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Heavy Artillery Flare-Up On India-Pak LOC

Ball In Delhi's Court Says Islamabad; IAF Avers Targets Were Hit And 'We Don't Count Bodies'

NEW DELHI: Pakistan used heavy artillery guns on the Line of Control (LoC) on Wednesday leading to India warning it against any misadventure, defence sources said.

The Indian Army retaliated by firing the powerful Bofors gun to give a befitting reply. Intense shelling was reported all along the LoC on Wednesday and the use of heavy calibre weapons

have led to a tense situation.

Sources said Pakistan used 155 mm artillery guns in the Nowshera sector. There has been a sharp rise in the incidents of ceasefire violations after India carried out air strikes to hit terror camps in Balakot in Pakistan.

The firing intensified amid a propaganda war unleashed by Pakistan about the air strike, forcing Indian Air Force to issue

caution against the information warfare unleashed to discredit the Indian armed forces.

ISLAMABAD: Meanwhile, Pakistan on Wednesday said "the ball is now in India's court" following Islamabad's "peace gesture" of releasing an Indian Air Force (IAF) pilot but warned that the situation will "go bad" if New Delhi decides to opt for further

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The Swedish-made Bofors long-range gun.

Trudeau Sinks Deeper Into SNC-Lavalin Mess

Second Minister Resigns; PM Talks Of 'Erosion Of Trust'



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau greets attendees at a Liberal Climate Action Rally in Toronto, Monday, March 4, 2019. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Frank Gunn

OTTAWA: Prime Minister Justin Trudeau dropped his insistence that his government has done nothing wrong in the SNC-Lavalin affair after a second cabinet minister in less than a month resigned Monday.

Treasury Board president Jane Philpott handed in her resignation on Monday afternoon, saying she's lost confidence in the way the government has dealt with criminal charges against the Montreal engineering giant.

Her resignation came after former attorney general Jody Wilson-Raybould resigned from cabinet amid allegations that the Prime Minister's Office improperly pressured her to stop a criminal prosecution of SNC-Lavalin.

At a rally Monday night in Toronto, Trudeau did not repeat the same message he's delivered since the controversy erupted a month ago, that no undue pressure was exerted, that the government was balancing its concern for the fate of 9,000 SNC-Lavalin employees with respect for the independence of the justice system.

Rather, he adopted a more conciliatory tone that appeared to allow for the possibility that a line may have been crossed.

In her resignation letter to Trudeau, Philpott pointed out that a cabinet minister must be able "speak in support of the government and its policies" at all times.

"Given this convention and the current circumstances, it is unten-

able for me to continue to serve as a cabinet minister," she wrote.

Trudeau named Carla Qualtrough, the minister of public services and procurement, as acting president of the Treasury Board.

Conservative Leader Andrew Scheer said Philpott's resignation proves he was correct when he asserted last week that Trudeau has "lost the moral authority to govern."

New Democrat Leader Jagmeet Singh reiterated his call for a public inquiry into the affair.

On Thursday, Trudeau said he should have been aware trust had broken down between his office and Jody Wilson-Raybould over the SNC-Lavalin controversy,

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Scheer To Remove GST From Home Heating Bills

Measure To Cost Around \$1.6 Billion

OTTAWA: Conservative Leader Andrew Scheer is promising to remove federal sales tax from Canadians' home-heating bills as part of an early election campaign commitment.

If elected in the October federal election, Scheer says he would offer rebates to Canadians for the five per cent tax charged on all residential home energy, including heating oil, electricity, natural gas, propane, wood pellets and other heating sources.

Scheer estimates this could save Canadians an average of \$107 per year. The rebate would be capped at a maximum of \$200 per household and would not be available for commercial energy costs and for investment properties. People who live in provinces that have harmonized provincial and federal sales taxes would get the same rebate.

"Heating your home in winter isn't a luxury for Canadians. It is a necessity," Scheer said. "We don't tax other basic necessities like groceries and we shouldn't be taxing home heating."

The Conservatives estimate the measure would cost the federal treasury \$1.6 billion. Scheer's promise comes as Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has launched a campaign about his carbon-pricing plan and how the money raised will be rebated directly to residents of the four provinces that have no measures.

Ottawa is requiring provinces to impose a price on carbon emissions, starting at \$20 per tonne this year and rising by \$10 per



tonne annually until it hits \$50 in 2022. Ottawa is imposing its own tax on Ontario, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and New Brunswick, as they continue to refuse to impose their own carbon pricing plan that meets federal targets.

Scheer has been a vocal opponent of the carbon tax.

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Ford Defends \$1,250-A Plate Fundraising Gala

TORONTO: A pricey Progressive Conservative fundraising gala where attendees can rub shoulders with key members of government doesn't constitute cash-for-access, Premier Doug Ford said ahead of the event in Toronto on Wednesday.

Opposition parties have raised concerns that the 2019 Leader's Dinner - where tickets cost \$1,250 - would grant opportunities for people to influence cabinet ministers.

But Ford defended the event and said his party frequently hosts smaller fundraisers across



the province where people have a chance to hear directly from him.

"I'm going up to Muskoka on Friday for a \$25 dinner, a spa-

ghetti dinner, to talk to the real people," Ford said. "I encourage everyone to come out Friday to listen to the great things that this government has done for the common folk."

Government House Leader Todd Smith said Wednesday's gala was "absolutely not" a cash-for-access event.

"These are personal donations," he said. "This is real people coming to our event tonight."

Media are not permitted to attend the sold-out gala, where Ford is expected to deliver a keynote address to an audience

that will include several members of cabinet. The Progressives Conservatives have billed the event as "the biggest fundraiser Ontario has ever seen."

A spokesman for the Progressive Conservative party said the event will attract people from across the province and denied that the gala offered special treatment for attendees.

"Anyone who claims that selling tickets will somehow translate to more access to government officials is woefully misguided," said Marcus Mattinson.

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