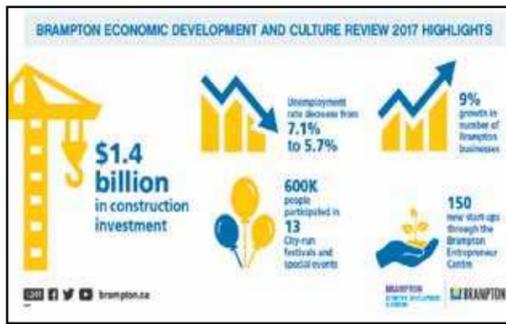




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## 100,000 Attend Toronto Khalsa Day Parade

Trudeau Skips Annual Sikh Event; Wynne, Ford, Jagmeet Singh Present; Khalistan Flags Flutter



TORONTO: Over 100,000 Sikhs and people of other communities from all over the GTA joined in the celebration of Khalsa Day and Baisakhi New Year at the annual #khalsaday parade in Toronto along Lakeshore on Sunday.

Organized by the Ontario Sikhs and Gurdwaras Council, the pa-

rade celebrates the founding of the Sikh religion in 1699. This is the 39th parade in Toronto and is the third largest in Canada.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau skipped the parade - obviously because of the Indian Government's ire at him appearing at the event last year when he became the first Canadian Prime Minister

in a decade to march at the event, with some people carrying separatist Khalistan flags and posters featuring terrorist leaders like Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale.

The criticism that Canada is serving as a base for revival of the defunct Khalistan movement, did not prevent several leading politicians from appearing at the



nagar kirtan (as the parade is called) just as they had done in the Surrey Vaisakhi celebration in British Columbia last week.

Among them were Mayor of Toronto John Tory, NDP Ontario leader Andrea Horwath and PC leader Doug Ford. New Democratic Party (NDP) national leader Jagmeet Singh was present in

Toronto and Surrey. In Toronto, reports said, he talked about alleged human rights violations in India.

"This afternoon I marched in the #Khalsa Day parade with Toronto's Sikh community to honour the birth of Khalsa. Sikh Canadians have made a huge impact

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## Ford Reverses Course On Greenbelt Plan

'Tory Government Will Maintain Protected Region In Entirety'

TORONTO: Public backlash has prompted Doug Ford to back-track on an election promise to allow housing development in a protected green space around the Toronto region, with the Progressive Conservative leader saying he's going to listen to those who want the area preserved.

A Tory government would maintain the Greenbelt in its entirety and enshrine that pledge in the party's soon-to-be-released platform, Ford announced in a statement issued a day after saying he'd open the region to some construction to ease the housing crisis in the Greater Toronto Area.

"I looked at it as making sure we have more affordable housing," Ford said of his initial position. "The people have spoken. I'm going to listen to them, they don't want me to touch the Greenbelt, we won't touch the Greenbelt."

The Greenbelt - the world's largest permanently protected



green space - is a 7,200-square-kilometre area that borders the Greater Golden Horseshoe region around Lake Ontario. It was protected from urban development by legislation in 2005.

Kathleen Wynne called idea 'wrongheaded'. "If you open up the Greenbelt and make it into a Swiss cheese map you never get that back," Wynne said. "You never get that water protection back. You never get that agricultural land protection back."

Wynne acknowledged that some areas around the border of the Greenbelt have changed since it was established over a decade ago, but that was part of the original plan for the region, she said.

The premier noted that opening up the Greenbelt for development is unnecessary. "The fact is there is enough land in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area to build two more cities the size of the Mississauga," she said.

NDP Leader Andrea Horwath had also slammed Ford's development pledge, calling it bad policy. "There is no reason whatsoever to even contemplate paving over the Greenbelt unless you're trying to make a good buck for your friends in the development industry," she said.

Ford had said Monday that for every piece of the Greenbelt opened for development, he would add equivalent land to the protected area to ensure it doesn't

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## Ontarians Overpay \$5B For Auto Insurance

TORONTO: A report released on Tuesday provides alarming new data on just how much profit exists in the auto insurance system in Ontario.

The updated report, conducted by York University Schulich School of Business Professor Dr. Fred Lazar reports that Ontario auto insurers made \$1.5 billion pre-tax income in 2016, up nearly 60% over the last four years alone and that Ontarians have overpaid \$5 billion in premiums.

"This increase in profitability is likely the result of a widening gap between reductions in claims coverage costs and premiums. In 2011, for example, average claims per vehicle declined by 27%. Premiums, on the other hand, barely declined," according to Lazar.

Lazar also calculates that Ontario drivers continue to pay excessive auto insurance premiums in the province.

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## Canada Working With US On Nigerian Influx

OTTAWA; Canadian officials in Nigeria are working with the U.S. on developing tools to flag Nigerians applying for U.S. visas who may be at "high risk" of crossing illegally into Canada across the U.S. border.

So far this year, the majority of illegal migrants arriving in Canada are Nigerians who have recently been issued U.S. travel visas.

"It is apparent that they obtained those visas with the express intent to actually go to Canada," said Hursh Jaswal, communications director for Immigration Minister Ahmed Hussein.

"They land in the United

States, where they stay for a very short period of time, and then make their way to Canada."

That's why Canada is now working with its American counterparts to try to stop Nigerian travellers to the United States from using their U.S. visas as a ticket to Canada - a practice Jaswal calls an "abuse of U.S. visas for the purpose of asylum."

Canadian officials in Nigeria are now working directly with their U.S. counterparts to develop assessment indicators that would flag cases "deemed to be high risk," Jaswal said.

Last year, the majority of irregular migrants who arrived in Canada were Haitian, which was

largely attributed to the Trump administration's decision to lift the temporary protected status for immigrants from Haiti living in the U.S.

This year's shift toward Nigerians is not surprising to Kehinde Olalere, a Canadian immigration lawyer who grew up in Nigeria and regularly travels to the country.

Nigerians fleeing the violence of Boko Haram and other systemic persecutions in Nigeria find it marginally easier to obtain travel visas from the U.S. compared to Canada. But many see the United States as merely a transit point on the way to Canada, Olalere said.

"The U.S.A. is not an attrac-

tive place to most Nigerians right now. It used to be the most attractive place, but with the Trump factor - the old-style immigration climate in the U.S. compared to Canada - most people are going to find their way to Canada."

Jean-Nicolas Beuze, president of the United Nations high commissioner for refugees in Canada, disagreed with the "Trump factor" theory, saying he believes the influx of Nigerian refugee claimants is more closely related to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's more welcoming messaging about immigrants.

Many Nigerians face persecution for their sexual orientation

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