C-18 seriously."



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