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Unique 'What's In Your Thali?' Initiative - page 11



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## First Afghanistan Minority Refugees Arrive

*Families Welcomed Under Private Sponsorship Program; Alberta Foundation Spearheads Move*

CALGARY: The Government of Canada has welcomed the first arrival of Sikh and Hindu minority refugee families from Afghanistan.

Minister of National Defence Harjit Singh Sajjan greeted the families here on Tuesday, as part of this year's celebration of the 40th anniversary of the successful Private Sponsorship Refugee Program.

The families were brought to Canada, through the generosity of Canadians coming together to help resettle these vulnerable refugees. Several Government officials greeted the families from among the approved Afghan minority refugee claimants at Calgary International Airport.

"Canada is a global leader in resettling the world's most vulnerable, which is why our government

has worked very closely with the Manmeet Singh Bhullar Foundation and other partners to ensure safe resettlement opportunities in Canada," an official press statement said.

Manmeet Singh Bhullar was a member of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta was known for his compassion and support for his community. Unfortunately,

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Defence Minister Harjit Sajjan with two refugee children.

## SNC-Lavalin Charges Now Under OECD Lens

*Liberal MPs Shut Down SNC Committee Before Vote*



Conservative Leader Andrew Scheer speaks to local resident Jean Fournier, right, March 6, while visiting Fournier's Quebec City home. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Jacques Boissinot

OTTAWA: The Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development is monitoring the allegations the Liberal government tried to influence a criminal prosecution against SNC-Lavalin to determine whether Canada is violating its commitment to an international anti-bribery convention.

The OECD's working group on bribery said in a statement that it is "concerned" by accusations that Trudeau and staff in his office tried to get former attorney general Jody Wilson-Raybould to let the Quebec engineering giant negotiate a remediation agreement rather than pursue the firm on criminal charges of bribery and fraud.

It's keeping an eye on the twin federal investigations of the allegations, the group said, including one by the House of Commons justice committee. SNC-Lavalin is accused of bribing Libyan officials between 2001 and 2011 to win business there.

Meanwhile, opposition MPs erupted in fury on Wednesday after the Liberals used their majority on the House of Commons justice committee to delay an opposition attempt to call Jody Wilson-Raybould to testify again on the SNC-Lavalin affair.

The meeting was called as an emergency session by the three Conservatives and one New Democrat MP, after the Liberals used their majority last week to

put off having the discussion on future witnesses until March 19. The Liberals, with five MPs to the opposition's four, prevailed. The discussion on future witnesses, including Wilson-Raybould, will now be next week, in private.

Canada is one of 44 nations that in 1999 signed the legally binding Anti-Bribery Convention, which established international standards to criminalize the bribery of foreign officials so nations would punish their own citizens and companies for trying to undermine governments elsewhere.

The OECD working group monitors the implementation and enforcement of the convention. It wrote to the Prime Minister's Of-

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## Six Of Brampton Family Killed In Ethiopia Crash

*Group Was Heading For Kenyan Safari*

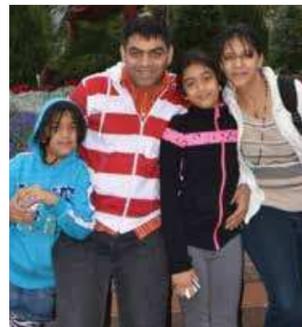
BRAMPTON: Six members of an Indo-Canadian family from Brampton were among those killed when an Ethiopian Airlines Boeing 737 crashed six minutes after take-off from Addis Ababa en route to Nairobi in Kenya on Sunday.

Ashka Dixit, 14 and Anushka Dixit, 13, were on a family vacation with their parents, 37-year-old Kosha Vaidya and 45-year-old Preit Dixit and their grandparents, 73-year-old Pannagesh Vaidya and 67-year-old Hansini Vaidya when flight ET 302 went down.

The plane nosedived into a field near Tulu Fara village outside the town of Bishoftu, some 60 km southeast of Addis Ababa. All 157 passengers and crew members on board the plane were killed in the crash.

Perit Dixit worked in health-care and his wife, Kosha Vaidya, worked in the human resources department of the Canadian Hearing Society, which provides services for deaf people. Ashka attended Chinguacousy Secondary School and Anushka attended Centennial Sr. Public School, both in Brampton.

Brampton Mayor Patrick Brown said the family is dealing with an "unbelievably tragic situation." "Global Affairs Canada has been in touch with the family members in Brampton and will assist," he said. "As a sign of respect, all flags at City Hall will be half-mast until further notice. Our thoughts and prayers are with them during this time of sorrow



and reflection."

On Monday, Indian foreign minister Sushma Swaraj also called to express her condolences.

The family, all living in Canada, was headed for a safari to Kenya. Pannagesh Vaidya and Hansini Vaidya were Indian nationals.

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## Ontario To Ban Cellphones In Classrooms

TORONTO: Cellphones will be banned in Ontario classrooms during instructional time, starting in September - news that some suggest is meant to distract from ongoing criticism over autism funding.

Education Minister Lisa Thompson (on right) said on Tuesday that a formal announcement is coming soon.

"Ontario's students need to be able to focus on their learning, not their cellphones," she wrote. "By banning cellphone use that distracts from learning, we are helping students to focus on ac-



quiring the foundational skills they need like reading, writing and math."

Some schools already have

similar policies, but the province will issue a directive to all public schools for the 2019-20 school year, government sources told The Canadian Press. How to enforce the ban would be up to individual boards and schools.

Exceptions would be made for when teachers want to use cellphones as part of their lesson, for medical reasons and students with special needs.

Harvey Bischof, president of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, said it doesn't sound like the policy will differ from what is already hap-

pening in schools.

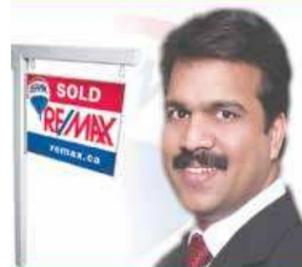
"The notion that teachers are simply allowing inappropriate cellphone use at the moment is incorrect," he said.

"My suspicion is the only thing it's meant to change is the discussion that's going on around the return of kids on the autism spectrum to schools on April the 1st without the appropriate supports."

Thompson announced additional money for school boards and training for teachers Monday as hundreds of kids may soon en-

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