PM MODI LAUNCHES THREE HIGH THROUGHPUT COVID-19 TESTING FACILITIES, SAYS INDIA CONDUCTING 5 LAKH TESTS DAILY |P10

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SOUTH ASIAN Mid Week NEWS WEEKLY

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FIVE FRENCH-MADE RAFALE JETS ARRIVE AT AMBALA; MODI, RAJNATH SINGH GLOAT AT IAF'S SHOW OF STRENGTH

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Y MEDIA EXCLUSIVE

INFRASTRUCTURE MINISTER CATHERINE MCKENNA PROMISES A TRANSIT SYSTEM MAKE-OVER

In an exclusive interview with federal Minister of Infrastructure and Communities Catherine McKenna, Y Media Group Editor Yudhvir Jaswal talked about infrastructure, transit systems, and the WE Charity controversy.

CONSERVATIVE MP ERIN O'TOOLE IS READY TO WIN THE PARTY LEADERSHIP RACE, BRING CANADA BACK ON TRACK

While the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic has washed out excitement that was otherwise reserved for the national Conservative Party leadership race, Durham MP, and one of the four candidates vying for a place on the top of the order, Erin O'Toole remains optimistic. In an exclusive interview with Y Media Group Editor

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CANADA REFUSES TO RECOGNISE SIKH 'REFERENDUM 2020' ORGANISED BY GROUP SIKHS FOR JUSTICE, PUNJ CM CAPT AMARINDER CALLS MOVE EXEMPLARY

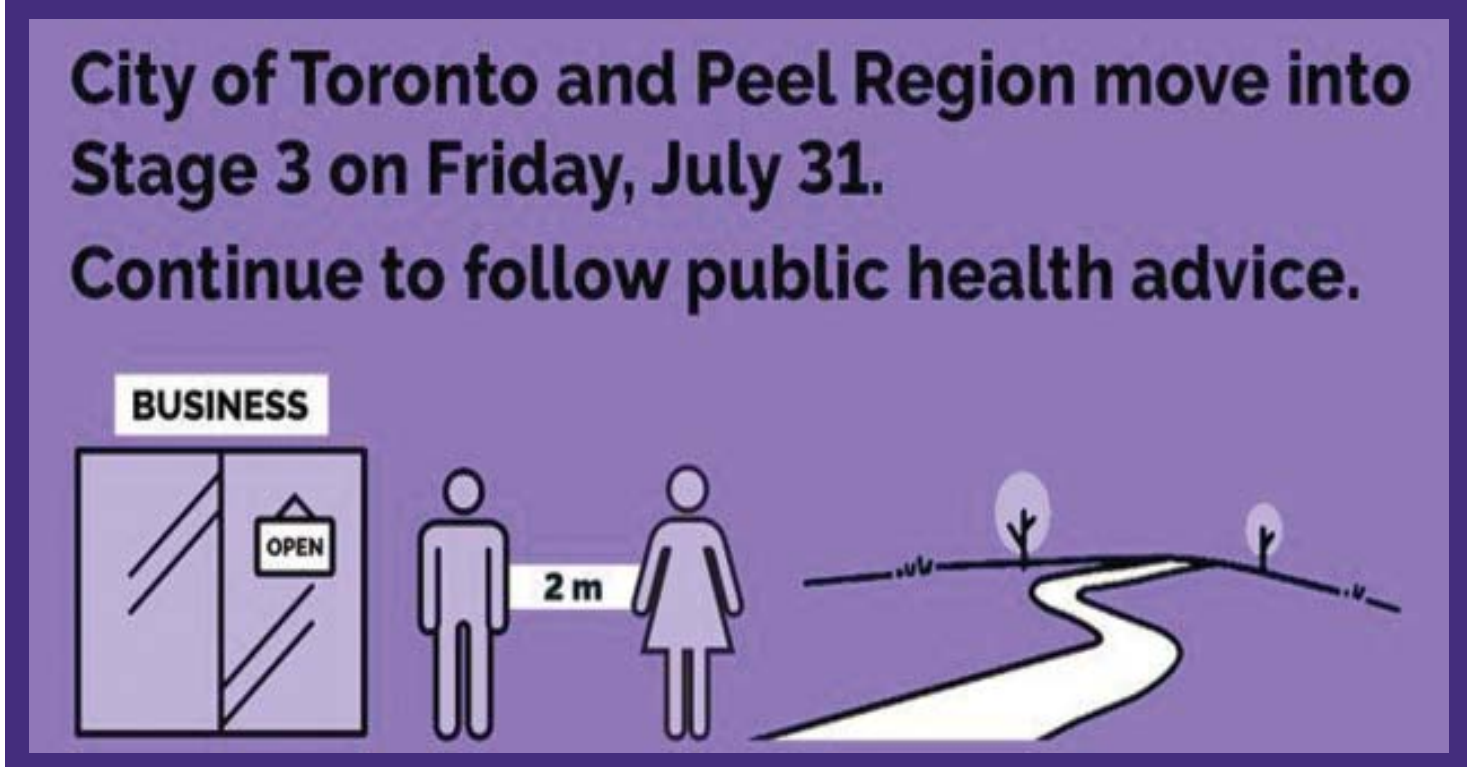
FILE PHOTO

The Canadian government has reportedly rejected the secessionist 'Referendum 2020' pushed forward by pro-Khalistan group 'Sikhs for Justice' (SFJ). Media reports quoted Canada's Foreign Minister as saying, "Canada respects the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of India, and the Government of Canada will not recognise the referendum."

The move was welcomed by Punjab Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh, who urged other countries to follow in Canada's footsteps and reject the referendum. In a surprising statement, he praised the Justin Trudeau administration, calling its stand exemplary. Media reports quoted Capt Amarinder as saying failure to oppose the organisation could set a dangerous precedent for any country.

Earlier this year, SFJ had written to Trudeau seeking his support for the non-binding referendum. The separatist organisation plans to hold it in November along with in-person voting at separate venues including Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal, Calgary, and Edmonton. Founder of the group, Gurpatwant Singh Pannu has been declared as a terrorist for actively promoting Pakistan-backed terror activities on Indian soil.

TORONTO, BRAMPTON & MISSISSAUGA WILL MOVE TO STAGE 3 ON FRIDAY



I DETAILS ON PAGE 3

COVID VACCINE : MODERNA'S STUDY REACHES STAGE 3 ON MONDAY

One of the world's leading researchers for a COVID-19 vaccine has reached the final testing phase. The biggest COVID-19 study developed by the National Institutes of Health and Moderna Inc., has reached Phase III.

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PEEL POLICE BREAKS UP BRAMPTON HOUSE PARTY; HOMEOWNERS CHARGED

In a major violation of COVID-19 by-laws, a house party held over the weekend in Brampton has garnered a lot of attention. Peel Police officers were reportedly called to a residential area on Countryside Drive and Goreway Road for a report that a party was taking place inside.

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CHINESE AUTHORITIES REPORTEDLY TAKE CONTROL OF THE CHENGDU US CONSULATE IN RETALIATION TO HOUSTON CHINESE CONSULATE CLOSURE

The Chinese foreign ministry has officially taken over the US consulate in Chengdu, as they issued a brief notice saying authorities entered through the front entrance and took over the premises. Media reports revealed the American flag was taken down early in the morning.

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COVID VACCINE: MODERNA'S STUDY REACHES STAGE 3 ON MONDAY

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Called the COVE (Coronavirus Efficacy) as described in a release on the pharmaceutical giant's website, Phase III is being conducted in collaboration with the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA), part of the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. CEO at Moderna, Stephane Bancel was quoted in the release as saying, "We are pleased to have started the Phase 3 of COVE study. We are grateful to the efforts of so many inside and outside of the company to get us to this important milestone. We are indebted to the participants and investigators who now begin the work of the COVE study itself. We look forward to this trial demonstrating the potential of our vaccine to prevent COVID-19, so that we can defeat this pandemic." The vaccine will be administered to 30,000 planned volunteers to test the shots. There are two doses, the real shot and a dummy version. The volunteers won't know what shot they have received. Scientists will closely track which group experiences more infections.

PEEL POLICE BREAKS UP BRAMPTON HOUSE PARTY; HOMEOWNERS CHARGED

CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

Reports reveal as many as 200 people were dispersed from the party. Media reports reveal valet was arranged to park cars, and barriers were erected above the home's backyard fence to prevent neighbours from peeking inside. Brampton Mayor Patrick Brown condemned the incident and confirmed that "by law officers laid charges on the property owners". He tweeted, "The matter will be going to court. Maximum penalty is $100,000. Reckless behavior is expensive."

Y MEDIA EXCLUSIVE

CONSERVATIVE MP ERIN O'TOOLE IS READY TO WIN THE PARTY LEADERSHIP RACE, BRING CANADA BACK ON TRACK

Yudhvir Jaswal, MP O'Toole spoke about the issues currently faced by Canadians, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and the Liberal Party, and why should be the next face of the Tories.

MP O'Toole said, "The party needs a leader who is ready to fight for the issues Canadians care about. In September, when the Parliament comes back, after the pandemic, after a trillion dollar debt, the highest level of unemployment in the G7, we need someone to hold Trudeau into account for the poor economic situation we are in."

He added, "But also for the scandal involving WE Charity, when his own minister took a $40,000 trip and only just paid it back. There are ethical scandals, core economic performance, our reputation around the world is in decline. I am the only one in the race who is a current MP and can win the election."

"I am ready to win," says O'Toole. When asked what would be his top two priorities if he were at the helm of things, the leader said, "First would be national unity. We have to make sure that western Canada, particularly Alberta and Saskatchewan are respected by the federal government and are not held back. Justin Trudeau has had some ideological program for the oil and gas sector that has hurt employment, and I will eliminate these right away."

O'Toole's second priority would be to "save small businesses." He said, "Many small businesses are suffering in my own riding of Durham. Family-owned businesses are going under right now. Many of whom did not get rent assistance from Trudeau, did not qualify for business loans, and now their families are at risk."

The MP went on to talk about China, stating that Canada needs to work with its allies like the UK, US, and Australia to "put pressure on China and look at markets other than China because I think there is going to be a long period of trade uncertainty. So Canada not only needs to work with our allies, but also grow a new market. We need to fix the damage Justin Trudeau has done with India."

"I have a plan for that. I am ready to rebalance these relationships as a prime minister."

When asked what changes he would bring to the GTA, MP said, "I am a strong Conservative. We don't hide from who we are. We don't let the Liberals, or the media define us. I think we have to have a more serious environmental plan. I am going to kill the carbon tax but I am going to make sure we have a climate change plan that uses smart regulation and works with the provinces."

INFRASTRUCTURE MINISTER CATHERINE MCKENNA PROMISES A TRANSIT SYSTEM MAKE-OVER

When asked what the minister's plan for infrastructure is, McKenna said the focus really is on public transit. An example of this was seen on Tuesday when the minister visited Brampton to make a major $113 million sustainable investment in the city, in partnership with the Ontario government.

She said, "People trying to get around are so important. We want that to happen in safer, more affordable, and cleaner ways. All Brampton MPs have been pushing for this. This announcement shows that we can get things done." She added that the federal government has been closely working with the mayor and the province. "We support cities. Transit system in Ontario has been hit. Revenues are down, and there are lots of additional expenses. These investments will improve people's lives," she said.

Jaswal stated that general notion states not much has been achieved in terms of infrastructure in the GTA. He said the last time a highway was built was in 1997. "Any city mayors, the Premier talking about a highway?" he asked. Responding to the question, McKenna said she wants to make sure "we value taxpayers' dollars. We need to get infrastructure going. This is not just an economic situation, it is also about jobs."

"So every day I wake up making sure we are moving forward in building communities whether it's public transit or waste water, or more affordable housing. We need to be doing that. And that is what the government needs to be focusing on quite frankly ; How do we work with communities, how do we work with people," McKenna said. She added, "We need to be thinking of a more sustainable future ."

Speaking on transit projects, the minister said there are several different projects that the province and cities are looking at including expanding the subway line, expanding GO. "Reality is, when you want to grow your economy, you get a major return on your investment. Infrastructure investment, even without the pandemic is important. We need to be mindful of how we spend taxpayers' dollars. There are multiple benefits to these projects. Shovel-worthy projects are what we need."

When asked about the Liberal government's WE Charity scandal, and the Opposition using the word 'Corruption' on repeat, McKenna said that while Prime Minister Justin Trudeau "will speak for himself", her government has been really focused on "keeping people safe, infrastructure, creating jobs, and the border. Making a difference in the lives of people."

"We need to be focusing on building better and stronger communities, and really be focused on people," the minister said.

Y MEDIA EXCLUSIVE: BRAMPTON GETS OVER $45.3 MILLION INVESTMENT FROM FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, OVER $37.8 MILLION FROM PROVINCE IN MASSIVE PUBLIC TRANSIT INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

TORONTO, BRAMPTON & MISSISSAUGA WILL MOVE TO STAGE 3 ON FRIDAY

Additional businesses and public spaces will be reopening as the Ontario government allows the City of Toronto and Peel Region to move into Stage 3 of reopening the province on Friday, July 31 at 12:01 a.m. This decision was made in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health and local medical officers of health. It is based on positive local trends of key public health indicators, including lower transmission of COVID-19, ongoing hospital capacity, public health capacity to conduct rapid case and contact management, and a significant increase in testing.

Toronto Public Health and Peel Public Health regions will join the 31 public health regions that entered into Stage 3 on July 17 and 24, 2020.

"While more restaurants, theatres and businesses can hang up their Open for Business sign, we're asking everyone to follow public health advice and act responsibly," said Premier Doug Ford. "We have made tremendous progress that allows us to return to something a little closer to our normal lives this summer, but we are not out of the woods yet. This virus is still among us and we have to be extra cautious to avoid sparking a surge or an outbreak. I strongly urge everyone to continue following public health protocols."

Windsor-Essex County Health Unit region will remain in Stage 2. Ontario will continue to monitor local trends of key public health indicators in the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit region and move it into Stage 3 when it is safe to do so. In the interim, the government continues to address the needs of the region, in partnership with other levels of government, through measures such as on-farm testing, the deployment of mobile testing units and the adoption of new public health guidance for positive asymptomatic workers for all workplaces.

"More businesses and services are able to reopen thanks to the collective efforts of all Ontarians to limit the spread of the virus," said Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health. "While public health trends across the province are positive, we continue to closely monitor Windsor-Essex so that we can move the community into Stage 3 when the time is right. No matter which stage a region is in, everyone needs to continue to follow public health advice to protect themselves, their families and community."

Ontario is also supportive of proposals made by the City of Toronto and Toronto Public Health relating to restaurants, bars and other food and drink establishments that are permitted to be open. For more information on the restrictions that will remain in place during Stage 3, as well as the public health and workplace safety restrictions necessary to keep people safe, visit Ontario.ca/reopen.

Businesses that are unable to open or resume full activities due to Stage 3 restrictions, or businesses that have ideas to safely amend Stage 3 restrictions or requirements, can visit Ontario.ca/reopen to submit a reopening proposal for consideration. Government and public health officials will review proposals and contact businesses for feedback or clarification and provide an initial response within 10 days.

The Chief Medical Officer of Health and public health experts also continue to closely monitor the evolving situation to advise when public health restrictions can be further loosened or if they need to be tightened.

It remains critically important for everyone to continue following public health advice as more businesses and services reopen in Stage 3. This includes practising physical distancing with those outside your household or social circle, wearing a face covering when physical distancing is a challenge or where it is mandatory to do so, staying home when ill, and washing your hands frequently and thoroughly.

Osler surpasses 100,000 COVID-19 tests completed across its sites

William Osler Health System (Osler) is recognizing a significant milestone this week, marking the completion of 100,000 COVID-19 tests across its sites on Sunday, July 26. Osler was one of the first hospitals in the province to open a COVID-19 Assessment Centre at the beginning of the pandemic, and it has since completed more tests than any other hospital in Ontario. The 100,000 figure represents tests completed at Osler's Assessment Centres in Brampton and Etobicoke, and testing (based on clinical discretion) in Osler's hospitals.

"Testing is so critically important, particularly in this community as it continues to be challenged by higher numbers of COVID-19 cases," said Kiki Ferrari, Executive Vice President, Clinical Operations. "Osler is pleased to be working with our dedicated partners at Ontario Health, the City of Brampton, local public health units, and health organizations across the region to make testing more convenient and accessible for a safer, healthier community." In the last month, Osler has completed (on average) more than 1,200 tests per day across its sites. It also recently relocated its original 'walk-in' Assessment Centre in Brampton to a drive-thru model at a popular city location to better serve the community with expanded options for COVID-19 testing. Since the new location opened in mid-June, the Centre has been testing an average of 540 patients per day. Osler's Assessment Centre located close to its Etobicoke General Hospital site tests an average of 550 patients per day.

"Osler teams have stepped up in a big way throughout this pandemic, including through the swift opening and dedicated, ongoing staffing of its Assessment Centres to increase safe and convenient testing for the community," continued Ferrari. "The staff and physicians working at these Centres have endured the seasons' extreme elements – blizzard-like conditions, extreme heat and humidity, torrential rain, tornado warnings, and long days on their feet in full PPE to perform continuous COVID-19 tests. We commend them along with the rest of our team for going beyond each and every day."

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CHINESE AUTHORITIES REPORTEDLY TAKE CONTROL OF THE CHENGDU US CONSULATE IN RETALIATION TO HOUSTON CHINESE CONSULATE CLOSURE

CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

It has been reported that police authorities closed off a two to three block area around the consulate premises. The Chengdu consulate closure comes as a swift and direct retaliation to the Trump administration's closure of the Chinese consulate in Houston. Beijing had issued a strong statement of protest, stating the move was a violation of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, and the China-US Consular Convention. China has consulates in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York, along with its embassy in Washington. The US, meanwhile, has four additional consulates in China, and an Embassy in Beijing.

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Applications to open April 27

Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance (CECRA)

Loans and/or forgivable loans to commercial property owners who will in turn lower or forgo rent of small businesses for the months of April, May, and June

Tax Deferral

Businesses can defer until after August 31, payment of income tax amounts that become owing on or after March 18, and before September 2020.

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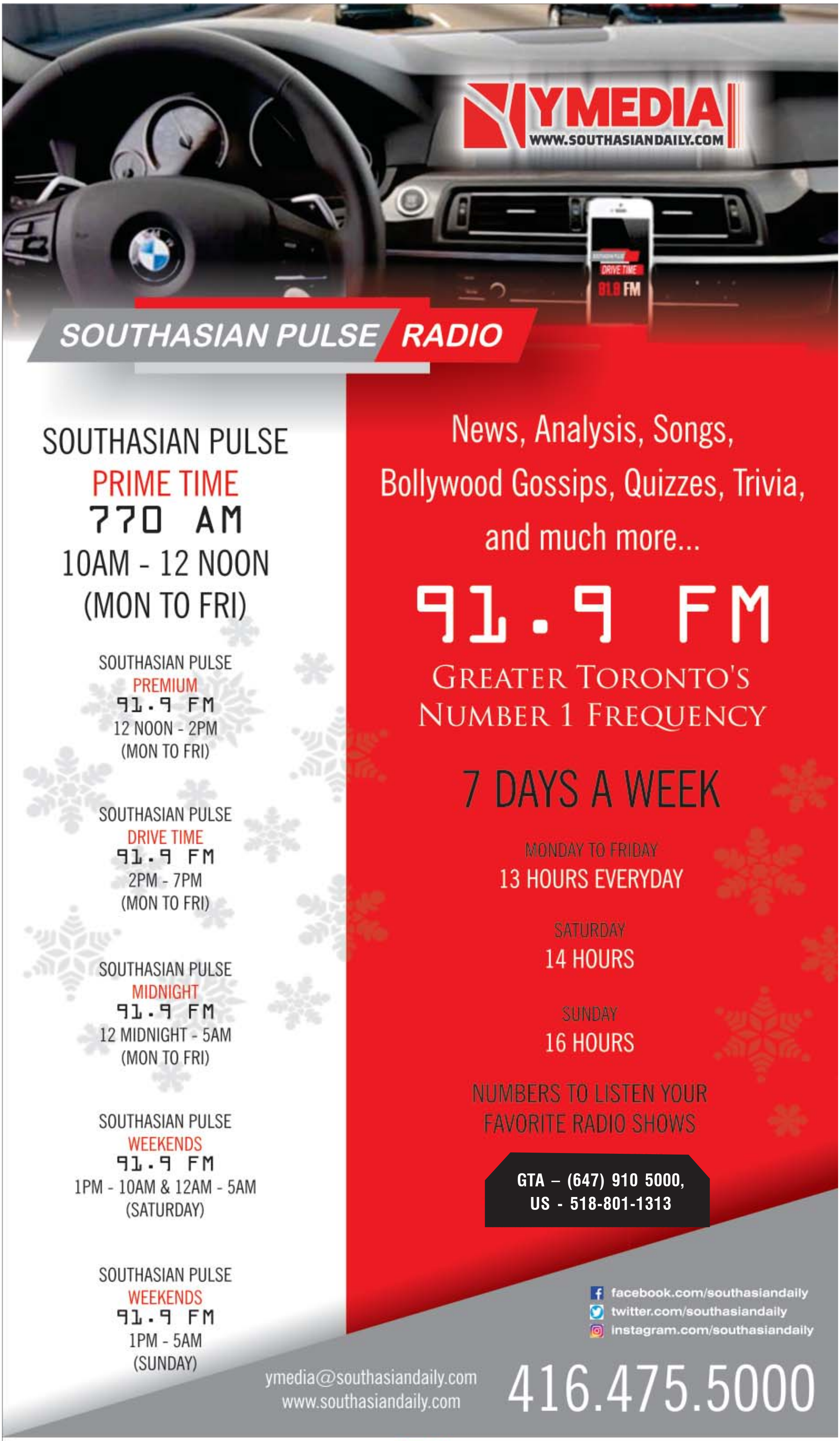
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FEDERAL MIN CATHERINE MCKENNA ANNOUNCES OVER $113 MILLION INVESTMENT IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PROVINCIAL GOVT IN BRAMPTON TRANSIT SYSTEM

Mayor Patrick Brown and the City Council welcomed a significant investment from the Government of Canada and Government of Ontario that will directly support public transit infrastructure in Brampton.

Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Catherine McKenna, announced a federal investment of over $45.3 million in four projects through the Public Transit Infrastructure Stream (PTIS).

Following Minister McKenna's announcement, Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria, Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction, and Member of Provincial Parliament for Brampton South, on behalf of Laurie Scott, Ontario's Minister of Infrastructure, announced the Government of Ontario is contributing more than $37.8 million to the public transit infrastructure projects.

The City of Brampton is contributing over $30.2 million; all jointly through the Investing in Canada infrastructure plan.

The four projects include:

2020-2021 Replacement Buses: Purchase of 32 conventional buses to maintain existing service levels and replace the retiring fleet.

Federal funding: $9,132,000

Provincial funding: $7,609,239

Municipal funding: $6,088,761

2020-2024 Bus Refurbishments: Refurbishment of 300 conventional buses, including the repair and replacement of major components such as engines, suspensions and brakes.

Federal funding: $22,243,218

Provincial funding: $18,534,161

Municipal funding: $14,830,666

Replacement of on-board cameras and digital video recorders: Adding newer technologies on the entire bus fleet.

Federal funding: $2,000,000

Provincial funding: $1,666,500

Municipal funding: $1,333,500

Downtown Transit Mobility Hub: A new transit hub that will increase the number of bus bays, allowing for more service, new bus canopies, waiting area, concessions and include the requirements to upgrade the hub to hold electric buses.

Federal funding: $12,000,000

Provincial funding: $9,999,000

Municipal funding: $8,001,000

Mayor Brown said, "The investments announced today will help increase the capacity and quality of our rapidly-growing transit system, providing a safer and healthier transportation solution for all. With the help of our Federal and Provincial partners, we are able to invest in our communities by supporting and growing our infrastructure."

Adding, "Reliable transit helps increase accessibility to services and jobs, reduces greenhouse gas emissions and improves the overall health of our community. I look forward to our continued partnerships to support our community here in Brampton."

MidWeek

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Province Announces Ontario Health Team inWestern York Region

Ontario Health Teams Better Connect Care and Support Ontario's COVID-19 Response

Vaughan-Woodbridge, ON — In support of the ongoing fight against COVID-19 and as part of the province's plan to end hallway health care, the Ontario government is announcing a new Ontario Health Team serving Vaughan, King, Thornhill, Richmond Hill and surrounding communities and is providing additional funding to better connect care.

"Over the past several months, Ontario Health Teams have demonstrated remarkable responsiveness to the COVID-19 outbreak by simplifying the purchase of personal protective equipment, supporting the staffing of long-term care homes and assessment centers and expanding virtual care options," said **Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health.** "They've done so by breaking down long-standing barriers to better connect care, both in support of patients and our brave frontline heroes. Today's announcement of a new Ontario Health Team in western York Region will build on this success as we continue to implement our plan to defeat COVID-19."

The Western York Region Ontario Health Team is one of five new Ontario Health Teams being established across the province at this time. Ontario Health Teams bring together health care providers to work as one team to improve patient outcomes. Through an Ontario Health Team, patients will experience easier transitions from one provider to another, including, for example, between hospitals and home care providers, with one patient story, one patient record and one care plan. Patient and families will also have access to 24/7 navigation and care coordination services.

The Western York Region Ontario Health Team will focus on caring for medically and socially complex older adults with cognitive, physical and functional limitations in its first phase.

"Today, we are proud to announce that our government has reached another major milestone in the development of Ontario Health Teams," said **Michael Tibollo, Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and MPP for Vaughan-Woodbridge**. "The new Western York Region Ontario Health Team will bring a new model of care that better connects patients and health care providers in their communities. I want to extend my heartfelt congratulations and gratitude to the Western York Region Ontario Health Team for their hard work, and their commitment to providing high-quality integrated patient-centered care."

The province is also investing up to $25.25 million to directly support the 29 approved Ontario Health Teams. Of this funding, $9.5 million will be dedicated to virtual care, which will provide more support for vulnerable populations and individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19. With the remaining $15.75 million, each Ontario Health Team will receive up to $375,000, to be used for:

- Expanding digital care, including training, education and purchasing new tools and technology for virtual visits, booking online appointments and patient portals;
- Dedicated human resources to help develop and implement this new model of care, including more collaborative responses to COVID-19; and
- Purchasing business information tools to measure the performance and outcomes of the Ontario Health Team model.

"Building a stronger health care system for the people of western York Region starts with a better connected system that is tailored to meet the needs of our local community," said **Altaf Stationwala, President and CEO of Mackenzie Health."**Today's announcement is a major step forward in bringing together local health care and social service providers as one co-ordinated team so that patients can move between different services and get the care they need when they need it, close to home."

"The announcement and endorsements today of the Western York Region Ontario Health Team represent a promise to the residents in western York Region to deliver an integrated approach to wellness and health," said **Bryan Keshen, Co-Chair of the Western York Region Ontario Health Team and President and CEO of Reena."**It is a promise to enhance wellness through a collaborative support model.The challenges and experiences resulting from this pandemic highlight the integrative nature of community health. Today, the founding collaborative members look forward to not only continuing to work together but to work with other providers in health, social services and other sectors to enhance the health and wellbeing of our community." Last year, the Ontario government began implementing its plan to build a new, integrated health care system for patients by announcing the first 24 Ontario Health Teams and Ontario Health, a single agency to oversee quality health care delivery, and improve clinical guidance and support for providers. The strong partnerships and integrated care established by Ontario Health Teams and Ontario Health has helped better position the province to respond quickly and effectively to COVID-19. As Ontario Health Teams continue to expand across the province, these partnerships and the lessons learned will also help better prepare the province for a potential second wave of COVID-19 and flu season. "Families in our community have called for better-integrated care for patients," said **Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education and MPP for King-Vaughan**. "We are taking action to improve local healthcare for families in King Township and Vaughan, in addition to the completion of the long-awaited Cortellucci Vaughan Hospital that will serve our growing community. Our focus is on building a healthcare system that is centred on patients, families, and caregivers." "As a former optometrist in York Region, I've witnessed patients struggle to navigate our complex medical system. The new Ontario Health Team model will help medical professionals work together to improve patient outcomes," said **Gila Martow, MPP for Thornhill.**

"This announcement highlights our government's continuous commitment to fulfilling the promise to end hallway health care and deliver the best possible medical care to all Ontarians," said **Michael Parsa, MPP for Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill.**

"Effective and efficient healthcare service is eagerly needed by residents in Richmond Hill. The Western York Region Ontario Health Team will definitely fit the needs in my riding at the right time!" said **Daisy Wai, MPP for Richmond Hill**.

BRAMPTON'S NURTURING NEIGHBOURHOODS PROGRAM GOES VIRTUAL FOR 2020

The City of Brampton's Nurturing Neighbourhoods Program will return on Tuesday, August 4, 2020. This year, to protect the health and safety of staff and residents, the program is moving online.

The Nurturing Neighbourhoods Program aims to improve civic engagement, empower residents to play an active role in enhancing their neighbourhood and connect them with resources. There will be three new ways for residents to learn more about their neighbourhood and share what is important to them online:

Virtual walks – 15 pre-recorded walks will be posted on the City's website on scheduled dates. Residents are encouraged to take these walks virtually, or use the provided tools to take these walks independently in person, while maintaining physical distance.

Neighbourhood survey – the City wants to understand the community's neighbourhoods and how residents interact within them. Residents are encouraged to take the online survey for their area.

Online mapping tool – an online mapping tool will allow residents to identify opportunities, concerns and changes within their neighbourhood.

Brampton Mayor Patrick Brown said "Brampton is a Mosaic, and our residents are experts when it comes to the neighbourhoods they call home. The Nurturing Neighbourhoods Program provides innovative opportunities for Bramptonians to be engaged in their community, and I encourage anyone living in the 15 areas selected this year to have their say by taking the virtual walks, participating in the neighbourhood surveys and commenting on the online mapping tool."

For more information on Nurturing Neighbourhoods and a complete list of virtual neighbourhood walks, visit www.brampton.ca/neighbourhoods.

ONTARIO GOVT ANNOUNCES NEW LONG-TERM CARE HOME AT LAKERIDGE HEALTH'S AJAX PICKERING HOSPITAL SITE

The Ontario government announced that a new long-term care home will be built at Lakeridge Health's Ajax Pickering Hospital site in months, not years. The project is part of the province's Accelerated Build Pilot Program. By working with Lakeridge Health and Infrastructure Ontario, the province intends to build up to 320 new long-term care beds by 2021 at this site. The pilot program is part of the government's plan to create new long-term care beds across the province that include features such as air conditioning and private or semi-private rooms, beginning immediately. The pilot program was launched last week in Mississauga where 640 new beds will be built by 2021. Details about the new project were provided by Premier Doug Ford who was joined by Dr. Merrilee Fullerton, Minister of Long-Term Care, Sharon Cochran, Chair of the Lakeridge Health Board of Trustees, John Henry, Regional Chair and Chief Executive Officer for the Regional Municipality of Durham, and Shaun Collier, Mayor of Ajax. "Government after government failed to make the necessary investments in our long-term care homes and that ends now," said Premier Ford. "With our new modernized funding model and this innovative pilot program, we will get shovels in the ground faster on these critical projects and ensure more seniors get the quality care they deserve. I won't rest until every senior in Ontario has a safe and comfortable place to call home."

Through the use of hospital lands, and a range of accelerating measures such as modular construction and rapid procurement, the government and its partners are targeting completion of the project in 2021, years faster than the traditional timeline. Lakeridge Health will work with Infrastructure Ontario to manage the day-to-day construction oversight, monitor commissioning, and provide timely status reporting on progress.

"This project is a key step towards repairing the cracks in our long-term care system, addressing our growing waitlist, building healthier communities, and ending hallway health care," said Minister Fullerton. "Our government will continue to implement innovative ideas and modern solutions to provide our vulnerable seniors with a place to call home and the care they need."

Working together with long-term care and health system partners, Ontario continues to use innovative ideas and modern solutions to help end hallway health care and increase long-term care capacity in communities across the province.

Ford announces $4 billion in one-time assistance to 444 municipalities ; Includes $777 million from the Fed Govt, 1.22 billion from Province

The Ontario government, in partnership with the federal government, is providing up to $4 billion in urgently needed one-time assistance to Ontario's 444 municipalities. This funding will help local governments maintain the critical services people rely on every day, including public transit, over the next six to eight months. Details on specific allocations will be provided in the coming weeks. This funding is part of the province's made-in-Ontario plan for renewal, growth and economic recovery.

The announcement was made today by Premier Doug Ford, Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health, Rod Phillips, Minister of Finance, Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and Caroline Mulroney, Minister of Transportation.

"By working together, we have united the country in the face of the immense challenges brought on by COVID-19 and secured a historic deal with the federal government to ensure a strong recovery for Ontario and for Canada," said Premier Ford. "I want to thank Ontario's 444 local leaders who supported us through our negotiations with the federal government and through each stage of reopening. We will continue to be a champion for our municipal partners as they safely reopen their communities and ensure people can get back to work."

Premier Ford worked collaboratively with municipal partners, fellow Premiers, Prime Minister Trudeau and Deputy Prime Minister Freeland to reach this historic agreement, which includes $777 million from the federal government and $1.22 billion from the province in support for municipalities. Ontario will continue to work closely with its municipal partners to ensure this funding provides the support they need to address budget shortfalls related to COVID-19.

"Ontario's municipalities are the backbone of our great province," said Minister Clark. "Our government is committed to working hand in hand with our municipal partners to help them emerge stronger and enable them to lead economic recovery in every community. And the funding we are announcing today will play a critical role in that."

"Ontario municipalities told us they are dealing with a $4 billion shortfall as a result of COVID-19," said Minister Phillips. "Failing to act could result in cuts to services and higher taxes. That's why, under Premier Ford's leadership, Ontario was a strong advocate at the negotiating table to ensure municipalities and transit systems were supported as part of the Safe Restart Agreement. This is a historic level of support that's being provided during unprecedented times."

Through Ontario's leadership, a deal for public transit funding was also secured as part of the federal-provincial agreement. Up to $2 billion will be shared equally between Ontario and the federal government. Transit operators that have seen steep declines in revenues will receive the support they need to help address the financial impacts of COVID-19 and continue their operations in a safe manner.

"Transit operators across Ontario have done an incredible job ensuring that people who need to get around, including our frontline workers, have safe and reliable transit service during the outbreak," said Minister Mulroney. "This funding will help ensure transit services continue to be there so people can get where they need to go as our province reopens and people return to work." The Safe Restart Agreement will help ensure a strong and safe recovery for Ontario through investments in testing, contact tracing and data management; health care capacity and mental health; protecting vulnerable populations, including people experiencing homelessness and seniors in long-term care facilities; securing personal protective equipment (PPE); child care for returning workers; and support for municipalities and public transit systems.

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THE FIRST BATCH OF FIVE RAFALE COMBAT JETS ENTER THE INDIAN AIR SPACE ON ITS WAY TO AMBALA AIRBASE FROM FRANCE.

FIVE FRENCH-MADE RAFALE JETS ARRIVE AT AMBALA

The aircraft, having an undisputed track record and considered one of the most potent combat jets globally, landed at the Ambala Air Force base at around 3:10 pm to a rousing reception, nearly four years after India inked an inter-governmental agreement with France to procure 36 Rafales. Each jet was given a special water cannon salute at the strategically-located air base in the presence of top brass of the Indian Air Force including Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Bhadauria who had played a key role as lead negotiator in procurement of the jets. Welcoming the arrival of the jets, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in a tweet in Sanskrit, said there is no virtue like protecting the nation and there is no vow like defence of the nation. "The Birds have landed safely in Ambala," defence minister Rajnath Singh tweeted as soon as the aircraft touched down in Ambala.

At the same time, he used the occasion to send a veiled warning to China. "I would like to add, if it is anyone who should be worried about or critical about this new capability of the Indian Air Force, it should be those who want to threaten our territorial integrity," the defence minister said. Singh said that "the touch down of Rafale combat aircrafts in India marks the beginning of a new era in our military history. These multirole aircraft will revolutionise the capabilities of the IAF". The fleet, which took off from Merignac airbase in French port city of Bordeaux on Monday morning, had a planned stopover at Al Dhafra airbase in the United Arab Emirates and began its onward journey on Wednesday morning. The Rafale jets established contact with Indian Navy warship INS Kolkata in the Western Arabian Sea and were escorted by two Sukhoi 30 MKIs after they entered the Indian air space. "The aircraft covered a distance of nearly 8,500 km from France to India. First stage of the flight covered a distance of 5,800 km in seven and a half hours. French Air Force tanker provided dedicated air-to-air refuelling support during the flight. The second stage of the flight covering over 2700 km was carried out with air-to-air refuelling by IAF tanker," the IAF said in a statement. The National Democratic Alliance government had inked a Rs 59,000-crore deal on September 23, 2016 to procure 36 Rafale jets from French aerospace major Dassault Aviation after a nearly seven-year exercise to procure 126 Medium Multi-Role Combat Aircraft (MMRCA) for the Indian Air Force did not fructify during the UPA regime.

'Clean chit to those who murdered democracy': Priyanka Gandhi on BSP's whip to MLAs

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Tuesday took a veiled dig at the BSP, alleging that the whip issued by it to its MLAs in Rajasthan is a clean chit to those who "murdered" democracy and the Constitution.

The BSP on Sunday issued a whip to six MLAs, who had left the party to join the Congress last year, to vote against the ruling party in the state in case of a trust motion in the Assembly.

"Undeclared spokespersons of the BJP have issued a whip in support of the BJP. But, this is not a whip but a clean chit to those who murder democracy and the Constitution," she said in a tweet in Hindi.

While the BSP MLAs have claimed that they have joined the Congress of their own will, the BSP has been claiming that since theirs is a national party, the local unit cannot merge on its own. The Congress government in Rajasthan led by Ashok Gehlot is facing a crisis after 19 of its rebel MLAs including Sachin Pilot revolted against it. Gehlot is now keen to prove his majority on the floor of the House and is now demanding a session of the Vidhan Sabha.

Indian startup develops Covid 19 detecting mobile app, takes 5 minutes

A government supported IT company in Bengaluru has developed an application capable of capturing an individual's vital health statistics through mobile phone to determine one's propensity to Covid 19 infection and can potentially play a big role in early detection of disease and risk assessment of infected population, according to a ministry of science and technology.

The new technology based on medical screening has the potential to detect possible infection in an asymptomatic individual, helping in prioritising the conventional testing queue as well as in risk assessment of an asymptomatic individual to establish if he/she can become symptomatic apart from assistance in risk assessment of an asymptomatic individual for recovery.

The application, being developed by Bangalore based startup Acculi Labs, creates an individual's Covid risk assessment profile called Lyfas Covid score. While AarogyaSetu works on the principle of contact tracing and requires an individual to feed symptoms, Lyfas is a "proper medical screening test" which purely depends upon test results.

Generation of Lyfas Covid score has been achieved through repurposing Lyfas-- a clinical-grade, non-invasive, digital functional biomarker smartphone tool for screening, early detection, root cause analysis, acute event risk assessment, prognosis, and home monitoring of chronic diseases.

"Lyfas is an Android application in which, when one keeps the index finger on the rear camera of a mobile phone for 5 minutes, captures the capillary pulse and blood volume change and derives 95 biomarkers with proprietary algorithms and signal processing techniques. It uses the power of smartphone processors and smartphone sensors to capture a bunch of body signals," says the statement from the science and technology department of the government of India. The signals hence captured are then processed on the principle of Photoplethysmography(PPG), Photo Chromatography(PCG), Arterial Photoplethysmography(APPG), mobile spirometry, and Pulse Rate Variability(PRV).

Owaisi alleges PM Modi will violate 'constitutional oath' by attending Ram Temple ceremony

All India Majlis-e-Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen (AIMIM) chief Asaduddin Owaisi has said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's possible attendance at foundation stone laying ceremony of the Ayodhya Ram temple will amount to a "violation of the constitutional oath" taken when assuming office. Owaisi's comments follow a left leader's letter to the Centre disapproving the possible live telecast of the Bhumi Pujan ceremony in Ayodhya on August 5, calling it against the "accepted norms of national integrity".

The foundation stone-laying ceremony of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya on August 5 is likely to be broadcast live for the benefit of millions of devotees advised to pray at home and stay away from Ayodhya on the momentous occasion due to existing covid 19 restrictions .

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to perform prayers in the sanctum sanctorum of the earmarked Ram Temple site before laying its foundation stone at around 12:15 pm on the day. However, an official confirmation of the Prime Minister's programme for the day has not been released so far. "Attending Bhumi Pujan in official capacity will be a violation of @PMOIndia's constitutional oath. Secularism is part of the Basic Structure of Constitution, We can't forget that for over 400 years Babri stood in Ayodhya & it was demolished by a criminal mob in 1992," Owaisi tweeted on Tuesday. Several other prominent leaders including the proponents of the Ram Janmabhoomi movement are expected to attend the groundbreaking ceremony. Earlier a National Congress Party (NCP) leader's objections to Shiv Sena leader and Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray's possible participation in the event, made on similar grounds, was rejected both by Shiv Sena and the NCP.

Apart from Thackeray, veteran BJP leaders LK Advani, MM Joshi, Uma Bharti, Vinay Katiyar and RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat are also invited to the ceremony.

Ram Temple construction at Ayodhya was cleared by a 5-judge Constitution bench of the Supreme Court, which handed over the disputed land to Hindu parties, finding legal merit in their claim to the site, considered to be the birthplace of Lord Ram. It put an end to the more than a century old dispute that had led to a communal rift in the Indian society.

Most Muslim parties involved in the litigation have accepted the court's decision. The Central government has also maintained that the acceptance of the court delivered verdict on the Ram Temple demonstrates the strength of Indian democracy.

THE COVID-19 TALLY IN THE COUNTRY HAS REACHED 14,83,157 CASES, WHICH INCLUDE 4,96,988 ACTIVE CASES; 9,52,744 CURED, DISCHARGED, OR MIGRATED PATIENTS, AND 33,425 DEATHS.

With 47,704 new cases, India's COVID-19 tally crosses 14.83 lakh

As the coronavirus cases in India continue to spread rapidly, India is now just behind the United States and Brazil in terms of the total confirmed cases as it already overtook Russia to take the third spot in the list of worst-hit nations in the world affected by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). It is, therefore, also the biggest epicenter of the coronavirus disease pandemic in Asia.

With over 47,700 new cases reported in the last 24 hours, India's COVID-19 count on this day crossed the 14.83 lakh-mark, while the death toll has crossed the 33,400-mark as well.

At 9:30 AM on this day, the COVID-19 tally in the country has reached 14,83,157 cases, which include 4,96,988 active cases; 9,52,744 cured, discharged, or migrated patients, and 33,425 deaths.

According to the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, as many as 47,704 new COVID-19 cases and 654 deaths were reported in the country in the last 24 hours, marking a significant spike. A day earlier, India had recorded the highest-single day spike in the number of COVID-19 cases with a record of 49,931 new cases in 24 hours.

Maharashtra continues to be the epicenter of the coronavirus spread where the number of cases has witnessed an even large spike recently. According to the Health Ministry, Maharashtra has the highest number of cases with 3,83,723 positive cases of COVID-19 infection and 13,883 deaths.

Notably, Mumbai, the financial capital of the country, has become the hotbed of the coronavirus spread in the state where the number of cases has crossed the 1.10 lakh-mark and the death toll has topped the 6,100-mark as well. At 9:30 AM on this day, the COVID-19 tally in Mumbai showed 1,10,182 cases and 6,132 deaths.

One of the real challenges in Mumbai is controlling the disease contamination in Asia's biggest slum -- Dharavi, which is an extremely densely-populated region.

Maharashtra is followed by Tamil Nadu with 2,20,716 cases. The state crossed Delhi to take up second place in the list due to a recent massive surge in the number of cases.

The national capital is third on the list with 1,31,219 cases.

After Delhi comes Andhra Pradesh, where the COVID-19 figure stands at 1,02,349 cases with 49,558 patients recovered, and 1,090 fatalities. Karnataka has reported 1,01,465 cases of which 37,685 have recovered and 1,953 patients are dead.

Uttar Pradesh has reported 70,493 positive cases so far of which 42,833 patients have recovered and 1,456 patients have lost their lives due to the virus. In West Bengal, as many as 60,830 people have confirmed COVID-19, of which 39,917 recovered and 1,411 people succumbed to it.

In Kerala, which reported the country's first COVID-19 case, 19,728 people have been detected positive for coronavirus so far.

Meanwhile, a total of 5,28,000 samples was tested for COVID-19 across the country on July 27, the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) said on Tuesday.

This, according to the MoHFW, is a result of the coordinated efforts of the Union and various State and Union Territory governments push to increase the testing for the infection in the country.

Earlier on July 26, 5,15,000 samples were tested for the infection in the country. Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday had said that efforts are being made to ramp up the testing capacity in the country to conduct up to 10 lakh COVID-19 tests per day.

PM Modi launches three high throughput COVID-19 testing facilities, says India conducting 5 lakh tests daily

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday launched three high throughput COVID-19 testing facilities in Kolkata, Mumbai and Noida. These facilities are located at the National Institutes of Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).

Launching the hi-tech state-of-the-art testing facilities, the Prime Minister said they will boost the testing capacity by almost 10,000 daily tests in each of the three cities.

More number of tests will assist early detection and treatment, thereby helping fight the spread of the virus. He added that these labs will not be limited to testing for COVID, but in future, will also be able to test for Hepatitis B and C, HIV, Dengue and several other diseases.

These three high-throughput testing facilities have been set up strategically at ICMR-National Institute of Cancer Prevention and Research, Noida; ICMR-National Institute for Research in Reproductive Health, Mumbai; and ICMR-National Institute of Cholera and Enteric Diseases, Kolkata, and will be able to test over 10,000 samples in a day. These labs will also reduce turn-around-time and exposure of lab personnel to infectious clinical materials. The labs are enabled to test diseases other than COVID as well, and post the pandemic, will be able to test for Hepatitis B and C, HIV, Mycobacterium tuberculosis, Cytomegalovirus, Chlamydia, Neisseria, Dengue, etc.

Speaking on the occasion, Modi underlined that due to timely decisions taken by the government, India is better placed vis-a-vis other countries in terms of deaths due to COVID. The recovery rate is also higher than other countries and is improving on a daily basis. The total number of people who have recovered from the virus is about to reach 10 lakh.

According to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), a total of 1,68,06,803 samples have been tested up to July 26, with 5,15,472 samples being tested on Sunday.

The Prime Minister said that it was imperative for the country to develop corona specific health infrastructure at a fast pace. He noted that the Centre had announced a package of Rs 15,000 crore at the beginning of this battle. The country now has more than 11,000 COVID facilities and more than 11 lakh isolation beds. While the country had only one COVID testing centre in January, there are almost 1300 such labs now. He said that at present, more than 5 lakh tests are being conducted in the country daily, and efforts are underway to increase this capacity to 10 lakh in the coming weeks.

He noted that the country has become the second largest PPE kit manufacturer. The country has progressed from not having even a single PPE kit manufacturer as recently as six months ago, to having more than 1200 manufacturers now, who are producing more than 5 lakh such kits daily. He also highlighted that from being dependent on imports, now more than 3 lakh N-95 masks are being produced in the country daily, annual production capacity of ventilators has become 3 lakh and there has also been a significant increase in the production of medical oxygen cylinders. This has not only helped save lives but has also converted India from an importer to an exporter.

Delhi's COVID-19 recovery rate at 88 per cent; only 9 per cent still infected: Arvind Kejriwal

There is a significant improvement in the COVID-19 situation in the national capital with the recovery rate standing at 88 and only 9% are still infected, said Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Monday.

"There is an improvement in the COVID situation in Delhi. The Delhi model is being discussed in India and abroad. Today the recovery rate in Delhi is 88%, only 9% of the people are ill now and 2-3% of the people have died. There is a decline in the number of deaths as well," the Chief Minister said at a press conference here.

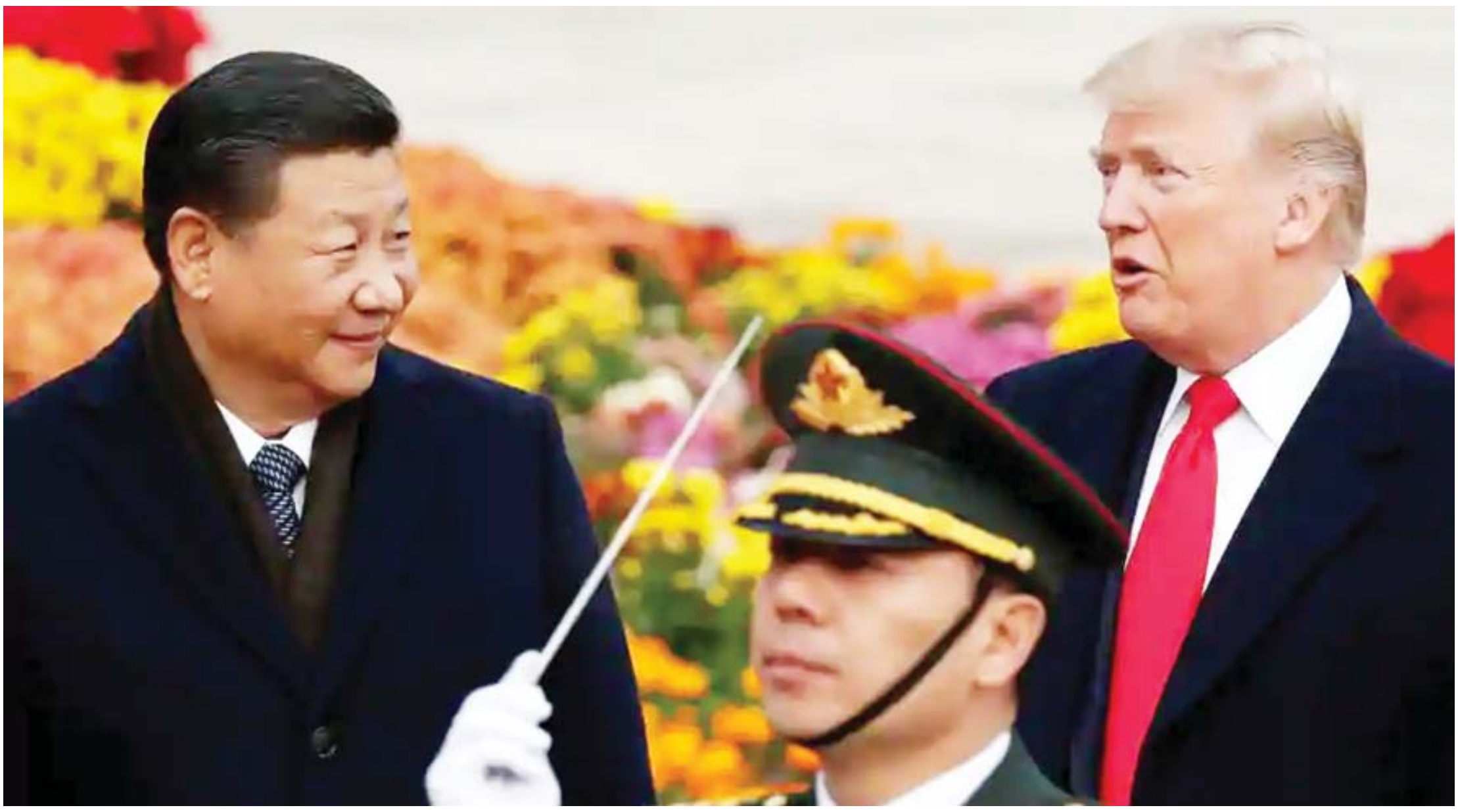
He also said that a sharp decline had been noticed in the COVID related deaths in Delhi and there was also a slump in the number of new positive cases being found.

"Yesterday 21 people lost their lives due to coronavirus. In June, the per day deaths used to be around the 100 mark. Earlier, for every 100 people tested 35 used to test positive for the disease, today that number is around five positive cases per 100 people tested, which is called the positivity ratio," he said.

The Delhi Chief Minister said that currently there are 15,500 beds for COVID-19 patients in the national capital while there are just 2,800 patients admitted, meaning there are close to 12,500 beds lying vacant in the Union Territory (UT). He, however, appealed to the people to continue using masks and also abide by other safety guidelines for prevention.

Rajasthan Political Crisis: Congress drops Supreme Court plea against Sachin Pilot, rebel MLAs

The Congress party on Monday dropped its case in the Supreme Court, which involved using the Rajasthan Legislative Assembly Speaker's powers to disqualify its rebel legislators in the state, including former Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot. The development came shortly after Rajasthan Governor Kalraj Mishra rejected, for the second time, Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot's call for an assembly session from July 31. Rajasthan Assembly Speaker CP Joshi withdrew his plea in the Supreme Court, against the High Court order asking him to defer his decision on disqualification notices issued to former Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot and 18 other MLAs. On Friday, the Rajasthan High Court had ordered that the status quo should be maintained on the disqualification notices sent out by the Speaker to rebel leader Sachin Pilot and 18 other MLAs. Kapil Sibal, the counsel for Rajasthan Speaker CP Joshi, told the Supreme Court on this day that the Rajasthan High Court had passed a fresh order on July 24, which raised several other issues including the interpretation of 10th Schedule of the Constitution. Sibal said they'll weigh legal options and added that Friday's High Court order may be challenged.A Bench of Justices Arun Mishra, B R Gavai, and Krishna Murari allowed the Speaker to withdraw the plea. Sibal also told the Bench that due to lack of stay by the Supreme Court on the High Court`s July 21 order, the High Court has proceeded to pass a detailed order on July 24. The High Court order of July 21 has "merged" with the High Court subsequent order of July 24 and therefore this SLP against July 21 order of HC has become infructuous, added Sibal. Sibal told the apex court that the Rajasthan High Court has passed a fresh order on July 24 which has raised several other issues including interpretation of the 10th schedule. "They have passed a 32-page order. We have to weigh our legal options on what to do next," Sibal said. The anti-defection law, enshrined in the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution, was inserted in 1985 to prevent such political defections. It lists two situations for disqualification on the ground of defection. Firstly, if an MP or an MLA "has voluntarily given up his membership of such political party" (clause 2(1)(a)). Secondly, if he votes or abstains from voting in the House contrary to any direction issued by his party, that is if he violates the party whip in the House (clause 2(1)(b). Earlier, the Governor had rejected Gehlot's request for calling an assembly session, citing reasons such as the petition involving rebel MLAs being heard in the apex court. Today, the Congress withdrew its petition from the Court, presumably as a move to weaken the Governor's arguments against the convening of the assembly session.



GLOBAL TRADE ALREADY WAS DEPRESSED BY THE 2-YEAR-OLD TARIFF WAR BETWEEN THE WORLD'S TWO BIGGEST ECONOMIES. THAT RANCOR HAS SPREAD TO INCLUDE HONG KONG, CHINESE MUSLIMS, SPYING ACCUSATIONS AND CONTROL OF THE SOUTH CHINA SEA.

US-China spats rattle world, prompting calls for unity

Antagonisms between the United States and China are rattling governments around the world, prompting a German official to warn of "Cold War 2.0" and Kenya's president to appeal for unity to fight the coronavirus pandemic.

Global trade already was depressed by the 2-year-old tariff war between the world's two biggest economies. That rancor has spread to include Hong Kong, Chinese Muslims, spying accusations and control of the South China Sea. Caught in the middle, other governments are trying to defend their own interests.

GERMANY:

Chancellor Angela Merkel's government wants to preserve trade and cooperation on global warming but says a security law tightening Beijing's control over Hong Kong is a "difficult issue."

The Hong Kong security law's potential disruption of the autonomy Beijing promised to the former British colony is no reason to stop talking but is "a worrying development," Merkel said.

Europe's biggest economy has yet to take a final position on Chinese tech giant Huawei despite U.S. pressure to exclude its equipment from next-generation telecom networks as a possible security risk.

"China is an important partner for us but also a competitor," Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said in a statement after a videoconference Friday with his Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi.

Peter Beyer, the government's coordinator for trans-Atlantic cooperation, expressed alarm in an interview with the RedaktionsNetzwerk Deutschland newspaper group.

"We are experiencing the beginning of a Cold War 2.0," Beyer said. He criticized both sides but said, "the U.S. is our most important partner outside the EU, and that is how it will stay."

FRANCE:

President Emmanuel Macron calls President Donald Trump "my friend" but is trying to avoid riling Beijing.

France has not echoed Trump's criticism of Beijing's handling of the coronavirus, but legislators applauded Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian last week when he condemned abuses of minority Uighurs in China's northwest.

Le Drian mentioned "mass arrests, disappearances, forced labor, forced sterilizations, the destruction of Uighur cultural heritage." He said France has asked that the camps be closed.

"All these practices are unacceptable," the minister said. "We condemn them."

Trump's ambivalence toward U.S. allies and flouting of diplomatic norms has alarmed France.

"Sino-American tensions don't benefit France," said Valerie Niquet of the Foundation for Strategic Research, a think tank. "We share the same interests as the United States towards China, we adopt more or less the same positions, so it doesn't bring us any positive element."

EUROPE:

Europe's "strategic relations" with China will be an issue for the European Union while Germany holds the rotating presidency of the 27-nation bloc, Merkel said this month.

EU foreign ministers have not managed to agree on a common position on China.

Regarding Hong Kong, options include closer scrutiny of exports of sensitive technology to the territory and changing visa policies for its residents. But there is no talk of economic sanctions or targeting Chinese officials with penalties.

"The message is that the recent actions change the rules," said the top EU foreign policy official, Josep Borrell. "This will require a revision of our approach and will clearly have an impact on our relations."

SOUTH KOREA:

South Korea is squeezed between its main military ally and its biggest trading partner.

In 2016, Beijing destroyed supermarket operator Lotte's business in China after the conglomerate sold a plot of land in South Korea to the government for an anti-missile system over Chinese objections.

Washington is unhappy with South Korea's desire to ease sanctions on North Korea to encourage disarmament and uneasy about its use of Huawei technology. Trump complains about the cost of stationing 28,500 U.S. troops in South Korea to protect against North Korean threats. A cost-sharing agreement expired in 2019 without a replacement.

The U.S.-Chinese row "has thrown a question to South Korea" about which side to choose, the newspaper Dong-A Ilbo said in an editorial Monday.

"Sooner or later we will be forced to provide an answer, no matter how hard we tried to avoid it," the newspaper said.

INDIA:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has tried to embrace both Chinese President Xi Jinping and President Donald Trump, but the pandemic and a border clash that killed at least 20 Indian soldiers have fueled anti-Chinese sentiment.

Protesters have called for boycotts of Chinese goods and burned Chinese flags. They applauded the government's ban on the popular Chinese video-sharing app TikTok and some other Chinese apps. Washington wants stronger ties with India and supported its controversial move a year ago to split its only Muslim-majority state, restive Jammu and Kashmir, into two federally controlled territories. This month, White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows said the United States would stand up to China on the Indian border dispute. "For India it is opportune that the U.S. is applying more pressure on China, and if it can get it to behave, that would be welcomed by the entire neighborhood," said Jayadev Ranade, president of the Center for China Analysis think tank in New Delhi.

AFRICA:

China-U.S. tensions are taking a toll: The African Development Bank said last year trade disruption due to the tariff war could lead to a 2.5% drop in economic output for some African countries.

Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta said political disputes should be set aside to better fight the coronavirus.

"Let's not be sucked back into isolationism or unilateralism. We need each other today more than ever," Kenyatta said an Atlantic Council event last month. "We're not going to fight coronavirus if one country fails and another succeeds."

SOUTHEAST ASIA:

The 10-nation Association of Southeast Asian Nations has avoided taking steps that would alienate Washington or Beijing, both important trading partners.

"The great powers, as they escalate their rivalry, will woo us into their side," said Harry Roque, a spokesman for Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte. "We will advance our national interest."

The region's most sensitive conflict — over control of the South China Sea — escalated when the Trump administration publicly rejected most of Beijing's claims to one of the world's busiest waterways.

"We are making clear: Beijing's claims to offshore resources across most of the South China Sea are completely unlawful," Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said in a July 13 statement.

The Philippines and Vietnam, among the most vocal critics of Chinese assertiveness, could benefit from that stance but will move cautiously, said Greg Poling of the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington.

"They aren't going to stick their necks in a noose until they see real follow-through from Washington," Poling said.

NORTH KOREA REPORTS FIRST 'SUSPECTED' COVID-19 CASE, IMPOSES MAXIMUM EMERGENCY SYSTEM

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un on Sunday took a "maximum emergency system" decision after a defector returned from the South with coronavirus symptoms.

Citing the North's Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), Yonhap News Agency said that Kim took "the preemptive measure of totally blocking Kaesong" after the "runway" returned to the border city on July 19, after three years.

"To tackle the present situation, he declared a state of emergency in the relevant area and clarified the determination of the party central committee to shift from the state emergency anti-epidemic system to the maximum emergency system and issue a top-class alert," the KCNA reported. "All the persons in Kaesong city who contacted that person and those who have been to the city in the last five days are being thoroughly investigated, given a medical examination and put under quarantine," the North's state media said.

"Despite the intense preventive anti-epidemic measures taken in all fields throughout the country and tight closure of all the channels for the last six months, there happened a critical situation in which the vicious virus could be said to have entered the country," Kim was quoted as saying. In January, North Korea had launched the national emergency system against the COVID-19, shut down its borders and tightened quarantine measures, Yonhap reported.

93-YEAR-OLD EX-NAZI GUARD BRUNO DEY CONVICTED OF 5,232 MURDERS, GETS 2-YEAR SUSPENDED PRISON SENTENCE

A 93-year-old German man was convicted for helping to murder 5,232 prisoners at a Nazi concentration camp during World War II. He was given a suspended two-year sentence in what is considered to be one of the last cases of crimes committed during the Nazi era.

In the courtroom, Bruno Dey confessed that he was an SS guard in the Stutthof concentration camp near Gdansk, Poland. He, however, argued that just his presence at the concentration camp did not mean that he was guilty.

As he was wheeled into the courtroom, Bruno hid his face behind a blue folder as he revisited his role in one of the darkest periods of human history.

However, the court was not happy with his argument which found him guilty of the killings from August 1944 to April 1945. He was convicted of his crime on July 23.

How could you get used to the horror?" asked judge Anne Meier-Goering as she read the verdict.

In his final testimony, he apologised for the suffering caused to the victims of the holocaust.

"I would like to apologise to all the people who have gone through this hell of insanity and to their relatives and survivors," he told the court on Monday. According to a holocaust musuem website, around 65,000 people, mostly Jews, were murdered or died at Stutthof. Most of the victims of the crime were shot in the back of the head or gassed with the lethal Zyklon B gas.

Here's how Trump's opposition to mail voting hurts the GOP

Republicans once dominated voting by mail in Florida. But that was before President Donald Trump got involved.

After months of hearing Trump denigrate mail-in balloting, Republicans in the critical battleground state now find themselves far behind Democrats in the perennial push to urge their voters to cast ballots remotely. While Democrats have doubled the number of their voters who have requested mail ballots compared to 2016, Republicans have increased their numbers by about 20% since then. The recent tally is the hard evidence confirming many Republicans' fears about Trump's tweeting about mail-in voting: GOP voters are listening and appear less likely to take advantage of what many election and health officials agree is the easiest and safest way to vote in a pandemic.

The numbers are so clear that Florida Republicans are shifting their emphasis from years past and are now trying to persuade voters to use another alternative to Election Day voting: in-person early voting. "Did the president's tweet cause it? Maybe a little bit, but it's been shifting for years now," said Susie Wiles, who has been tapped by the Trump campaign to help buoy the president's newly troubled Florida campaign. "If COVID is still the level of concern that it is now, early vote is, after absentee, probably the next best option." Political campaigns in both parties typically push their voters to cast ballots by mail because they can bank votes for their side in advance, freeing up scarce resources to chase down less-frequent voters and turn them out by Election Day. Amid the coronavirus, that push has become all the more urgent. But while Democrats have tried to expand access to voting by mail, Republicans have struggled with what to tell their voters. Some have pushed for it, while Trump and his allies at the Republican National Committee have tried to limit expansion of remote voting.

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