

ASIAN JOURNAL

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OIL, DEFENCE AND GEOPOLITICS: WHY PUTIN IS VISITING MODI IN DELHI

By Steve Rosenberg

Russian President Vladimir Putin has arrived for a two-day visit to India, where he was embraced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi ahead of an annual summit held by both countries.

Delhi and Moscow are expected to sign a number of deals during the visit, which comes months after the US increased pressure on India to stop buying Russian oil.

It also comes as US President Donald Trump's administration holds a series of talks with Russia and Ukraine in an attempt to end the war.

India and Russia have been close allies for decades and Putin and Modi share a warm relationship. Here's a look at why they both need each other - and what to watch for as they meet. A special friendship, trade deals and geopolitics

By Steve Rosenberg

Why are relations with India key for the Kremlin?

Well, for a start, look at the numbers:

a population of nearly a billion and a half. economic growth exceeding 8%. India is the



world's fastest growing major economy.

That makes it a hugely attractive market for Russian goods and resources - especially oil.

India is the world's third largest consumer of crude oil and has been buying large volumes from Russia. That wasn't always the case. Before the Kremlin's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, only 2.5% of India's oil imports were Russian.

That figure jumped to 35% as India took advantage of Russian price discounts prompted by sanctions against Moscow and Russia's re-

stricted access to the European market.

India was happy. Washington less so.

Earlier this year, the Trump administration slapped an additional 25% tariff on Indian goods, arguing that by purchasing oil from Russia, India was helping to fund the Kremlin's war chest. Orders from India for Russian oil have since dropped. President Putin will be keen for India to keep buying.

For Moscow, weapons sales to India are another priority and have been since Soviet times.

Ahead of Putin's visit, there were reports that India plans to purchase state-of-the-art Russian fighter jets and air defence systems.

Russia, hit by a labour shortage, also sees India as a valuable source of skilled workers.

But there's geopolitics at play, too.

The Kremlin enjoys demonstrating that Western efforts to isolate it over the war in Ukraine have failed.

Flying to India and meeting Prime Minister Modi is one way of doing that.

So is travelling to China and holding talks with

Xi Jinping, as Putin did three months ago. He met Modi on the same trip. The image of the three leaders smiling and chatting together sent a clear message that, despite the war in Ukraine, Moscow has powerful allies who support the concept of a "multi-polar world".

Russia lauds its "no limits partnership" with China.

It is just as vocal about its "special and privileged strategic partnership" with India.

That is a stark contrast to Moscow's strained relationship with the European Union.

"I think the Kremlin is sure that the West, including Europe, totally failed," believes Novaya Gazeta columnist Andrei Kolesnikov.

"We are not isolated, because we have connections to Asia and the Global South. Economically, this is the future. In that sense Russia returned as the main actor in these parts of the globe, like the Soviet Union. But even the Soviet Union had special channels and connections to the US, West Germany and France. It had a multi-vector policy.

"But now we are totally isolated from Europe. This is unprecedented. Our philosophers always said that Russia was a part of Europe. Now we're not. This is a big failure and a big loss. I'm sure that part of Russia's political and entrepreneurial class is dreaming of returning to Europe and of doing business not only with China and India."

This week, though, expect to hear about Russia-India friendship, trade deals and increased economic co-operation between Moscow and Delhi.



Chal Chaliye
SABZI MANDI
Chal Chaliye ...

ਤਾਜ਼ੇ ਫਲ ਫਰੂਟ, ਤਾਜ਼ੀਆਂ ਸਬਜ਼ੀਆਂ
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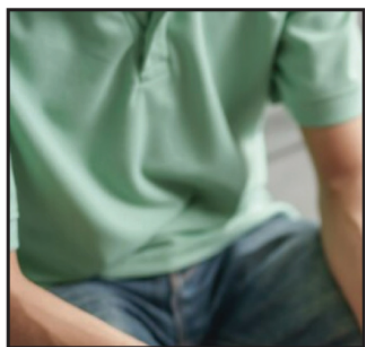
Helping people understand their rights under Mental Health Act

People experiencing a mental-health crisis now have a legal right to meet with an independent rights adviser to better understand their rights and the supports available to them, with amendments to the Mental Health Act coming into force.

The Independent Rights Advice Service helps inform people involuntarily admitted under the Mental Health Act of their Charter rights and improves access to justice for vulnerable populations. The service was introduced in phases over the past two years and is now available throughout B.C. Full implementation was required before the amendments could come into force.

“Everyone deserves to be able to understand and access their basic rights, no matter the situation they are in,” said Niki Sharma, Attorney General. “This free, independent service strengthens access to justice, ensuring that people admitted into involuntary care have the ability to understand what is happening and are treated with dignity and fairness.”

Delivering independent, con-



fidential support British Columbia’s Mental Health Act allows people with a severe mental-health disorder to be admitted and treated at designated mental-health facilities to prevent the person’s substantial mental or physical deterioration, or for the person’s own protection or the protection of others. Through the amendments, eligible patients must be informed about their new right to meet with a rights adviser, and facilities that provide involuntary treatment must support patients’ ability to meet with a rights adviser when requested.

The service is free and confidential. It is delivered by the Canadian Mental Health Association, B.C. division

(CMHA BC), and operates independently from health authorities and law enforcement.

Where the service is available The Independent Rights Advice Service is available throughout British Columbia, including in mental-health spaces, such as psychiatric and observation units, and some additional areas (such as medical-surgical sites) at all designated facilities in B.C. It is also available to involuntary patients living in the community on extended leave.

Supporting patients, improving access to justice

Rights advisers are trained to: explain rights under the Mental Health Act

clarify the Mental Health Review Board process

support patients interested in seeking second medical opinions

provide information about legal support and legal-aid eligibility

“Our priority is making sure people get the help they need in a way that honours their rights and their dignity,” said Josie Osborne, Minister

of Health. “The Independent Rights Advice Service gives people in involuntary care access to confidential, independent support so they can understand their rights and make informed decisions. This is about putting people first in mental health care.”

Rights advisers are trained in areas such as:

lived experience of involuntary treatment

anti-racism advocacy

cultural safety and humility

trauma-informed practice

considerations in delivering services for children and youth, 2SLGBTQIA+ and/or

gender-diverse people, Indigenous people, racialized people

and people with cognitive disabilities

This service is part of government’s work to ensure people struggling with severe mental-health conditions get the best possible treatment, with the dignity and fairness they deserve.

Quotes: Jonny Morris, CEO, Canadian Mental Health Association, B.C. – “When someone is detained

under the Mental Health Act, it can be a confusing path to navigate alone. The Independent Rights Advice Service, now entering a new phase after almost two years of service, is a powerful source of support, information and understanding. We are grateful to the Province of B.C. for funding this crucial service, to our partners and to the people with lived and living expertise who have guided this work.”

Sophia Ciavarella, provincial manager, Independent Rights Advice Service –

“Since its launch, the Independent Rights Advice Service has helped people in involuntary treatment feel recognized, heard and educated on their rights and decision-making power. Many rights advisers have lived experience and know how impactful it can be to have a sense of confidence and security during an experience that can be full of uncertainty. We hope this legislative change will help us support more people, letting them know they are not alone.”

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ASIAN JOURNAL

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City of Surrey clears the way for future hospital growth

Surrey, B.C. – The City is removing red tape and taking proactive steps to support potential expansion at Surrey Memorial Hospital and improve transportation access to the new Surrey Hospital and BC Cancer Centre in Cloverdale. At Monday's Council Meeting, Council approved zoning amendments at Surrey Memorial Hospital, following the recent direction to staff to explore updates enabling future growth, and endorsed the transportation plan for the new hospital in Cloverdale, ensuring both projects can move forward efficiently. "Surrey is growing quickly, and we need to plan ahead to ensure our hospitals can meet future demand," said Mayor Brenda Locke.



"By removing barriers to potential expansion at Surrey Memorial Hospital and advancing transportation improvements for the new Cloverdale hospital, we are laying the groundwork for

accessible, high-quality care for our community now and into the future." The bylaw amendments will eliminate the need for future rezoning and streamline the application process.

While specific plans for Surrey Memorial Hospital have not yet been finalized, the updates provide flexibility to accommodate a variety of potential projects. The City's transportation

plan for the new hospital in Cloverdale will ensure safe and convenient access when the facility opens in 2030. Fraser Health will improve key roads, intersections, and walking and cycling routes connected to the

hospital. The City will build a new west-side multiuse path along 180 Street between 55 Avenue and 56 Avenue, and new bikeways linking existing greenways and bike lanes to 180 Street and Highway 10. Together, these improvements will create a continuous, safer network for cyclists and pedestrians while enhancing overall access to the hospital. The City will also work with TransLink to improve transit access between the hospital and SkyTrain. Options under consideration include re-routed bus services or new routes, such as a direct connection linking the hospital, the 184 Street Surrey-Langley SkyTrain Station, and Campbell Heights.

Statement from the Mayor: 2026 Surrey police budget

As Mayor, a top priority of mine has always been to improve public safety while protecting taxpayers from costly tax hikes. When it became clear that the province made the decision to move forward with the transition to the Surrey Police Service, we worked hard to secure \$250 million in provincial funding to address anticipated increased costs. Since that time, we have done everything in our power to support a transition to a new, modern, and leading police force. Late yesterday, the City of Surrey released the provisional budget from the provincially appointed Surrey Police Board. The Board's

request includes a very significant \$91-million increase over the previous year's budget. If approved, that would represent a roughly 18% property tax increase for Surrey property owners. As Mayor, I am not prepared to support this budget now as presented. It is extraordinarily excessive, and Surrey taxpayers cannot afford it. Our staff and Council will conduct all proper due diligence to review and scrutinize the provisional budget and work with the Board to ensure we collectively fulfill our governance responsibilities with accountability, transparency, and fiduciary prudence.

And while the proposed budget is excessive, I remain committed to supporting a meaningful increase in funding to hire additional officers, as we've done over the past three years, to enhance resources for policing in Surrey, especially at this critical time to target priorities such as the current wave of extortions in the city. Surrey taxpayers want to see action to improve public safety, and we're prepared to make those investments. But they also expect us to be prudent with public money and avoid significant tax hikes at a time when affordability remains a top priority.



New francophone school coming to Saanich

Plans are moving forward to build a new K-12 francophone school in Saanich with 465 student spaces to support families and strengthen access to French-language education.

"Our government is proud to invest in projects that strengthen communities and support students," said Bowinn Ma, Minister of Infrastructure. "This new school will ensure francophone students can learn in a safe, modern environment that reflects their culture and community."

Benefits students

The new École Beausoleil will include:

- 20 classrooms
- child care and community programs
- low-carbon building design to help reduce emissions and support a more sustainable future

Currently, the Beausoleil program operates in a temporary facility on the same site as Braefoot Elementary school, with capacity for 170 elementary school students.

To better serve francophone families and meet growing demand, a permanent Beausoleil school will be built on the same site as Lansdowne Middle school and serve an additional



295 students as a K-12 francophone school. The school will help ensure francophone students can learn in a safe, modern environment that reflects francophone culture and community.

Supporting francophone students in Greater Victoria École Beausoleil will be the second K-12 francophone school in Greater Victoria, following Victor Brodeur. With two K-12 francophone schools, francophone families will have more options and better access to schools closer to

home.

The Province is investing nearly \$73 million in École Beausoleil, with construction expected to begin in fall 2027.

"For our community, this new school is much more than a building: It is a collective dream we've had for a long time and it's finally coming true," said Marie-Pierre Lavoie, board chair, Conseil scolaire francophone (CSF) de la Colombie-Britannique. "The school embodies the resilience, pride and commitment of generations of fam-

ilies, educational staff and francophone leaders in Victoria. We are sincerely grateful to the provincial government and proud to take this step together, one that will strengthen the vitality of French in British Columbia for years to come."

Creating more seats for francophone students in B.C.

Since 2017, the Province has invested almost \$300 million in francophone education infrastructure through close collaboration with CSF, resulting in:

12 site acquisitions

throughout the province

seven school expansion projects, including new schools in Pemberton and Burnaby that are under construction, and completed projects in other communities throughout B.C., such as Smithers, Mission and Victoria.

The investments help build new and expanded schools in B.C., supporting francophone education and giving more families access to CSF programs.

Quotes:

Christian Leclerc, pres-

ident, Fédération des parents francophones de Colombie-Britannique —

"The fédération des parents enthusiastically welcomes the realization of the new school construction project in Victoria and applauds the provincial government's efforts to meet the needs of our families. This investment represents an important stage in the development of Victoria's rapidly growing francophone community."

Diana Gibson, MLA for Oak Bay-Gordon Head

"Our government is committed to building the schools we need in our community. This new francophone K-12 school will be a place where students can learn, grow and celebrate their culture close to home."

Nina Krieger, MLA for Victoria-Swan Lake —

"A strong francophone school is an investment in our young people and in the vitality of our community for years to come. By expanding French-language education, we are ensuring that students can learn in the language they love while staying connected to their community."

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Surrey celebrates exceptional youth at 15th Annual SASSY Awards

Surrey, B.C. – The 15th Annual Service Above Self Surrey Youth (SASSY) Awards were held last week at Surrey City Hall to celebrate outstanding youth achievement and community contributions across four award categories.

“It is my pleasure to congratulate all the passionate young people recognized at this year’s SASSY Awards,” said Mayor Brenda Locke. “Their energy, courage, and commitment inspire hope for the future. I want to thank each of them for helping shape a brighter city and for inspiring others to lead in their communities.”

Awards were presented in the following categories: Community Leadership and Service; Diversity, Equity and Inclusion;



Leadership and Service Beyond Adversity; and School Leadership and Service. For the first time, each category featured both Junior (under 16) and

Senior (17 and older) divisions, resulting in a total of 20 awards. Recipients received a cash prize, a donation to present to a charity of their choice, and a SASSY trophy. Run-

ner-ups in each category also received cash awards and charitable donations.

Presented by the Semiahmoo Rotary Club in partnership with the City of Surrey, the

15th annual SASSY Awards also showcased youth performances throughout the evening. Proceeds support Rotary youth programs such as Interact and Rotaract,

empowering young people to lead initiatives both locally and globally. Any surplus funds will go toward special youth projects in the community and future SASSY Awards.

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Face ਚਿਹਰਾ: ਕੀ ਚਿਹਰਾ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਢਿਲਕ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ?

Arms ਬਾਹਵਾਂ: ਕੀ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਬਾਹਵਾਂ ਉੱਪਰ ਨੂੰ ਚੁੱਕ ਸਕਦੇ ਹੋ?

Speech ਗੱਲ-ਬਾਤ: ਕੀ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਗੱਲ-ਬਾਤ ਅਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਹੋ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ?

Time ਸਮੇਂ: ਸਮੇਂ ਦੀ ਅਹਿਮੀਅਤ ਸਮਝੋ - ਬਟਪਟ 9-1-1 'ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

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REALTY CLASSIFIEDS

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Buyers jump into Canada's housing markets as 2025 draws to an end

Real estate transactions in November gave the first hints that Canada's housing markets finally kicked into gear this fall—though not everywhere—with most areas still lagging fall 2024 by a mile.

Vancouver, Fraser Valley, Calgary, Edmonton, Regina, Saskatoon, Winnipeg and Montreal saw home resales increase in November from October, in some cases by more than 5%. It was a notable for several markets following muted activity earlier in the season.

Toronto and Hamilton, on the other hand, experienced further declines—highlighting economic challenges facing southern Ontario.

The latest market results didn't show any deviation from recent price trends. Abundantly supplied markets such as Vancouver, Calgary and Toronto continue to see falling home values as buyers hold strong bargaining positions. Prices in parts of the Prairies and Quebec maintained solid gains.

We anticipate these diverging trends

will persist for the rest of the year, and potentially into early 2026.

However, a broader recovery should gradually emerge as economic momentum builds, and labour market conditions improve.

November results in Toronto confirm the picture that has emerged over the previous three months: Home resales have stalled, inventory is abundant, sellers face strong competition, and prices are drifting lower.

Activity is still close to 25% below pre-pandemic norms despite a marginal 0.6% increase in sales from October (seasonally adjusted).

The composite MLS Home Price Index continues to decline between 5% and 6% from a year ago—the case since spring.

Sluggish demand likely reflects a combination of factors including tariff-related economic uncertainty, grimmer job prospects, lower immigration and little urgency to strike deals when inventory is high, and prices are declining.



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Court Order Sale. Property is sold as is where is. This 5 bedroom 4 bathroom split-level home is very well maintained in a family oriented neighbourhood. Quiet Street with tons of privacy, the generous kitchen boasts granite countertops and spacious island, while large windows flood the space with natural light. Private 2 car garage. Very well maintained. Located in a GREAT LOCATION with easy access to major highways, shopping, and schools. Measurements approx. buyer to verify if important. School Catchment: Maddaugh Elementary & Echolaish Secondary. For more information please call. (30811618)

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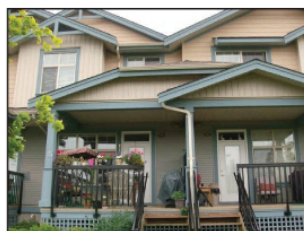
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13930 77 Ave Surrey BC



124 13725 72A AVENUE



314-7445 120 Street



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#22 12730 66 AVE SURREY



6139 142 ST SURREY



#201 13893 74 AVE SURREY



14071 59A AVE, SURREY



14948 62 AVE SURREY



11700 85B AVE DELTA



#34 9088 HOLT RD, SURREY



11826 87 AVE, DELTA



#202 7445 120 ST, DELTA



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2026 Nissan Rogue Rock Creek Edition: Adds Off-Road Flair!

Review by Veenoo Dewan

The popular Nissan Rogue remains a consistently good seller and continues to impress and delight owners. The key attributes to this stylish compact/ mid-size five-seat crossover remain consistent. The Rogue's powertrain remains unusual in this segment, namely a 1.5L 201-hp turbo three-cylinder variable compression (VC) engine paired with a CVT. All-Wheel Drive (AWD) is standard in Canada.

The Rogue arrives in four trim lines for the Canadian market in 2026. The entry S version - \$34,398, SV- \$38,198, Rock Creek: \$41,398 and the top-grade Platinum version at \$45,898. The S includes standard features like cloth seats, 17-inch alloy wheels and as standard Blind Spot Monitoring system. The SV adds a moonroof, 18-inch alloys, 12.3-inch touchscreen, and extra active drive assist systems. The SV Premium adds 19-inch wheel and more features. The Platinum offers such goodies as quilted aniline leather seats, surround view monitor, adaptive cruise and active driver assist systems. We tested the off-road orientated Rock Creek version aimed at the Off-Road sector. Standard is Nissan Safety Shield 360 featuring forward collision mitigation with pedestrian detection, blind spot info, lane departure



warning, rear cross traffic monitor with auto braking, and auto high beam.

In terms of the interior, the base S model has an 8-inch touchscreen, with includes Apple CarPlay and Android Auto compatibility while the SV has a 12.3-inch touchscreen and 12.3-inch digital gauge cluster. Infotainment on higher trim grades includes Google Apps with Alexa voice command plus wireless Apple CarPlay and Android Auto. High end options include power folding rear seats are available, as is a hand-free liftgate and a clever rear dividable cargo system. A 12-volt power outlet in the cargo area is also offered for convenience and recreational versatility.

The as evaluated Rock Creek version is distinguished by a unique gloss black front grille with silver accents and a redesigned front fascia incorporating Lava Red accents that are carried through the design. The Rock Creek rides on 235/65R17 Falken Wild Peak all-terrain tires mounted to 17-inch satin black beadlock style wheels for extra traction on rough surfaces. A unique tubular roof rack with integrated cross bars is both stylish and functional with the cross bars, also accented in Lava Red. The roof rack functionality is enhanced by built in mounting points for bikes, kayaks and cargo boxes. Gloss black sideview mirrors set

off the special aesthetic look.

Off Road technology for the Rock Creek Edition includes: HD Intelligent Around View Monitor with Off-Road view mode and Hill Descent Control. Inside, the Rock Creek Edition features Tailor Fit Leatherette Seats with contrast stitching and the Rock Creek logo on the backrests. The same exterior Lava Red accents are present in contrast seat stitching and a few other places in the cabin.

All Rogue interiors feature comfortable seats both front and rear with a decent amount of support and bolstering. Front and rear seat passengers enjoy plenty of legroom. Access is also good with large, almost 90 degrees opening doors. The

floating centre console has some useful storage underneath along with other cubbies. General ergonomics and the operation of the touchscreen system is good. The Rogue's trunk has a creditable 1,019 litres of cargo space, expandable to 2,095 litres with the split rear seat folded. On the road, the 1.5 VC turbo unit engine continuously adjusts compression ratio depending on use for maximum efficiency power and fuel efficiency. The Standard Idle Stop/Start technology also helps reduce urban fuel economy. It's not just looks, for mild off-roading and light trails the Rock Creek's beadlock-style all-terrain tires provide superior

traction on gravel, sand, and uneven terrain. Meanwhile, the enhanced Off-Road Technology features on the Rock Creek include HD Intelligent Around View Monitor with a specialized Off-Road view mode. At up to a driving speed of 119 km/h, the system aids drivers in seeing obstacles, rocks, or ruts when off-road. The useful Hill Descent Control meanwhile automatically maintains a constant speed on steep downhill descents.

For weekend outdoorsy adventures and camping, the Rock Creek is ideal. The off-road ability is also enhanced by the standard Intelligent All-Wheel Drive system, which automatically adjusts 4-wheel power distribution between wheels based on driving conditions. This Rogue Rock Creek model has an estimated fuel economy of 8.7 L/100km in the city and 7.2 L/100km on the highway.

To sum up, the 2026 Nissan Rogue Rock Creek Edition arrives as an excellent addition to the Rogue lineup as the most adventure-ready version of the compact SUV. It fills the needs for drivers who need both family-friendly practicality and decent mild off-road capability and does it very well. Highly recommended. 2026 Nissan Rogue Rock Creek Edition. Priced as tested: \$46,678 including options, Freight and PDI. More info at www.nissan.ca

Santa signs prompt calls to police in Canadian city

By Nadine Yousif

Police in a Canadian city are reminding the public that being a “grinch” may be frowned upon, but not illegal, after receiving calls over anti-Santa signs.

The signs appeared on a house window along a Santa Claus parade route over the weekend in Brantford, 103 kilometres (64 miles) west of Toronto. They read: “Santa is fake” and “Your parents are Santa”, images on social media showed. Police said they received “a few calls from upset residents” over the signs, and the individual responsible was asked to take them down.

They added that while the signs were not illegal, embracing the festive season is encouraged. “While it isn’t illegal to be a ‘Grinch’, we do encourage everyone to



embrace the spirit of the season and help foster a positive, welcoming community, especially during events like the Santa Claus Parade,” a police spokesperson

said.

An image shared on social media showed four colourful signs posted on a window, two of which had writing on black sharpie on them,

which read: “Santa isn’t real”, and “Your family buys your presents”.

Police said the signs were not illegal because of free speech laws and because they were post-

ed on private property, Canada’s public broadcaster CBC reports.

Some shared their dismay at the display on social media. In a comment on Facebook, one person called it “absolutely disgusting”.

Others, however, questioned the outrage. “I can’t believe someone actually called the police about this,” another user wrote.

The traditional Santa Claus parade is held annually in Brantford. This year, it drew a crowd of around 30,000 – a typical turn-out for the holiday event, local media report.

The signs are not the first time police have been called to deal with a holiday spoiler. In 2018, Texas police arrested a protester who told children Santa Claus is not real outside a church in Cleburne.

He was charged with

criminal trespassing for refusing to leave.

Scott Cain, then mayor of Cleburne, insisted that his town “loves Santa Claus”.

“I hope those protesters know they are probably going to get a big lump of coal instead of being on the nice list,” he added.

Decades earlier, a Vietnam veteran by the name of Richard Dildy was arrested in 1979 and charged with causing a disturbance after protesting outside a mall in downtown Toronto.

Photos showed him wearing a sign that read: “Down with Santa!”

He was labelled a “grinch” in a local newspaper the next day, according to a Toronto Today report. But he was not moved.

“All I was saying is that people have to stop lying to their children,” he told the Toronto Star.

Province takes action to reduce administration, prioritize front-line health care

The first steps of a review of the health authorities have been completed, which included reducing administrative costs, and work is underway to improve efficiencies and redirect savings to front-line services.

“People in every corner of B.C. deserve a health-care system that keeps pace with their growing and complex needs,” said Josie Osborne, Minister of Health. “That’s why we’ve launched this review last March, to hear directly from the people doing the work and to identify how we can make our system more efficient. While

that review is being completed, we’re already taking steps to reduce administrative duplication in health authorities so they can focus on what matters most: delivering high-quality care for patients across the province.”

Over the engagement period of the review, approximately 20,000 health-care workers attended town halls. More than 15,000 workers completed surveys in support of the review.

While the review continues, the Province is acting on its early findings by bringing together administrative and

corporate services across regional health authorities and the Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA), including legal, supply chain, finance and human resources. The functions will be delivered through a new standalone shared services organization that supports all health authorities, allowing them to focus more on delivering better care for patients. The new organization will be established by spring 2026. Services will gradually transition to the new organization over time, and as details are finalized.

The changes will remove

bottlenecks, reduce redundancies, improve supports and create more consistency and co-ordination throughout the system at a lower cost. It will also encourage innovation and the sharing of ideas that strengthen B.C.’s health system.

By consolidating administrative and corporate services, PHSA will have a clearer mandate, allowing it to focus on the specialized provincewide services that benefit patients, including cancer care, ambulance services and pediatric, maternal and women’s health.

PHSA provides a limited set of optional shared

services to the regional health authorities, which leads to duplication when some health authorities do not use them. Establishing a new dedicated organization for corporate and administrative services and making participation mandatory for all health authorities and the PHSA will save time, money and effort that can instead be redirected to patient care.

This consolidation will also allow the Province to leverage economies of scale to secure better pricing and contracts, shifting from five separate processes to a co-or-

ordinated provincial approach. It also positions the health system to better support front-line services.

The work builds on interim expenditure measures underway to control administrative costs during the review. Since the review launched in March 2025, health authorities have eliminated, closed or left vacant 1,100 positions. Beginning in 2026-27, this is anticipated to save more than \$60 million annually that can be redirected to front-line care.

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(PG)***

The Beat Goes On!

It looks like 2025 may well be considered to be the year of the musical. Song and dance continues to light up the screen after the recent releases of KISS of the Spider Woman and Blue Moon. Sony Pictures classics and Mongrel media hope to continue on this winning trend with Merrily We Roll Along. Unlike those two previous films, Merrily has a large cast of sing and dance men and women. Feel the beat of this latest and fresh offering at select Cineplex Cinemas and Lionstone Theatres around B.C.

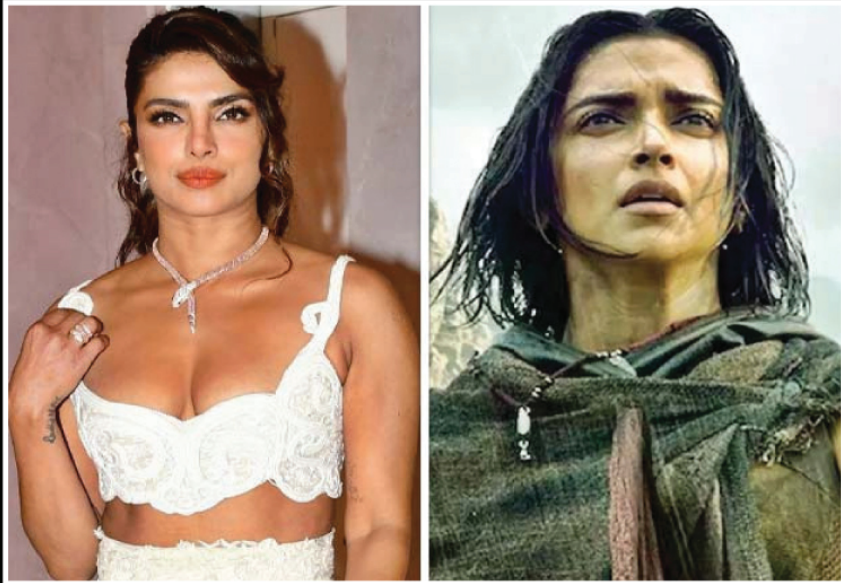
Yes, it hopes if you're a fan of musicals. Told over two informative and tumultuous decades Merrily traces the topsy turvy life of a trio of friends(?) who test their feelings as life events have a way of gnawing away at their relationships. Now the toast of Broadway lyricist Charlie and composer Franklin Shepard seem to have the world at their feet.

Who would have thought Child superstar Daniel Radcliffe (Harry Potter) could sing but he sings up a storm as Charlie Kringras whose friendship with Franklin, played sharply by Jonathan Groff is put through the wringer. Pressures of family life and lovers collide and become an al-

batross for these two with female best buddy writer Mary a combustible part of the mix. Enjoy the chaos with talented actress Lindsay Mendez doing her best to try to calm the pending storms.

Beyond the petty jealousies that rage out of control a great supporting cast of singers /actors add fuel to the fire in this lengthy reveal of the creative process and surrounding pressures all encounter in this closely knit creative community and hangers-on.

Based on the four time Tony winner of the Broadway spectacle this film version is filled with classical songs from the incomparable Stephen Sondheim and is a triumph. Wonderfully directed by Maria Friedman Merrily We Roll Along is a talkative musical high featuring loads of raw emotion, not so subtle sexual tension and memorable performances. It was shot live in New York at a performance last year at a happier time before the once upon a time Big Apple became soured by a terrorist loving Mayor who will have a big chill on Broadway, all the arts, businesses and the freedom loving world.



IS PRIYANKA CHOPRA REPLACING DEEPIKA PADUKONE IN KALKI 2898 AD 2?

We now hear that Priyanka Chopra Jonas, currently shooting for another Telugu mega-project, Rajamouli's Varanasi, is going to replace Deepika in Kalki 2898 AD 2.

Here is what this writer's very reliable source in Hyderabad has revealed. "Priyanka Chopra Jonas is most definitely in serious negotiations for this project. However, there are some hurdles, ironically similar to the obstacles which expelled Deepika from the project. Priyanka requires flexi-

bility regarding her time and schedule in order to fulfil her mom duties. However, this is not an insurmountable issue, as Priyanka is agreeable to travelling with her daughter to locations."

A bigger problem is the remuneration. Apparently Priyanka is asking for almost the same price as Deepika. The writer reached out to the Kalki 2898 AD producer Priyanka Dutta for a confirmation. She chose not to reply.



SHAH RUKH KHAN AND KAJOL UNVEIL DDLJ BRONZE STATUE IN LONDON'S LEICESTER SQUARE

Bollywood icons Shah Rukh Khan and Kajol marked a memorable moment on December 4, 2025, by unveiling a bronze statue of their legendary characters Raj and Simran from the 1995 classic Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge (DDLJ) at London's famed Leicester Square.

Despite cold, rainy weather, the pair captivated the gathered audience and media, recreating the film's iconic pose with radiant smiles. Shah Rukh Khan looked

sharp in a black suit, while Kajol radiated grace in a mint-green sari. The new bronze statue is the first ever dedicated to an Indian film at Leicester Square, placing DDLJ alongside global cinematic icons like those from Harry Potter, Mary Poppins, Paddington, Singin' in the Rain, and heroic figures like Batman and Wonder Woman. The statue captures the film's signature pose — a moment the duo lovingly recreated during the ceremony.



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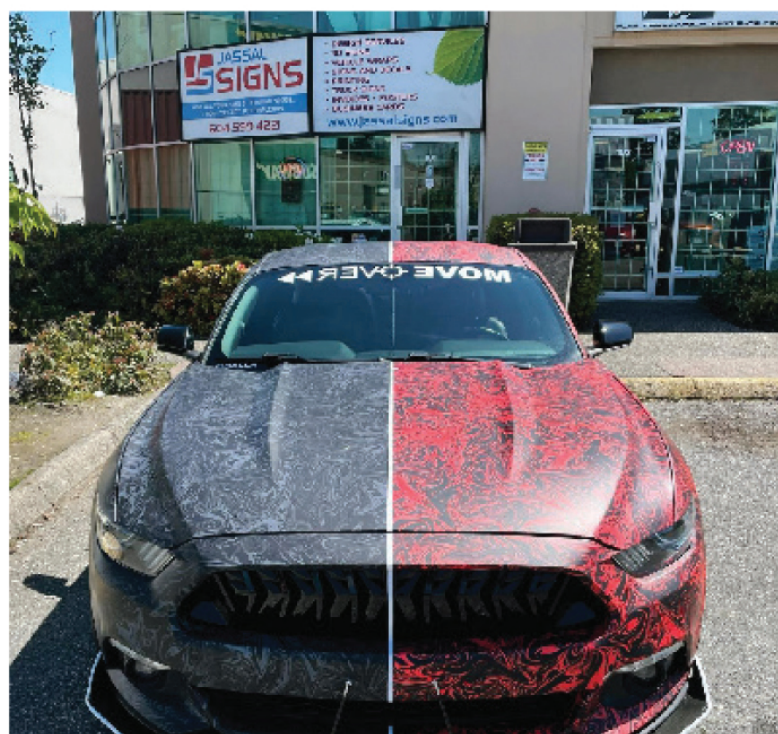


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