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**need to know**

**ELECTRIC UTILITIES MERGE**

An agreement to merge the electric utilities that provide power to three southern Ontario cities has been completed. The merger of Barrie Hydro Distribution Inc. and PowerStream Inc. creates the second-largest electrical distribution company in Ontario. The new entity, called PowerStream Barrie Hydro Distribution, will serve some 310,000 homes and businesses in Barrie, Markham and Vaughan.



**CHILD CLAIMS SEXUAL ASSAULT**

A 64-year-old Burlington man will appear in court later this month after a six-year-old girl said she was sexually assaulted in a grocery store. Authorities say the victim was kissed on the cheek and mouth by a stranger when she became separated from her mother at the Plains Rd. store around 4:30 p.m. Saturday. Abdul Hadi faces sexual assault charges and is scheduled to appear in a Milton court on Jan. 23.

**briefs**  
local news

**Marble slab falls on man**

A 24-year-old man suffered serious injuries after being crushed under a slab of marble yesterday afternoon. Emergency crews were called to an importing business at 65 Densley Ave. where the man's co-workers had managed to remove the slab, police said. The victim was conscious and breathing when crews transported him to hospital.

**Durham Clear Bags begin**

Durham region starts its Clear Bags pilot project Jan. 12 to determine how the bags affect diversion rates. Residents must use clear garbage bags for the three month program to help make it easier to inspect which items shouldn't be going to landfills. There are no changes to collection schedules or the three-bag weekly limit. The program runs until April 10.

**LOOKING UP:** There might be heavenly bodies on the TTC, but they don't belong to transit riders. To celebrate the International Year of Astronomy, the University of Toronto is running 3,000 colourful ads on buses, subways and streetcars, which draws the science of astronomy to everyday life. At right, student Erin Mentuch and prof. Ray Jayawardhana pose with examples.



SUN MEDIA

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