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## HOW DID ENGINES GET TO IRAN?

Bombardier probes war-drone ties **NP1**



**AGEISM  
MUST STOP**  
*Prejudice hurts  
seniors* **A8**

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POSTMEDIA

## NEWS

### CLIMATE

Savage to lead  
delegation  
to COP27 **A3**

### POLICE

Judge rules  
against plaintiff  
in excessive-force  
case from '06 **A5**

## FP

### TELECOM

Freedom sale  
in spotlight  
at Rogers-Shaw  
tribunal **NP7**

## SPORTS

### VAN DIEST

McDavid plays  
his 500th NHL  
game **NP10**

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Members of the Edmonton Police Pipes and Drums take part in the No Stone Left Alone ceremony Monday at Beechmount Cemetery. **GREG SOUTHAM**

# Premier's fate in hands of byelection voters

All eyes on race in Brooks-Medicine Hat  
as Smith seeks a seat in the legislature

**JASON HERRING**

CALGARY Will Alberta's new premier get a seat in the legislature?

That's what residents of Brooks-Medicine Hat will decide Tuesday, as voters in the riding head to polls for a byelection that's put all eyes on the southern Alberta region.

Premier Danielle Smith won the leadership of her United Conservative Party last month, but now she's seeking a second victory in the byelection, which she called immediately after being sworn into office.

Her chief competition comes from two local candidates, each looking to stage a major upset. Retired Medicine Hat schoolteacher Gwendoline Dirk is running for the NDP, while former Brooks mayor Barry Morishita threw his hat in the ring as leader of the centrist Alberta Party.

Two right-wing fringe candidates — The Independence Party's Bob Blayone and Wildrose Independence Party of Alberta's Jeevan Mangat — round out the ballot.

Smith is the heavy favourite in the race, said Mount Royal University political scientist Lori Williams, who added she needs a significant margin of victory to solidify her position as UCP leader. "She absolutely needs to win and win decisively in this byelection," Williams said.

"If Danielle Smith didn't win, it would put her in a very weakened position. She'd have to get a seat in another byelection or try to govern from outside the legislature and neither of those are particularly palatable options."

Williams said Smith faces challenges from strong local candidates as well as criticism for her decision to run in Brooks-Medicine Hat in-

stead of the vacant Calgary-Elbow seat, where the new premier said a byelection will not be held.

Williams added that a strong showing by Morishita could boost the Alberta Party's future electoral prospects.

"It could be a springboard for success for the Alberta Party in the general election," Williams said.

Advance voting for the byelection began Nov. 1 and ended Saturday, with polling stations in Medicine Hat, Brooks and Bassano.

Elections Alberta said Monday that 4,231 votes were cast in those polls, accounting for 12.4 per cent of the about 34,000 eligible voters in the riding.

That's down from 22 per cent of eligible Brooks-Medicine Hat voters who cast advance ballots in the 2019 general election.

Morishita said Monday he's happy with the effort his team has put into the campaign, with teams centred in the riding's west in the Brooks area and its east around Medicine Hat.

SEE BYELECTION ON **A4**  
■ **DAVID STAPLES, A2**

## No Stone Left Alone honours fallen soldiers

**HAMDI ISSAWI**

Students in Edmonton and across the country are on a mission to ensure the memory of Canadian soldiers and their sacrifices aren't lost to the ebb and flow of time.

Ahead of Remembrance Day, about 46 young people from Cadets Canada and Edmonton's Riverbend Junior High School withstood cold and snow to honour veterans buried at the city's Beechmount Cemetery on Monday.

Joining the ceremony in the cemetery's military field of honour, Lt.-Gov. Salma Lakhani acknowledged the chilly conditions, which she said should prompt the participants to appreciate those in the line of duty who are charged to persevere despite the weather conditions.

Lakhani asked students to consider the "precious gifts" owed to the efforts of those who serve, such as the freedom to express, question and explore ideas.

SEE REMEMBRANCE ON **A3**

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