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Brown Vows To Build Strong, Vibrant Ontario

by Bala Menon

A significant tax cut for the middle class, a child care tax credit, a further 12 per cent cut to hydro rates, $1.9 billion in new mental health spending over the next decade and a happy revamp of the auto insurance strategy are among the guaranteed promises made by Ontario Progressive Conservative Leader Patrick Brown.

Brown was at the Voice offices on Wednesday where he met with the editorial team and outlined his strategy for the June 2018 provincial election. The PC platform, called the People's Guarantee, contains over 140 promises, including big spending - to the tune of $ 5 billion to expand subways - support for pharmacare for those under 24 years of age and a free tuition plan for post-secondary students.

A big step-up in Ontario politics is his vow to pass a Trust,

Integrity and Accountability Act, which will plug loopholes in current laws and clean up provincial politics, especially with regard to lobbying and ministers asking contractors to donate money to party coffers. "I have made a commitment and signed a contract in front of our membership that I would keep my promises in my first term or I will resign. The platform is a guarantee…"

Hydro is a gung-ho subject for Brown. "We produce a massive surplus of of power, we waste so much of our water power and we just give it away to Michigan and to Pennsylvania. We will return the Hydro One dividend to the people of Ontario and we will stop all the bad hydro projects now in the pre-consruction stage and limit all liabilities to the taxpayer..."

Brown said the Auditor-General has estimated that "we have overpaid $9.2 billion on renewable energy, because of all the contracts that the Wynne government has signed….It is ugly, it is

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Six New Stations On New Toronto To Vaughan Line

Largest Subway Expansion In N. America In Decades

TORONTO: The largest expansion of Toronto's subway system in nearly 40 years went into service on December 17, offering a fast and convenient new option for people to get to a job or class -- and home to their families sooner.

Premier Kathleen Wynne, along with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau; John Tory, Mayor of Toronto; Josh Colle, TTC Chair; and Wayne Emmerson, York Region Chairman and CEO; as well as other local transit and elected officials, celebrated the landmark project by taking the inaugural ride on the new stretch of Line 1 linking Toronto with Vaughan.

This is among the largest subway expansions in North America in recent decades, with six new stations and 8.6 kilometres of new track. It will allow people to get from the new subway terminus at Vaughan Metropolitan Centre to the Sheppard West station in about 14 minutes, and to Union Station in 42 minutes. And students will be able to take rapid transit to York University for the very first time.

The extension of Line 1 into York Region will strengthen connections across the region. The new extension forges links with other transit connections being built across the region, from the future Finch West LRT to the Barrie GO rail line and the vivaNext rapid-bus network in York Region.

The new subway terminus is already helping to encourage business and residential development in Vaughan's emerging downtown. This hub will help create a walkable, urban community with extensive green space and quick access to transit. The fast connection between Vaughan and Union Station in downtown Toronto will help businesses attract the best talent and boost their productivity -- and help families across the region connect quickly and easily.

This milestone marks the first in a series of game-changing transit projects the Ontario government will open in the coming years. The 19-kilometre Eglinton Crosstown LRT is one of the largest infrastructure projects ever undertaken in Toronto; Waterloo Region is set to celebrate the opening of its first light rail project, just as Regional Express Rail is set to better connect it with the Greater Toronto Area; and Ottawa's Confederation Line LRT is expected to open next year.

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It's Varanasi Calling...

Ontartio Progressive Conservative Leader Patrick Brown is spending his holidays this year in the ancient Indian city of Varanasi. An Indophile, who understands the country and its people, Brown has visited India 17 times - making nine trips to Gujarat alone (he is a close friend of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi). "You don't go to a country 17 times unless you like the country very much....." In Varanasi, Brown will be performing the mystical Ganga Aarti ritual, on the banks of the holy river, just as Modi did before he embarked on his election campaign in 2014. "I will be the first Canadian politician to visit Varanasi."

"I believe in a united Canada, I believe in a united India," he said in regard to the divisive resolution passed in the Ontario Parliament calling the 1984 anti-Sikh violence a 'genocide.'

BJP Holds On To Gujarat, Wrests Power In Himachal

GANDHINAGAR/SHIMLA: The BJP on Monday just managed to hold on to power in Gujarat, edging past the halfway mark to clinch a sixth term in government, but wrested Himachal Pradesh from Congress with a comfortable majority.

Overcoming initial setbacks in a seesaw battle, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) bagged 99 seats, seven more than the magic figure of 92 in a House of 182. Putting up an improved performance, the Congress secured 77 seats while its allies got three more. The NCP, which fought alone, got a lone seat and Independents got two.

In contrast, Himachal Pradesh lived up to its reputation of changing the ruler every election, as the BJP comfortably beat Congress, winning 44 of the 68 seats that were up for grabs. The Congress won 21 in the hill state where it had previously held 36 seats. Two seats went to Independents and a lone seat was taken by CPI-M.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi,

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Trump Wants 'Leadership Role' For India

America First Strategy Warns Of Threats From China And Russia

NEW YORK: President Donald Trump has unveiled his "America First National Security Strategy" giving India a "leadership role" in the "broader" Indo-Pacific region and taking a hardline on China and Russia, provoking strong reactions from Beijing and Moscow.

The security plan released on Monday said: "We will deepen our strategic partnership with India and support its leadership role in Indian Ocean security and throughout the broader region."

Washington also pledged to increase quadrilateral cooperation with Japan, Australia and India.

"We welcome India's emergence as a leading global power and stronger strategic and defence partner. We will seek to increase quadrilateral cooperation with Japan, Australia and India."

Trump's security strategy also stated that the US would "press Pakistan to intensify its counter-terrorism efforts, since no partnership can survive a country's support for militants and terrorists who target a partner's own service members and officials," it said.

"The US will also encourage Pakistan to continue demonstrating that it is a responsible steward of its nuclear assets."

In a year-end, campaign-style speech in central Washington, the President warned of rising threats from an emboldened Russia and China.

He called Moscow and Beijing "revisionist powers" who "want to shape a world antithetical to US values and interests, attempting to erode American security and prosperity".

"They are determined to make economies less free and less fair, to grow their militaries, and to control information and data to repress their societies and expand their influence." But, he said, the US must attempt to build a "great partnership with them".

Trump stopped short of calling out Moscow for its election meddling.

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