



Xi Jinping Is China's President For Life, page 7



Ramesh Sangha On Canada-India Ties, page 12



Sahara Seniors Celebrate Women's Day, page 16

'Equal Pay For Equal Work' Kicks In On April 1

TORONTO: On April 1, 2018, Ontario will become the first jurisdiction in North America to mandate equal pay for equal work between casual, part-time, temporary and seasonal workers, and full-time or permanent workers.

Under the new rules, casual, part-time, temporary and seasonal employees cannot be paid at a rate of pay less than full-time or permanent employees if:

- They do substantially the

same kind of work, in the same establishment

- Their work requires substantially the same skill, effort and responsibility
- Their work is performed under similar working conditions

Temporary help agencies also will not be permitted to pay assignment employees at a rate less than employees directly hired by the agency's clients under these same conditions.

These changes are the result of

the province's Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act, 2017 --representing the largest update to Ontario's labour laws in a generation. The government raised the minimum wage to \$14 an hour on January 1, 2018, and will further increase it to \$15 an hour on January 1, 2019.

Kevin Flynn, Minister of Labour (pictured), said: "Paying people the same wage for doing the same work is not only fair, it's the right thing to do. Fairness



and decency must be the defining values of our workplaces. These changes will ensure that every

hard-working Ontarian has a chance to reach their full potential and share in Ontario's prosperity."

QUICK FACTS

- Other provisions of the Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act, 2017 have already come into force, including more paid vacation time for employees with five years of employment with the same employer, and expanding and increasing several leaves of

Continued on page 5



An Afghan woman cries as she runs near the site of a suicide attack in front of Kabul University. An Islamic State car bomber killed at least 29 people who were celebrating the Persian New Year on Wednesday and injured scores of others. (AP Photo/Massoud Hossaini)

39 Indians Kidnapped By IS In Mosul Confirmed Killed

NEW DELHI: Thirty-nine Indians kidnapped by the Islamic State (IS) terror group in Iraq's Mosul in 2014 are dead, External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj said on Tuesday.

The minister confirmed the deaths in the Rajya Sabha and said the mortal remains will be brought back to India by Union Minister of State for External Affairs V.K. Singh.

"General V.K. Singh will go to Iraq to bring back the mortal remains of the Indians killed in Iraq. The plane carrying the mortal remains will first reach Amritsar, then Patna and then go to Kolkata," Sushma Swaraj said.

Canada's Federal Conservative Party leader Andrew Scheer has expressed sorrow over the news.

"39 innocent Indian lives, many from Punjab, were lost. ISIS terrorists need to be brought to swift justice. On behalf of @CPC_HQ, I offer my deepest condolences to the people and Government of India and all those affected by this tragedy", Scheer tweeted on Tuesday.

Swaraj said the bodies were spotted using deep penetration radar and were exhumed from mass graves. Their identities were confirmed by DNA tests. "The bodies were brought to Baghdad for DNA testing. The DNA of 38 Indians have been matched.

"For verification of the bodies, DNA samples of their relatives were sent there. Four state governments -- Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, West Bengal and Bihar -- were involved in the process," the minister said.

The victims -- 31 from Punjab, four from Himachal Pradesh and four from Bihar and West Bengal -- were construction workers and

Continued on page 4

Consultations To Begin On Anti-Racism Strategy

\$23 Million To Be Spent Over Two Years For Multiculturalism Programs

OTTAWA: The Trudeau Liberals are being told to be careful in how they frame a national dialogue on racism to ensure it focuses on solutions, instead of sparking a contentious debate that could thwart federal efforts.

The Liberals will soon launch consultations on a national anti-racism strategy promised in February's budget.

Heritage Minister Melanie Joly, who will oversee the work, said the government wants to "find real solutions to real problems," particularly on fundamental rights, access to justice and jobs.

Previous efforts to talk about racism has not gone well. Concerns about free speech forced their way into discussions around a House of Commons motion

condemning Islamophobia. Similarly, the Quebec government's plan to consult on systemic racism was met with objections that forced the province to tone down its plans.

MP Greg Fergus, chair of Parliament's black caucus, said federal consultations must ensure debate doesn't devolve into accusations of racism, but rather examine how discrimination manifests itself.

"Systemic racism exists in Canada," Fergus said in French after a Liberal caucus meeting.

"We're much better than other societies around the world, but ... we still have our flaws."

A recent House of Commons committee study on combating Islamophobia and systemic discrimination and racism recom-

mended the government craft a national anti-racism strategy -- which will happen as part of \$23 million in spending over two years for multiculturalism programs.

The committee also pushed the government to do a better job of collecting and analyzing data on diversity and inclusion, which Statistics Canada received \$6.7 million to do over five years.

NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh said he wanted the government to take actions like reforming the justice system - noting the disproportionate number of black and Indigenous Peoples in Canada's prisons - and improve access to education for marginalized communities.

"It's not a problem to study, but

Continued on page 4

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Come To Canada, Dear Grandpa!

OTTAWA: Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada will be accepting up to 10,000 complete parent and grandparent sponsorship applications this year, Ahmed Hussen, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, said on Tuesday.

The department has now started to notify potential sponsors whose submissions were selected that their confirmation numbers have been posted on the official immigration website.

The department has also shortened the period of time for applicants to submit complete sponsorship applications from 90 days to 60 days.

Access to the online Interest to Sponsor form closed on February 1. A letter released by the

IRCC Minister on the Parents and Grandparents Program said: "Reuniting Canadian citizens and

permanent residents with their parents and grandparents helps to strengthen Canada. That is why this country has one of the world's most generous sponsorship programs for parents and grandparents, and why we continue to improve it."

"Our government realizes that helping people reunite with their parents and grandparents is an important issue for many families in this country. As a result, we've made the Parent and Grandparent Program more fair and transparent, and we are working with potential sponsors to ensure they are informed and aware of what they

Continued on page 4

