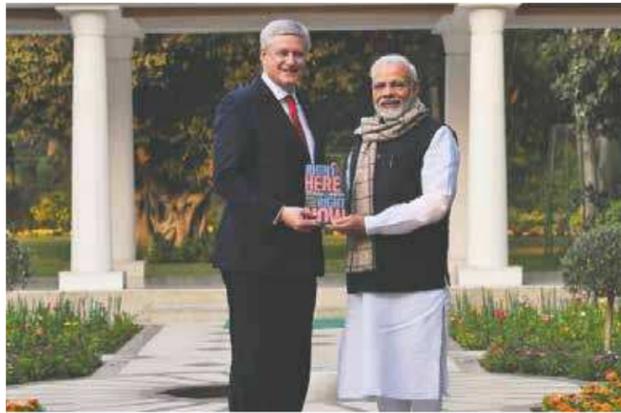


Global Influencers Gather For Raisina Dialogue

Continued from page 1

Opposition Leader to External Affairs Minister, I have long admired @SushmaSwaraj. She is a true champion for India on the world stage, and a real asset of @NarendraModi's cabinet.

Other high-profile participants at the Raisina Dialogue include Carl Bildt, Prime Minister of Sweden, Erna Solberg, Prime Minister of Norway, Marise Payne, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Australia, Dr. Mohammad Javad Zarif, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Iran, Alejandro Alvargonzález, Assistant Secretary General of NATO, Gen. Angus J. Campbell, Chief of the Australian Defence Force, Gen. Bipin Rawat, Chief of Army Staff, Indian Army, Admiral Sunil Lanba, Chief of the Naval Staff, Indian Navy, Adm. Christophe Prazuck, Chief of Staff, French Navy, Adm. Philip S. Davidson, Commander, U.S. Navy, Indo-Pacific



Command, USA, Admiral Katsutoshi Kawano, Chief of Staff, Joint Staff, Japan Self-Defense Forces, Hamid Karzai, former President of Afghanistan, Luis Almagro, Secretary General, Organization of American States, Paolo Gentiloni Silveri, Former Prime Minister of Italy, Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nepal, Sergei Ry-

abkov, Deputy Foreign Minister, Russia, Dr Gilles Carbonnier, Vice President, of the Red Cross, Switzerland,

There were 600 delegates from 93 countries at the Raisina Dialogue. The Raisina Dialogue was inaugurated on 08 January 2019, with the inaugural address being delivered by Prime Minister of Norway Erna Solberg.

This year, the theme of the Dialogue is "A World Reorder: New Geometries; Fluid Partnerships; Uncertain Outcomes". The discussions sought to address issues arising from ongoing global transitions and changes to the world order. Policy specialists and Senior officials from the European Parliament, United Kingdom, Lebanon, Turkey, Afghanistan,

Singapore, United States, Australia, Russia, France, China, United Arab Emirates, Belgium, Brazil, Germany and representatives of several international organizations and social media firms. Indian speakers include political leaders Sushma Swaraj, Smriti Irani, Shashi Taroor, Manish Toward, Ram Madhav and several corporate representaives.

Help For Transit Systems

TORONTO: Minister of Transportation has announced that the Ontario government is helping 107 municipalities across the province expand or improve their public transit systems with Ontario's gas tax program.

"We are investing in public transit to make it a more convenient travel option and to attract more riders," said Yurek.

This year, the province is giving \$364 million in gas tax funding to 107 municipalities that provide public transit service to

144 communities across Ontario. These communities represent 92 per cent of Ontario's population.

Funding for Ontario's gas tax program is determined by the number of litres of gasoline sold in the province. The program provides municipalities with two cents per litre of provincial gas tax revenues. Municipalities must use these funds towards their public transit capital and/or operating expenditures, at their own discretion, including upgrading transit infrastructure.

Cash Boost For Settlement Services

VANCOUVER: The federal government is boosting its funding for pre-arrival settlement services for immigrants to Canada, with the aim of accelerating their ability to adjust Canadian life and find jobs in their respective fields.

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Minister Ahmed Hussen announced in Vancouver last Thursday that his department is providing 16 organizations a combined \$113 million to offer immigration and settlement support both virtually and in-person

abroad, through to 2023.

These organizations connect with immigrants while they are still in their country of origin to provide them with general, regional, and occupation-specific employment services to help improve their job prospects.

These groups will also encourage immigrants to apply for relevant job licenses and certification and document their professional qualifications before they arrive in Canada.

They can also inquire about

specialized skill training.

The in-person assistance will be offered in China, India, the Philippines. A pilot project for Francophone services in Morocco is being established.

Hussen said that enhancing the current pre-arrival services will help immigrants transition to the Canadian labour market more smoothly, and potentially quicker. The services will be split into three categories: economic and family class immigrants, Francophone immigrants and refugees.

PM Sets Feb. 25 For Byelections

OTTAWA: Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has set Feb. 25 as the date for byelections in three vacant ridings including the British Columbia riding where NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh is hoping to win a seat in the House of Commons.

Trudeau has called the byelections for Burnaby South, the Ontario riding of York-Simcoe and Montreal's Outremont.

The byelections will be a crucial test for New Democrats, who've been struggling to find their footing since their party was relegated to a distant third in the 2015 general election.

For Singh, victory in Burnaby South is crucial, giving him an opportunity to raise his profile and shake off internal criticism about his leadership. Defeat could prompt New Democrats to dump Singh and replace him ahead of the Oct. 21 general election.

But the race in Outremont, left vacant after former NDP leader Tom Mulcair resigned, will also be seen as a test of whether the NDP can hang on what's left of the orange wave that swept Quebec in 2011.

The Conservatives are expected to easily keep York-Simcoe, left vacant by the resignation of long-time Tory MP Peter Van Loan.

Trudeau has not called a byelection in another B.C. riding, Nanaimo-Ladysmith, vacated last week by New Democrat MP Sheila Malcolmson, who is seeking a seat in the provincial legislature.

It remains to be seen what impact the fledgling People's Party of Canada might have. Former Tory minister Maxime Bernier split from the Conservatives and created the new party last summer. During the Tories' 2017 contest, Bernier won more support in both Outremont and York-Simcoe than Andrew Scheer, who wound up edging out Bernier on the final ballot.

Bernier hasn't named byelection candidates in either of those ridings but is expected to do so by the end of the week. His party hasn't had time to hold nomination contests so instead Bernier asked leaders in each riding to put forward names and then potential candidates were interviewed before a decision was made.

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