

## Nation Briefs

## Shell mine operations continue as protest enters day 2

CALGARY (Reuters)—Royal Dutch Shell Plc said on Wednesday its Muskeg River oil sands mine in northern Alberta was operating at full production as an environmental protest at the site entered its second day.

Shell said it has let the Greenpeace protesters continue their action, which is aimed at spreading the message that development of Alberta's oil sands worsens climate change.

The peaceful demonstration coincides with Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper's visit with U.S. President Barack Obama in Washington on Wednesday morning.

About 25 activists entered the mine on Tuesday and locked down a massive dump truck and mining shovel. The company temporarily suspended production at the 155,000 barrel a day site, but resumed operations late in the day.

Greenpeace spokesman Mike Hudema, who spent the night on the truck in the mine, said the group would remain at the site until at least the Harper-Obama meeting ends.

"The objective of action is really to send a strong message to President Obama and Prime Minister Harper in their meeting today that real climate leaders don't buy tar sands," Hudema said.

Hudema said there was a "cordial atmosphere" among the demonstrators and Shell staff at the mine, and both sides stressed they were taking care to ensure the safety of everyone.

"Our offer to discuss their concerns about oil sands developments and their vision for the energy future still stands. Greenpeace has not yet responded," Shell said in a statement.

## Alberta solar home to compete in Washington DC before going to Olympics

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The design incorporates the traditional Western Canadian wooden post-and-beam structure, with a south-facing deck and a rooftop patio accessible from inside the home. Reclaimed barn wood was used for the exterior.

The house, which is built in modules, will be transported on four flat-bed trucks to get it to Washington, DC. The same method will be used to move it to its temporary location for the Olympics.

During the Games the home will be set up near the Rocky Mountain site in Vancouver—a high-profile location from which the Province of Alberta will be taking VIPs from its pavilion to Whistler every morning.

"I think it's a great opportunity for Alberta," says Blackwell. "A project like this really showcases some of the research and innovation that's been going on for all the four post-secondary institutions that are involved."

After the Olympics, the house will return to Calgary where the next team will continue working on integrating additional renewable technologies such as geothermal technology.

ENMAX, the team's main sponsor, will also use the house as a testing facility for future solar powered homes. Other sponsors include Western Economic Diversification Canada, Encana and ConocoPhillips. "We've really tried to make it a focus of this team to showcase as much as possible the local suppliers, the local companies, to integrate their innovative products," Blackwell says.

# Multi-faith forum focuses on human rights

By CINDY CHAN  
Epoch Times Staff

OTTAWA—A multi-faith expert forum is traveling across the country to call attention to human rights concerns facing various faith-based communities in Canada and abroad.

Co-organized by One Free World International (OFWI) and B'nai Brith Canada, the forum was held in Montreal, Ottawa, and Toronto last week and will take place in Vancouver on Sept. 24.

The idea took shape when several leaders from different faiths sat down together a few months ago and decided to begin coalition building to help each other's communities that are facing persecution.

Among them were Rev. Majed El Shafie, president of OFWI, a Toronto-based human rights group that works for the rights of religious minorities worldwide, and Dr. Frank Dimant, Executive Vice President of B'nai Brith Canada, a national body that serves Jewish communities across the country.

Speaking at the Ottawa forum at Congregation Machzikei Hadas on Sept. 10, Rev. El Shafie told how OFWI came into being.

A Muslim from Egypt who converted to Christianity while in law school, Rev. El Shafie was persecuted and severely tortured after building an underground congregation and appealing for equal rights for Christians in the late 1990s.

He fled to Israel to escape execution and spent over a year in jail while Amnesty International and the United Nations investigated and intervened on his behalf. He eventually came to Canada, where he started OFWI.

"When I came to Canada, my perspective was, just defend my own community—the Christian Egyptians. Later, I grew up and I thought, 'I need to defend every Christian around the world,'" Rev. El Shafie explained.

"But later on, one day at three o'clock in the morning, I woke up and asked myself, 'If somebody was crossing the street in front of me, and a car came and hit him, would I ask him first about his religion, or would I call 911 anyway?'"

"This was when I started to defend every community and everybody that I can help and support."

Echoing this sentiment, Mr. Dimant told the audience that human rights is an issue "not only for the Jewish community, but we have others who are suffering. . . . We want to bring their plight to the attention of our community."

Other forum speakers included Li Xun, President of Falun Dafa Association of Canada; MP Pierre Poilievre, Parliamentary Secretary to Prime



MULTI-FAITH FORUM SPEAKERS: Four of the six speakers at the multi-faith forum on human rights in Ottawa on Sept. 10. (L-R) Rev. Majed El Shafie of One Free World International, Dr. Frank Dimant of B'nai Brith Canada, Iranian-Canadian human rights activist Farnaz Farrokhi, and Li Xun of Falun Dafa Association of Canada. SAMIRA BOUAOU/THE EPOCH TIMES

Minister Stephen Harper; Mehmet Tohti, founder of the Uyghur Canadian Association; and Iranian-Canadian human rights advocate Farnaz Farrokhi.

### SLAVES IN THEIR HOMELAND

Mr. Tohti belongs to the Muslim Uyghur community in the Xinjiang region in northwest China, formerly the independent state of East Turkestan before the communist invasion in 1949.

He said the Uyghurs have become an ethnic minority who are "slaves" today in their homeland, a result of communist repression and large influxes of Han Chinese under the regime's policy of assimilating his people.

All forms of telecommunication have been shut down since early July, when the human rights protests and violent suppression that occurred in the Xinjiang capital of Urumqi captured the world's attention, Mr. Tohti said.

But "the bad news is coming," as he has just received news that one of his younger brothers was in prison.

### ILLICIT ORGAN TRADE

Since the communist party took control of China in 1949, it has waged brutal campaigns against one group after another, Mr. Li said.

Introduced to the public in 1992, Falun Gong, also called Falun Dafa,

had 70 to 100 million followers by 1999 when the regime launched its persecution.

The regime orchestrates massive hate propaganda throughout China and abroad to vilify Falun Gong, a spiritual discipline that teaches "Truthfulness, Compassion, Forbearance," Mr. Li said.

Following a 2005 China mission, U.N. Special Rapporteur on torture Manfred Nowak reported that two-thirds of the torture cases brought to his attention were Falun Gong.

Mr. Li noted that former cabinet minister David Kilgour and Winnipeg-based international human rights lawyer David Matas, legal counsel for B'nai Brith, conducted an investigation into the persecution in 2006-2007.

Their report, "Bloody Harvest," detailed substantive evidence and concluded that the Chinese regime has been conducting large-scale organ harvesting from Falun Gong prisoners for an illicit organ trade.

"The Chinese government has yet to come clean and be transparent" after two U.N. requests for a satisfactory response, Mr. Nowak told The Epoch Times last month.

Chinese lawyers are another group suffering persecution. Gao Zhisheng, a Christian attorney and Nobel Peace Prize nominee, suffered extensive torture in 2007 after writing three open letters urging an end to the persecu-

tion of Falun Gong. Taken into custody again in February, his current whereabouts are unknown.

### CONNECTING AID TO HUMAN RIGHTS

Rev. El Shafie said last year more than 165,000 Christians were killed because of their faith—about 80 percent in Muslim countries; 20 percent in communist countries like China, North Korea, and Cuba; and some in India.

He has travelled widely to conduct fact-finding missions and help those being persecuted, particularly in Asia and the Middle East.

Recently returned from Pakistan, he spoke about that country's blasphemy law, which carries the death penalty for speaking against Islam, the Koran, or Muhammad. It is also a discriminatory law that has been used to intimidate and attack minorities including Hindus and Christians.

Noting other religious persecution in places like Egypt, Iraq, and China, Rev. El Shafie called on Canada to stop supporting countries that abuse people's rights.

"Our aid to these countries needs to be connected to the improvement of their human rights," he said.

### IRAN NUCLEAR THREAT

Mr. Dimant said the Jewish people are facing a "very frightening" situation today.

"In 1932 and 1937, Hitler was not talking publicly about genocide and the Holocaust. Yet today, from reports in Iran, they are actually openly talking about a nuclear warhead being built to kill six million Jews. There is no attempt to disguise it."

He also spoke of systemic discrimination against Israel and Jews in many parts of the world.

Mr. Poilievre highlighted Canada's leadership in the fight against anti-Semitism.

Canada was the first country to withdraw from the Durban II conference in Geneva in April, a U.N. event intended to review progress toward the goals set in 2001 at Durban I to fight racism.

In 2008 Canada announced it would not participate because the "expression of intolerance and anti-Semitism" during Durban I was carrying over into preparations for Durban II.

The U.S., Netherlands, Germany, Australia, Israel, and other countries followed Canada's lead.

Indeed, at Durban II, Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad "poured verbal acid all over Israel and the U.S. and Europe," said Mr. Poilievre.

Ms. Farrokhi talked about the persecution of Christians, Bahais, Jews, and other religious minorities in Iran.

With Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, "no longer can the Iranian government hide from the international community," she said, pointing to the role social networking tools played in communicating with the world about the mass protests and suppression following the disputed election results in June that returned Ahmadinejad to power.

Ms. Farrokhi urged the audience to sign the World Jewish Congress online petition to boycott Ahmadinejad's speech at the U.N. General Assembly in New York later this month.

### CHINA'S BACKING OF ROGUE STATES

When talking about rockets launched by Hamas into Israel, weapons proliferation in Iran, genocide in Sudan, and U.N. resolutions blocked by Muslim countries, Mr. Tohti emphasized that "it is the Chinese government mostly supplying financial and military aid" to those countries and groups.

"It's important for all of us to stand up against the Chinese government's ongoing persecutions, not only Falun Gong practitioners, Tibetans, and Uyghurs, [but] its support of terrorist groups in the Middle East," he said.

The next multi-faith forum on human rights will take place in Vancouver on Thursday, Sept. 24, 7 p.m., at GT Church, 3456 Fraser St. The event is free.

## Cirque du Soleil founder plans voyage into space

By SHAO SHAO CHEN  
Epoch Times Staff

A Canadian circus billionaire will be hosting a show that is out of this world—literally.

Guy Laliberté, founder of the Montreal-based Cirque du Soleil, will be traveling to space next month to hold a live event in orbit.

Laliberté is due to fly into space on Sept. 30 aboard a Russian Soyuz capsule with Expedition 21 to travel to the orbiting International Space Station. He will spend over \$35 million on the 11-day trip.

In a webcast news conference from Moscow, Laliberté said he plans to host

a two-hour live show from the space station promoting global access to clean water.

Described as the "first social artistic mission in space, the show will be broadcast from the International Space Station on Oct. 9.

The broadcast from space will be linked with theatres and stages in London, Paris, New York, Tokyo, Sydney, Montreal, Moscow, Johannesburg, Mumbai, Marrakesh, Mexico City, Rio de Janeiro, Santa Monica, and Tampa in Florida.

According to Laliberté, environmentalist and former U.S. vice president Al Gore, Irish rock band U2, and other celebrities will take part in the live show from 14 cities around the world.

"During the past 25 years, my travels on earth have allowed me to meet extraordinary people: artists, leaders and friends," said Laliberté in a statement. "I am deeply touched that they have accepted to contribute their voices, their talent and their creativity to my artistic project. They have done so because they share my concerns about water and my belief that through art and emotion we can convey a universal message."

Laliberté said the concept for the show developed during the first day of training and the poetic direction of the show was inspired by children's stories. Each performance will feature factors associated with water.

"My wish is to touch people through an artistic approach and if we manage to do so, we will go beyond awareness," he said.

"I just hope that as a citizen of Earth, this will inspire people in a new way."

A former street performer who became a billionaire, Laliberté will become the seventh private citizen to become a "space tourist."

## Feds get tough on white-collar crime

By CINDY CHAN  
Epoch Times Staff

OTTAWA—Justice Minister Rob Nicholson announced on Tuesday that the federal government will introduce tougher legislation against financial fraudsters and other white-collar criminals.

The bill will mean a mandatory jail sentence for serious fraud and longer sentences if additional aggravating circumstances are involved.

The new legislation will also require courts to consider ordering offenders to provide restitution to their victims.

"Canadians lose faith in the criminal justice system when they feel that the punishment does not fit the crime," Mr. Nicholson said.

The announcement came on the heels of several highly publicized cases of financial scams and corruption in Canada.

The minister addressed the media on Parliament Hill shortly after two press conferences Tuesday morning at which nearly a dozen victims' groups called on the government to establish sterner measures to fight financial crime.

Among them was a committee representing some 150 victims



FIGHTING FRAUD: Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada Rob Nicholson speaking to the press on Parliament Hill Sept. 15 about the government's intention to introduce legislation to combat white-collar crime. To his right is Minister of Public Works and Government Services Christian Paradis. Further to the right is Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, M.P. Daniel Petit. NTD/TV

of an alleged \$75 million Ponzi scheme run by disgraced Montreal financial consultant Earl Jones. Jones is facing charges of theft and fraud, and has declared bankruptcy.

Joey Davis, chair of the group, said his mother lost \$200,000 in life savings that she entrusted to Mr. Jones. A Ponzi scheme takes money from new investors to pay earlier clients until the whole scheme collapses.

Speaking in French following Mr. Nicholson's announcement, Christian Paradis, Minister of Public Works and Government Services, noted that victims of white-collar crime often feel shame and tend to blame themselves, yet they are far from being careless with their money.

On Monday, Alberta RCMP laid charges of fraud and theft against two men for operating an alleged Ponzi scheme between

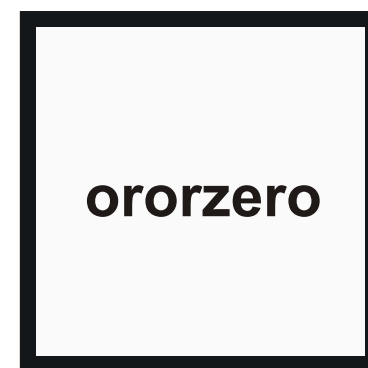
1999 and 2008 that swindled investors out of more than \$100 million.

Victims' groups are urging the government to create a new Securities Crime Unit that will allow the RCMP and municipal and provincial police to more effectively investigate white-collar securities crimes and prosecute the perpetrators.

Currently the police must seek approval for criminal investigation from a joint group comprising the provincial securities commissions and a number of self-regulatory organizations from the investment industry.

Prosecutions typically take 10 or more years to complete—if investigations take place at all—and rogue financial advisors face low sentences even as their thefts and forgeries amount to huge amounts of losses for their victims.

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PUZZLES & PEACE  
Guess the hidden saying, phrase or word(s) suggested by the graphic below



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FREE THE CHILDREN  
children helping children through education.

SOLUTION ON P7