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**Doug Ford to loosen Ontario COVID-19 restrictions starting Jan. 31.**

With key public health and health care indicators starting to show signs of improvement, the Ontario government, in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health, today, Jan 20 th , released details of steps to cautiously and gradually ease public health measures, starting on January 31, 2022.

"The evidence tells us that the measures we put in place to blunt transmission of Omicron are working," said Premier Doug Ford. "We can be confident that the worst is behind us and that we are now in a position to cautiously and gradually ease public health measures. While February will continue to present its own challenges, given current trends these are challenges we are confident we can manage." As a result of the additional public health measures enacted on January 5, 2022, the province is beginning to see signs of stabilization in key public health and health system indicators. Per cent positivity has fallen and new admissions to hospital have started to stabilize with length of stay shortening considerably. Over the coming days and weeks, these trends are expected to continue, allowing the province to begin cautiously easing public health measures.

In the absence of concerning trends in public health and health care indicators, Ontario will follow a cautious and phased approach to lifting public health measures, with 21 days between each step. The government is also introducing a new COVID-19 Small Business Relief Grant that will give businesses subject to closure under the modified Step Two of the Roadmap to Reopen a \$10,000 grant. The money will flow to eligible businesses in February. In addition, the government is also improving cash flows for Ontario businesses by making up to \$7.5 billion available through a six-month interest- and penalty-free period for Ontario businesses to make payments for most provincially administered taxes. This penalty and interest-free period started on January 1, 2022. This supports businesses now and provides the flexibility they will need for long-term planning.

"Thanks to the sacrifices of Ontarians we are starting to see glimmers of hope. However we know the coming weeks will continue to pose challenges, especially for our hospital partners," said Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health.

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Ontario

## 5 tips to get back on track for people with diabetes



(NC) The COVID-19 pandemic has caused major disruptions to mental health, physical activity, and sedentary behaviour for people worldwide. So it's no surprise that Canadians living with type 2 diabetes have also found it challenging to maintain healthy eating habits and exercise routines during the pandemic. As a result, some have struggled with their diabetes management, with four in 10 reporting blood glucose levels more frequently out of their target range.

The great news is that healthy living is a lifelong process so it's never too late to get back on track. Here are five tips for people with type 2 diabetes:

1. Start small by setting goals that are realistic and attainable. For example, get outside daily for a brisk 15-minute walk to get your heart rate up and help ward off seasonal blues.
2. Adjust your mindset. Rather than 'restricting' your diet, think about how you can add healthy to your meals.
3. Find a friend to stay motivated. It's easier to stick to healthy lifestyle changes when you have someone doing it with you.
4. Make a plan and stick to it. Schedule your physical activity and plan some healthy meals for the week in advance.
5. Stay in touch with your healthcare team. For Canadians living with type 2 diabetes, death from heart disease at an earlier age is a serious risk. Speak with your doctor about type 2 diabetes treatments that may also help protect your heart.

Find more resources at [myheartmatters.ca](http://myheartmatters.ca).

## Diabetes friendly meals to keep you warm and nourished this season



(NC) During the late winter months, it's easy to hibernate and lean into warm comforting meals. But for most of us, months of comfort food and sedentary lifestyles come at a cost. For the over three million Canadians living with type 2 diabetes, it's even more important to stay on track.

The great news is that by incorporating healthy foods into your diet, you can help balance blood sugar levels and manage health-related risks. Have the best of both worlds; hearty and comforting meals, while keeping your diabetes top of mind. Try this simple and fun spin on two family favourites: Chili Skillet Mac Prep time: 10 minutes

Cook time: 25 minutes Serves: 6 cups / 4 (1 ½ cups per serving)

Ingredients:

- \* 1 lb (454 g) extra lean beef (or ground turkey/chicken)
- \* 1 tsp (5 mL) canola oil
- \* 1 onion, chopped
- \* 4 cloves garlic, minced
- \* 1 stalk celery, chopped
- \* 1 carrot, chopped
- \* 1 tbsp (15 mL) chili powder
- \* 2 tbsp (25 mL) tomato paste
- \* 1 tbsp (15 mL) yellow mustard (optional)
- 2 cups (500 mL) sodium-reduced beef broth
- 1 1 cup (250 mL) canned, cooked, no-salt added red kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- \* 1 cup (250 mL) cooked small shell, bowtie or elbow pasta

Directions:

1. In a non-stick skillet cook beef for 8 minutes or until no longer pink. Drain in colander.
2. Return skillet to medium heat and add oil. Cook onion, garlic, celery, carrot, and chili powder for about 5 minutes or until softened. Stir in beef, tomato paste, and mustard if using, to coat.
3. Add broth and bring to a simmer for 5 minutes. Stir in beans and pasta; simmer for about 5 minutes or until heated through and thickened slightly.

## At the heart of healthy eating



(NC) While we're focused on matters of the heart for Valentine's Day, have you stopped to think about your heart health lately? Heart disease is one of Canada's leading causes of death, and Hypertension Canada estimates that 7.5 million Canadians are living with hypertension, with millions more likely to be diagnosed.

The good news is that heart disease and stroke is preventable by adopting healthy habits, such as moving your body, refraining from smoking, introducing a diet rich in fruits and vegetables, omega 3s and fibre, while limiting sodium, sugar and saturated and trans fats. Taking medication as directed and limiting alcohol consumption, as well as regular blood pressure monitoring are also important steps.

This may seem overwhelming, but you don't have to go it alone. Jacklyn Villeneuve, a Loblaw's registered dietitian, provides a few tips to help you take control. Look at your whole plate. When meal planning, using the whole plate method can help you to ensure you're getting all the nutrients your body needs, while helping to maintain a healthy heart. Half of your plate should be filled with fruits and vegetables, while a quarter should be filled with a protein such as a chicken breast or legumes and the remaining quarter should include whole grains such as quinoa, bulgur, or brown rice.

Focus on fibre. Fibre slows the digestion and absorption of your foods and can help you manage cholesterol and blood glucose levels. You can get fibre from fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans and legumes, as well as nuts and seeds. Chia seeds, flaxseeds and hemp hearts are all easy options for adding fibre to your diet. These seeds are similar in their nutritional benefits as they provide heart-healthy omega-3 fats, fibre and some protein. Although they are similar, they do have their own unique nutrient profiles so including a variety is key. You can sprinkle these seeds on cereals, yogurt and salads, and add them to

Monitoring is key. Registered dietitians at grocery stores may be able to work closely with pharmacists to take a 360-degree look at heart health. Services can include free blood pressure checks, help with smoking cessation or a heart-to-heart talk about meal planning. Find more information or book a free 15-minute consultation at [loblows.ca/dietitians](http://loblows.ca/dietitians). Smoothies or baked goods.

## IT'S HIGH TIME THE INDO/CEYLON ACCORD OF 1987 IS FULLY IMPLEMENTED



India's Minister of State for External Affairs Shri V. Muralidharans's following statement on July 31, 2021 in the Rajya Sabha was timely, fitting and correct which also alludes to the nagging and continuing unsolved problems being faced by the Tamils in Sri Lanka.

"India believes that delivering the legitimate aspirations of the Tamil community is in the best interest of Sri Lanka and respects the rights of the Tamil community including a MEANINGFUL DEVOLUTION".

The statement of this Minister clearly and simply refers and believes in the following aspirations of the Tamils including and involving equality, justice, peace and legitimate rights of Tamils with the carrying out of a meaningful devolution as the political settlement.

By his statement, the Minister has implicitly recognized and confirmed the dominant role of India in dealing with the problems of the Tamils. Besides, India being a Superpower in South Asia is also the neighbour of Sri Lanka with only 35 miles separating it from the north of Sri Lanka.

Though 7000 years ago both India and Sri Lanka consisted of one landmass until a tsunami or natural catastrophic event broke and divided the contiguity paving way for the Palk Strait between India and Sri Lanka. Before this separation free flow of migration and settlements from south India were normal and usual.

Tamils moved back and forth and most of them lived in the coastal parts of Sri Lanka. It is to be noted that the famous five Easwarams of Lord Shiva were built on the coastal side of Sri Lanka before the alleged legendary arrival of Vijaya from South India in B.C 483.

Historically Tamils are recorded as the original inhabitants of Sri Lanka and majority of them choose to live in the North and East of Sri Lanka until Sinhalese were recognized as a race in the 6th century along with the Sinhala language which is a mixture of Pali, Sanskrit and Tamil.

This is a brief note of the history of Tamils after the Tamil kings ruled the whole parts of Ceylon (Sri Lanka) except the Southern parts of Sri Lanka where Sinhala King Dutugemunu was ruling while Tamil King Ellara was ruling from Anuradhapura from B.C 144 to B.C 101.

As such Tamils' aspirations of equality, justice, and rights of Tamils have to be fulfilled without any doubts. Rights of Tamils The Minister in his statement has admitted and recognized the aspirations of the Tamils as legitimate which cannot be bargained, bartered, or even diluted with. He also admits that the aspirations of the Tamils have not been fulfilled by Sri Lanka so far. Accordingly, India owes and carries the duty to deliver them through its good offices and good faith as a last option to direct involvement with Sri Lanka as a neighbour and a party who co-signed the Indo/Sri Lanka Accord of 1987.

The legitimate aspirations of the Tamils have been lying in the election manifestos of Tamil parties which received the mandates of Tamils in several general elections held since independence in 1948. The last election manifesto has called for the fulfillment of the following aspirations.

- [1] North and East merger
- [2] Recognition of North and East as Tamils' historically inhabited homeland.
- [3] The right of self-determination.

The aspiration of equality has been deliberately trampled and denied by the successive Sri Lankan Governments since 1956 commencing from the passage of Sinhala Only Act of 1956 followed with several other discriminatory legislations in state employment and the full use of one of the official languages Tamil by the Government in its dealing with the Tamil public not to mention the genocidal agenda of Sinhala Buddhist Governments since 1948.

Justice is another aspect which has been discarded and thrown overboard by the Sri Lankan Governments since 1956 with an entrenched system of impunity in operation in Sri Lanka.

The word justice is anathema to all Sri Lankan Governments backed by a politically leaning Judicial System. It has to be stated that only a handful of suspects alleged to have committed genocidal crimes

since 1956 have been hauled up to courts during the last 70 years and even the convicted and jailed have been pardoned and released halfway while in jail.

The rights of Tamils granted under the 1966 UN Convention on Civil and Political Rights Article One [1] which allows the peoples the right of self-determination and the right to determine their political status and thereby pursue their economic, social and cultural development has not been honored by Sri Lanka. Instead repressive measures have been taken in the past to crush their rights.

There is discrimination in state employment and the rights of Tamils to preserve their culture and religion have been interfered by Buddhist Monks and Sinhala racist civilians who are forcefully seizing civilian lands to erect Lord Buddhas statues and/or construct Buddhist Temples (Viharas) even by destroying Hindu Temples and/or by removing statues of Hindu deities. These sacrileges have become common and normal in recent times.

In conclusion, it has to be stated that Tamil Nadu's cultural, historical, linguistic and religious links are interwoven with the Tamils in Sri Lanka. As such with a population of 70 million Tamils living in India, a greater obligation and unshakable duty on India lies to ensure the existence of Tamils and preserve their language, religion and culture in Sri Lanka. Therefore India cannot sit idle and watch the ongoing genocide committed against the Tamils by the Sri Lankan Governments by the Sinhala security forces.

India's Central Government also has to look into the important issues of accountability, the war crimes, crimes against humanity etc. allegedly committed during the period from October 1987 to 1989 when the Indian Peacekeeping Force [IPKF] was present in Sri Lanka. Various massacres like the Jaffna hospital massacre on October 21st and 22nd of 1989 and the Valvettithurai massacre on August 2nd and 3rd of 1989 have never been fully investigated nor has anyone been prosecuted before the courts.

It is clear that impunity prevailed and protected the crimes while accountability and justice was treated with scant responsibility and respect by the concerned authorities..

Thus, India owes a duty of redemption to right its wrongs and offer appropriate remedies for the victimised Tamils in Sri Lanka who are still undergoing cultural genocide after the genocides committed against the Tamils in 1956, 1958, 1971, 1977, 1987, 1983 and from 2006 to 2009.

It is high time for India as a co-signer to ensure the full implementation of the Indo/Ceylon Accord of 1987 and the provisions of 13th Amendment.  
By: Thambu Kanagasabai, Former Lecturer in Law, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka.



By. Thambu Kanagasabai -  
LLM [London] Former Lecturer in  
Law, University of Colombo.

### 3 key steps to remember before buying or selling your home

(NC) Entering the real estate market is big moment for anyone. And, whether you're buying or selling your first home or your fourth, it's also a major transaction. Taking a few simple steps can help make the process as smooth and successful as possible. Here are three to remember:

**1. Consider your wants and needs**

Before you buy or sell, it's important to think about what you value and what you want versus what you need. For example, is a big backyard a dealbreaker for you? Or, would you be okay with a tiny outdoor space if you found the right home? If you're selling, is it the price that matters the most? Or is a short closing that puts money in your hand faster more important?

**2. Interview your agent**

Everyone knows someone who knows a real estate agent. It can be tempting to make a quick choice and go with that friend of the family or in-law. While they could be the right person in the end, it's important to interview at least a couple of different agents to find the right fit. Real estate agents often have different specialties or mindsets and approaches that may or may not click with you. By having a chat with a few people, you'll know you're setting up a successful partnership.

**3. Test for radon**

Radon is a radioactive gas that comes from uranium in the ground that can get into your home undetected. All homes have some level of radon. However, long-term exposure to elevated levels increases your risk of developing lung cancer – in fact, it's the number one cause of lung cancer in non-smokers.

If you're selling your home, reassure buyers about radon levels. And if you're buying, it's a good idea to do radon testing as well as your standard home inspection. You can purchase an easy do-it-yourself radon test kit or hire a certified professional. Costs to fix high radon levels are comparable to updating your furnace or air conditioner.

Find more information at [canada.ca/radon](http://canada.ca/radon).



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### Create your comfort zone with hygge style



(NC) Looking for design inspiration that doesn't sacrifice on comfort? Take inspiration from Hygge – the Danish feeling of atmosphere of warmth, relaxation and connection to bring a stylish sense of harmony to your home. To help you achieve the look in your space, Sharon Grech, Benjamin Moore colour and design expert, shares her top three tips.

**Hygge your home.** Pronounced hue-guh, hygge is any place that's cozy, comfortable and welcoming. This makes it an ideal aesthetic choice for family homes or anywhere you want to get snug. However, the concept is also a celebration of Scandinavian design, and embraces a simple, uncluttered and functional approach to living.



"Hygge is about comfort, but not about clutter," explains Grech. "To create a streamlined but cozy space, choose furniture with concealed storage and opt for pieces with clean modern lines for a Scandi-chic feel."

**Inviting layers.**

A warm atmosphere is a hallmark of the style. From sitting surrounded by candlelight or next to a blazing fire with friends, creating a backdrop for peaceful moments will help you embrace hygge. "Add warmth to any room with soft lighting, textiles and natural materials such as wood and wicker," suggests Grech. These elements invite you to linger and get comfortable.

**Look to the skies.**

For an easy way to get the look, consider repainting in a hue that evokes the colours of Scandinavian skies. You can give your space a hygge makeover by painting a room or accent wall with product like Aura interior paint in a matte finish that will stay true over time. "Steam AF-15 and Quiet Moments 1563 are colours that instantly create serenity and invite light into any space." Levels are comparable to updating your furnace or air conditioner.

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### Winter home maintenance: A checklist

(NC) It can be tempting to hibernate come winter. And yet, there are still plenty of things you can take care of around the house this time of year. They'll go a long way to keeping you safe and sound this season, and all year long.

**Seal.**

Weatherstripping openings around your doors and windows will go a long way to keeping you cozy this winter, save you some money in electricity costs, and help your home stay in great condition. If you were too busy raking leaves in fall to get this task done, don't worry, it's never too late.

**Prepare.**

Any time of year, but especially in winter, it's important to be prepared for an emergency. If you don't have one already, take the time to create an emergency kit with supplies to last you 72 hours. Include water, a flashlight, blankets, and non-perishable foods like canned goods and granola bars. It's important to check your kit every year and replace expired items.

**Test.**

No matter where you live, your home is likely host to radon gas. Radon is a radioactive gas that can get into your home undetected. You can't see or smell it. Long-term exposure to elevated levels increases your risk of developing lung cancer – in fact, it's the number one cause of lung cancer in non-smokers. All homes have some level of radon. The question is how much, and the only way to know is to test. You can buy a do-it-yourself kit or hire a certified professional to find out.

Find more information on radon testing at [canada.ca/radon](http://canada.ca/radon).



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# Sri Lankan independence movement



The Sri Lankan independence movement was a peaceful political movement which was aimed at achieving independence and self-rule for the country of Sri Lanka, then British Ceylon, from the British Empire. The switch of powers was generally known as peaceful transfer of power from the British administration to Ceylon representatives, a phrase that implies considerable continuity with a colonial era that lasted 400 years.[1] It was initiated around the turn of the 20th century and led mostly by the educated middle class. It succeeded when, on 4 February 1948, Ceylon was granted independence as the Dominion of Ceylon. Dominion status within the British Commonwealth was retained for the next 24 years until 22 May 1972 when it became a republic and was renamed the Republic of Sri Lanka.

#### British colonial rule

The British Raj was dominant in Asia after the Battle of Assaye; following the Battle of Waterloo, the British Empire became more influential.[1] Its prestige was only briefly dented by setbacks in India, Afghanistan and South Africa. It was virtually unchallenged until 1914. The British were very powerful during their rule in Sri Lanka and left more of a lasting impact than any other power.[1]

The formation of the Batavian Republic in the Netherlands as an ally and of the French Directory, led to a British attack on Ceylon in 1795 as part of Britain's war against the French Republic. The Kandyan Kingdom collaborated with the British expeditionary forces against the Dutch, as it had with the Dutch against the Portuguese.

Once the Dutch had been evicted, their sovereignty ceded by the Treaty of Amiens and subsequent revolts in the low-country suppressed, the British began planning to capture the Kandyan Kingdom. The 1803 and 1804 invasions of the Kandyan provinces in the 1st Kandyan War were defeated by the Kandyan Sinhalese forces. In 1815, the British fomented a revolt by the Kandyan Sinhalese aristocracy against the last Kandyan monarch and marched into uplands to depose him in the 2nd Kandyan War.

The struggle against the colonial power began in 1817 with the Uva Rebellion when the same aristocracy rose against British rule in a rebellion in which their villagers participated. They were defeated by the British. An attempt at rebellion sparked again briefly in 1830. The Kandy and Sinhalese peasantry were stripped of their lands by the Crown Lands (Encroachments) Ordinance No. 12 of 1840 (sometimes called the Crown Lands Ordinance or the Waste Lands Ordinance).[2] a modern enclosure movement and reduced to penury.

In 1848 the abortive Matale Rebellion, led by Henedige Francisco Fernando (Puran Appu) and Gongalegoda Banda was the first transitional step towards abandoning the feudal form of revolt, being fundamentally a peasant revolt. The masses were without the leadership of their native King (deposed in 1815) or their chiefs (either crushed after the Uva Rebellion or collaborating with the colonial power). The leadership passed for the first time in the Kandyan provinces into the hands of ordinary people, non-aristocrats. The leaders were yeomen-artisans, resembling the Levellers in England's Civil War period and mechanics such as Paul Revere and Tom Paine who were at the heart of the American Revolution. However, in the words of Colvin R. de Silva, 'it had leaders but no leadership. The old feudalists were crushed and powerless. No new class capable of leading the struggle and heading it towards power had yet arisen.'



#### Plantation economy

Agriculture was the main source of revenue for the country and foreign exchanges. The land in Sri Lanka is very important because it has led to many different wars among different countries.[3] In the 1830s, coffee was introduced into Sri Lanka, a crop which flourishes in high altitudes, and grown on the land taken from the peasants. The principal impetus to this development of capitalist production in Sri Lanka was the decline in coffee production in the West Indies, following the abolition of slavery there.

However, the dispossessed peasantry was not employed on the plantations: The Kandyan Sinhalese villagers refused to abandon their traditional subsistence holdings and become wage-workers in the harsh conditions that prevailed on these new estates, despite the pressure exerted by the colonial government. The British therefore had to draw on its reserve army of labour in India, to man the plantations in its lucrative new colony to the south. Through the Indian indenture system, hundreds of thousands of Tamil "coolies" from southern India were transported into Sri Lanka to work on European-owned cash crop plantations.[4]

The coffee economy collapsed in the 1870s when coffee blight ravaged the plantations, but the economic system it had created survived intact into the era of its successor, tea, which was introduced on a wide scale from 1880 onwards. Tea was more capital-intensive and needed a higher volume of initial investment to be processed so that individual estate-owners were now supplanted by large English consolidated companies based either in London ('sterling firms') or Colombo ('rupee firms'). Monoculture was thus increasingly capped by monopoly within the plantation economy. The pattern thus created in the 19th century remained in existence down to 1972. The only significant modification to the colonial economy was the addition of a rubber sector in the mid-country areas.

#### The Buddhist resurgence and the 1915 riot

A new body of urban capitalists was growing in the low country, around transport, shop-keeping, distillery, plantation, and wood-work industries. These entrepreneurs were from many castes and they strongly resented the historically unprecedented and unbuddhist practice of 'caste discrimination' adopted by the Siam Nikaya in 1764, just 10 years after it had been established by a Thai monk. Around 1800 they organised the Amarapura Nikaya, which became hegemonic in the low-country by the mid-19th century.

Buddhism was enforced by kings and priests because they belonged to the Brahmin caste which allowed them to have the power to push what religion they wanted to practice. Buddhism practiced among higher castes (Brahmins) was further enforced by kings/ priest power, and their power increased and carried into the newly settled land.[5] Since the higher caste individuals and those in power were enforcing Buddhism, it eventually became the established religion among the Sinhalese communities. It became very popular among all castes and practiced all over and in different land (areas). There was a practice that was known as Asoka in the Sinhalese kingdom and it is thought that Buddhism has many aspects that stemmed from Asoka. Similar to Asoka (Practice among the Sinhalese) "Such establishment of Buddhism in a country was evidently a departure in the history of that religion and seems to have been an innovation of Asoka".[5]

The British attempt at giving a Protestant Christian education to the young men of the commercial classes backfired, as they transformed the Buddhism practiced in Sri Lanka into something resembling the non-conformist Protestant model. A series of debates against clergymen of the Methodist and the Anglican church was organised, culminating in the 'defeat' of the latter at Panadura by modern logical argument. The Buddhist revival was aided by the Theosophists, led by American Col. Henry Steel Olcott, who helped establish Buddhist schools such as Ananda College, Colombo; Dharmaraja College, Kandy; Maliyadeva College, Kurunegala; Mahinda College, Galle; and Musaeus College, Colombo; at the same time injecting more modern secular western ideas into the 'Protestant' Buddhist thought-stream.

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# Sri Lanka: minorities, activists targeted -HRW



The Sri Lankan government in 2021 suppressed minority communities, harassed activists, and undermined democratic institutions, Human Rights Watch said on (13 th Jan, 2022) in its World Report 2022.

**It said,**

The government of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa failed to carry out legal reforms promised to its international partners and blocked accountability for grave violations, including past war crimes.

"President Gotabaya Rajapaksa seems determined to reverse past rights improvements and protect those implicated in serious abuses," said Meenakshi Ganguly, South Asia director at Human Rights Watch.

"While promising reforms and justice to deflate international criticism, his administration has stepped up suppression of minority communities." In the 752-page World Report 2022, its 32nd edition, Human Rights Watch reviews human rights practices in nearly 100 countries.

Executive Director Kenneth Roth challenges the conventional wisdom that autocracy is ascendant. In country after country, large numbers of people have recently taken to the streets, even at the risk of being arrested or shot, showing that the appeal of democracy remains strong.

Meanwhile, autocrats are finding it more difficult to manipulate elections in their favor. Still, he says, democratic leaders must do a better job of meeting national and global challenges and of making sure that democracy delivers on its promised dividends.

The Rajapaksa government has disregarded its own pledges of reform and continued to target minority Tamils and Muslims.

The government uses the Prevention of Terrorism Act, the country's long-abused counterterrorism law, and policies that threaten religious freedom and minority land rights.

In March 2021 the United Nations Human Rights Council mandated the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to collect and prepare evidence of grave crimes committed in Sri Lanka for use in future prosecutions.

But a resolution before the Sri Lankan parliament would drop human rights investigations begun under the previous administration.

Additionally, the Rajapaksa government's appointment of people with poor rights records to independent bodies, including the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka and the Office of Missing Persons, have undermined their credibility and independence.

Throughout the year, Sri Lankan security forces harassed and threatened human rights defenders, journalists, lawyers, and the families of victims of past abuses, and suppressed peaceful protests.

Security agencies, including the police Terrorism Investigation Division, intrusively monitored and intimidated civil society groups and interfered in their funding sources on the pretext of combating "terrorist financing." In June the European Parliament passed a resolution deploring the Sri Lankan government's intensifying repression.

The European Commission engaged in human rights talks with the government in which it renewed pledges to reform the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

An assessment of Sri Lanka's human rights record and its eligibility for continued trading privileges that are contingent upon respect for human rights, is expected from the commission in early 2022.

The government struggled to protect people from Covid-19 as cases surged several times throughout the year, which contributed to widespread economic distress, but a military-controlled response to the pandemic led to further serious rights violations.

The police killed at least three people while purportedly enforcing Covid-19 lockdown regulations, the report added. (HRW)



## கட்டுவனில் நிலத்தை அபகரித்து படைபினர் வீதி அமைக்கின்றனர்

**சுமந்திரன்**

தமிழ் மக்களின் நிலம் விடுவிக்கப்படும் என ஜனாதிபதி கோட்டாபாய ராஜபக்ச நாடாளுமன்றத்தில் உரையாற்றி சில மணி நேரத்தில் கட்டுவனில் தமிழ் மக்களின் நிலத்தை அபகரித்து படைபினர் வீதி அமைக்கின்றனர் - சுமந்திரன் வடக்கு, கிழக்கில் இராணுவத்தினர் வசமுள்ள தமிழ் மக்களின் நிலம் விடுவிக்கப்படும் என ஜனாதிபதி கோட்டாபாய ராஜபக்ச நாடாளுமன்றத்தில் உரையாற்றி சில மணி நேரத்தில் கட்டுவனில் தமிழ் மக்களின் நிலத்தை அபகரித்து படைபினர் வீதி அமைக்கின்றனர். இந்த நடவடிக்கை ஜனாதிபதியின் மொப் பித்தவாட்டத்தை ஆம்பலப்படுத்தலின்றது.

இவ்வாறு தமிழ்த் தேசியக் கூட்டமைப்பின் பேச்சாளரும் நாடாளுமன்ற உறுப்பினருமான எம்.டி.சுமந்திரன் தெரிவித்தார். அவர் மேலும் தெரிவித்ததாவது -

'நேற்றைய நாடாளுமன்ற சம்பிரதாய உரையில் இந்த நாட்டின் ஜனாதிபதி நான்தான் என்பவர் கூறுகின்றார் மக்களின் நிலங்கள் விடுவிக்கப்படும் என. ஆனால், அன்றைய தினமே கட்டுவன் மயலிட்டி வீதியில் வெறும் 400 மீற்றர் நீளமும் 26 மீற்றர் அகலமும் கொண்ட நிலத்தைக்கூட விடாமட்டமும் என்ப படைபினர் அடாத்தாக வீதி ஆமைக்கின்றனர்.

அவ்வாறெனில் இந்த நாட்டிலே ஜனாதிபதியின் சொல்லைக்கூட மதிக்காத இராணுவத்தினர் இருக்கின்றனர் எனத் தெரிகின்றது. படைத் தரப்பு நேற்றும் இன்றும் அவசரமாக ஆக்கிரமித்து வைத்திருக்கும் பகுதியில் டோசர்கள், டிப்பர் வாகனங்கள் மூலம் வீதி அமைக்கின்றனர்.

அந்த வீதியமைப்பு தொடர்பில் வீதி அபிவிருத்தி அதிகார சபை வாய் மூடியுள்ளது சட்ட விசாரணை அமைக்கப்படும் வீதி தொடர்பில் இதுவரை எந்த அதிகாரிகளும் வாய் திறக்காதமையால் உரியவர்கள் வழக்குத் தாக்கம் செய்ய என்னை நாடுகின்றனர். இதுதான் இந்த நாட்டின் நிலவமை என்பதனை சர்வதேசம் புரிந்துகொள்ள வேண்டும் - ஏன்றார்.



# Afghan human rights defenders arrive in Canada

For 2 decades, Canadians have worked side by side with Afghan nationals to improve security, democracy and human rights in Afghanistan. Now Canada is welcoming people who face risks as a result of this vitally important work.

The Honourable Sean Fraser, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, today, Jan 11, announced the arrival in Canada of over 250 Afghan refugees, including 170 human rights defenders, as government-assisted refugees. Canada has a long and proud tradition of standing up for human rights at home and abroad. In July 2021, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) launched a human rights defenders immigration stream, making Canada one of the few countries in the world with a dedicated, permanent immigration program for those who protect and promote human rights.

The work of human rights defenders is essential to promote and protect the human rights of people around the world, and too often, they put their own lives at risk. Many of those arriving today have worked for decades documenting human rights abuses in Afghanistan and intend to continue their work in Canada with the assistance of Canadian and international non-governmental organizations.

This latest group of arrivals is part of Canada's humanitarian commitment to welcome vulnerable Afghan refugees—including women leaders, human rights defenders, persecuted religious or ethnic minorities, LGBTI individuals, and journalists and people who helped Canadian journalists. The humanitarian program complements Canada's special immigration program for Afghans who worked for Canada during and after our military mission. So far, Canada has welcomed approximately 6,750 Afghan nationals as part of the government's commitment to resettle Afghan nationals.

In the coming days, these newest refugees will be welcomed into their host communities and will quarantine with the support of local service provider organizations as they begin their new lives in Canada.

The Government of Canada is working with Front Line Defenders and ProtectDefenders, alongside other Canadian and international partners, including the United Nations Refugee Agency, to identify human rights defenders who face security risks and are in need of resettlement, and to find solutions for human rights defenders in need of protection.

IRCC's Refugee Resettlement Program plays a key role in resettling vulnerable individuals across the country and ensures they have what they need to live and thrive in their new communities.

This includes helping them find permanent housing and providing them with information about finding a job, improving their language skills, and living in Canada generally.



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# Port City Colombo

The Port City was claimed to be a concept of former President Mahinda Rajapaksa, who was apparently inspired while inspecting the landfill being constructed for the Colombo South port.[6][7][8] The modern Port City was in fact a fully solicited proposal submitted by China Harbour Engineering Company based on previous proposals.

## Construction works at Portcity

The construction was set to begin in March 2011 but due to several circumstances the project was stopped. In mid 2012, the Sri Lankan Ports Authority (SLPA) announced that the construction of the then Colombo Port City project would commence on 17 September 2014. The budget was estimated to be \$15 billion.

The reclamation was to be carried out by China Harbor Engineering Corporation, who has been engaged by the investor. 125 ha (310 acres) was the land was given to government as well as 88 ha (220 acres) while owned by the government was planned to be leased for 99 years to the Chinese company. 20 ha (49 acres) was planned to be given freehold to the Chinese company.

Construction of the Colombo Port City project was launched on 17 September 2014 by Former Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa and Chinese President Xi Jinping.

The port city has been criticised for several reasons.[8] Many environmentalists claim that the port city contains many environmental hazards and the adverse environmental impact of the project would be far greater than the economic benefits it may have to offer.[13] Maritime sector veterans also pointed out the dangers Sri Lanka may face due to giving outright ownership of land to China, especially in a high-security zone, and concerns about its effects on Sri Lanka's sovereignty have also been expressed.[14] The project was also criticized for its lack of transparency and irregularities such as the involvement of SLPA which is implementing the reclamation project, had no mandate to do so as its mandate is to deal with ports and shipping.

## The Colombo International Financial Centre

Colombo Port City (land reclamation) seen from Galle road.

The port city was suspended after the fall of the Rajapaksa government due to issues related to sovereignty of Sri Lanka and adverse environmental impacts.

The Colombo International Financial Centre will be governed by an independent authority and will not be subjected to the Colombo Municipal Council. A special legal framework would enable it to operate on a subset of commercial law, in terms of contracts and commercial transactions with its own Special Colombo International Financial Centre Court serving as the court of first instance and provision of appeal to the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka. It would have its own arbitration centres.[19][20] The building complex was approved for construction in December 2018.[21] The city will use construction resources from the Colombo Harbour Expansion Project, currently under construction near the site of this proposed city.

## Construction

The inauguration of the project was in 2014 with a revised plan inaugurated in October 2019.[21][23] It is projected that the water reclamation would be completed in around twenty-eight months.[23] In 2017, it was predicted that the city would be completed by 2041.

## Land reclamation

The port city would require around 269 hectares of reclaimed land. 116 hectares is owned by the China Communications Construction Company (CCCC), itself owned by the China Harbor Engineering Company (CHEC), and the Government of Sri Lanka has set aside another 91 hectares for public spaces.

## Land reclamation in November 2015

At a question and answer session in July 2018, the Prime Minister stated that the land reclamation would be finished within one year and that construction should begin by next year, and that the government seeking assistance in establishing the legal construct for the administrative area.[25] This was successfully completed in January 2019 according to the Ministry of Megapolis and Western Development.

The project was around three months ahead of its targeted completion as of January 2019.

## Basic infrastructure

China Daily reported in April 2019 that the hydrostructural construction would be complete by the middle of 2019, with the construction of municipal facilities being completed by July 2020.

The Road Development Authority had sent approval for the new road network and piling work had begun for the nine bridged by January 2019.[27]

## Investments

In December 2020, Sri Lankan conglomerate LOLC Holdings signed an agreement with China Harbour Engineering for a mixed development project, with the investment value totalling \$1 billion. The project includes residential, commercial and retail assets set to break ground in mid-2021. This is the first major investment in Colombo Port City.



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