

PREMIER DOUG FORD VISITS BRAMPTON, ANNOUNCES ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR SCHOOLS, NEW MALALA YOUSAFZAI PUBLIC SCHOOL IN CITY



1 DETAILS ON PAGE 6

ONTARIO MOVING TO STAGE 3 ON FRIDAY JULY 24 EXCEPT TORONTO, PEEL & WINDSOR-ESSEX

Reopening our Province: Stage 3



The Ontario government is allowing seven more regions to enter Stage 3 on Friday, increasing the number of businesses and public spaces that will reopen across the province. This decision was made in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health and is based on positive local trends of key public health indicators, including lower or low transmission of COVID-19, ongoing hospital capacity, public health capacity to conduct rapid case and contact management, and a significant increase in testing.

1 CONTD. ON PAGE 3

OXFORD COVID VACCINE: RESEARCHERS SAY VACCINE COULD BE ROLLED OUT BY END OF 2020, "CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC"



Lead researcher of the Oxford University's COVID-19 vaccine development, Sarah Gilbert states the candidate could be rolled out by the end of 2020, however, there is no certainty. Speaking in an interview with BBC Radio, she said for the vaccine to be rolled out this year, it needed to be shown to work in late-stage trials, manufacturing in large quantities, and regulators had to agree to license it quickly.

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WE CHARITY FOUNDERS CRAIG KIELBURGER, AND MARC KIELBURGER TO APPEAR BEFORE HOUSE COMMITTEE NEXT WEEK



WE Charity founders Craig Kielburger, and Marc Kielburger are all set to appear before a House of Commons committee next week to testify about the federal Liberal government's involvement with the organisation. The charity continues to remain marred with controversy involving a federal \$900 million student grant program.

1 CONTD. ON PAGE 3

MAYOR TORY'S EVENT ON THURSDAY DISRUPTED BY PROTESTERS DEMANDING EVICTION MORATORIUM



Toronto Mayor John Tory's media event on Thursday was interrupted by protesters demanding an eviction moratorium. Tory, who was present at a groundbreaking event was reportedly in the middle of his remarks when protesters walked on stage and disrupted his speech. While he attempted to finish his speech, the demonstrators continued to pursue their demands.

1 CONTD. ON PAGE 2

WE Scandal: Tories renew calls for Morneau's resignation, Trudeau, top aide set to testify

Kicking up yet another bout of storm, Finance Minister Bill Morneau testified before the House of Commons finance committee on Wednesday, when he revealed that he hadn't fully reimbursed WE Charity for years-old travel expenses. He said he found out about pending dues worth \$41,366, and had his assistant write a cheque to the organisation. Speaking with MPs on the committee, Morneau said, "I expected and always had intended to pay the full cost of these trips, and it was my responsibility to make sure that was done. Not doing so, even unknowingly, is not appropriate. I want to apologise for this error on my part." The expenses date back to 2017, when his family travelled to Ecuador and Kenya.

Morneau's testimony has prompted strong reactions from the Opposition, who have now called for his resignation. Conservative ethics critic Michael Barrett has sent a letter to the ethics commissioner asking for another probe of the Finance Minister. Meanwhile, Ethics Commissioner Mario Dion has already launched an investigation into Morneau's failure to recuse himself from cabinet talks about awarding WE Charity a \$912 million student grants program.

Barrett said, "Sorry doesn't cut it," adding that it was an act of "extreme arrogance" to cut a cheque covering the expenses the same day he was to testify on the scandal. Conservative finance critic Pierre Poilievre pitched in saying, "Who did he think covered these \$41,000 in luxurious travel-related expenses and other advantages that he



received during his vacation stays?" He added, "In fact, how can one person even spend \$41,000 on a vacation?" NDP MP and ethics critic Charlie Angus has written a letter to Ethics Commissioner Dion seeking a second investigation into Morneau. He wrote, "It is important that the complete facts of the matter are assembled and that an appropriate finding is made."

Trudeau, advisor Katie Telford set to testify

The Prime Minister's Office has confirmed that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has accepted an invitation to testify soon before the Commons Finance Committee. PM's close adviser Katie Telford has also reportedly agreed to testify on a date yet to be determined.

Y MEDIA EXCLUSIVE: FIRST EVER LAVAZZA DRIVE-IN FILM FESTIVAL OPENS TO A TREMENDOUS NIGHT IN ONTARIO PLACE, ON JULY 20, MONDAY ; ICFF ALONG WITH CHIN RADIO/TV BRINGS A STREAM OF INTERNATIONAL FILMS



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Province Announces Ontario Health Team in Western 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, physi-

cal 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.

Deepak Anand, MPP
Mississauga - Malton



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MAYOR TORY'S EVENT ON THURSDAY DISRUPTED BY PROTESTERS DEMANDING EVICTION MORATORIUM

CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

The move comes after Bill 184 was passed in the legislature and with a provincial eviction suspension scheduled to end on July 31. Tory eventually was safely escorted off the stage by police officers.

The mayor later responded to their requests in a press release after the incident. He said he does not have the authority to impose a ban on evictions, adding that however, "no eviction should take place without a hearing." He added the city solicitor will be providing advice to City Council on the possibility of legally challenging some of the provisions of Bill 184.

The release read, "I will continue to advocate on behalf of tenants and have repeatedly said I am concerned about people who are at risk of being evicted once the province's ban on evictions is lifted."

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OXFORD COVID VACCINE : RESEARCHERS SAY VACCINE COULD BE ROLLED OUT BY END OF 2020, “CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC”

CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

Vaccine candidate produces strong immune response

Meanwhile, a release by Oxford University on Monday reveals their vaccine produces strong immunity response. The release said, “The results of the Phase I/II trial published today in the scientific journal, The Lancet, indicate no early safety concerns and induces strong immune responses in both parts of the immune system.” It added, “The vaccine provoked a T cell response within 14 days of vaccination (white blood cells that can attack cells infected with the SARS-CoV-2 virus), and an antibody response within 28 days (antibodies are able to neutralise the virus so that it cannot infect cells when initially contracted).”

“We saw the strongest immune response in the 10 participants who received two doses of the vaccine, indicating that this might be a good strategy for vaccination,” Professor Pollard said.

During the Phase I/II trial the vaccine has been evaluated in more than 1,000 healthy adult volunteers aged between 18 and 55 years in a randomised controlled trial. A subset of these volunteers (10 people) received two doses of the vaccine. Between April 23, 2020 and May 21, 2020, 1077 volunteers, received the vaccine ChAdOx1 nCoV-19 or a placebo MenACWY vaccine. There were no serious adverse health events related to ChAdOx1 nCoV-19.

Oxford University is closely working with UK-based global biopharmaceutical giant AstraZeneca for the further development, large-scale manufacture and potential distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine. The project has been funded by the British government to help accelerate the vaccine’s development.

ONTARIO MOVING TO STAGE 3 ON FRIDAY JULY 24 EXCEPT TORONTO, PEEL & WINDSOR-ESSEX

CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

The details were provided by Premier Doug Ford, Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health, and Rod Phillips, Minister of Finance.

“We’re working with communities across the province to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and help more businesses safely and responsibly hang up their ‘Open for Business’ sign,” said Premier Ford. “While we want as many people back to work and taking home a paycheck again as possible, it’s important for everyone ? no matter what stage your community is in ? to remain on guard and keep following the public health advice. By working together, we can keep new case numbers down and ensure all of Ontario can enter Stage 3 when it’s safe to do so.”

The following public health units will be allowed to move into Stage 3 on Friday, July 24, 2020 at 12:01 a.m.:

Durham Region Health Department;
Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit;
Halton Region Health Department;
Hamilton Public Health Services;
Lambton Health Unit;
Niagara Region Public Health Department; and York Region Public Health Services.

These regions will join the 24 public health regions that entered into Stage 3 on Friday, July 17, 2020. 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. The following regions will remain in Stage 2 until local trends of key public health indicators demonstrate readiness to move into Stage 3:

Peel Public Health;
Toronto Public Health; and
Windsor-Essex County Health Unit.

Ontario will continue to assess trends in the public health indicators to determine when these final public health unit regions can progress to Stage 3. 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. “Building on the success of the regional approach in the previous two stages and based on the positive public health trends we are seeing, we are ready to move more regions across the province into Stage 3,” said Minister Elliott. “Entering Stage 3 does not mean the fight against COVID-19 is over. We all must remain vigilant and continue following public health advice to ensure the progress we have made so far in stopping the spread will not be undone.”

Businesses not able 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. Government and public health officials will review proposals and contact businesses for feedback or clarifications. Proposals may inform the potential loosening of restrictions as Stage 3 progresses. Proposals will receive initial feedback within 10 days of submission. A sector could be allowed to reopen or resume Stage 3 activities based on proposals submitted by businesses.

“I’m impressed by how seriously business owners are taking the public health advice and how easy they made it for their customers to take precautions,” said Minister Phillips. “By providing plenty of space to physically distance, keeping hand sanitizer by the door and maintaining records for contact tracing, they’re playing a vital role helping fight COVID-19. We’re all doing our part and making it easy for others to do the same.” As the province carefully reopens, the health and well-being of Ontarians remains a top priority. The government is strongly recommending everyone to continue following public health advice, including 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. These measures are critical as more Ontarians return to work and access more businesses and services.

WE CHARITY FOUNDERS CRAIG KIELBURGER, AND MARC KIELBURGER TO APPEAR BEFORE HOUSE COMMITTEE NEXT WEEK

CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

The House finance committee voted to hold four meetings as part of an investigation into the scandal. In a statement, Craig said, “A lot of things have been written and said about WE Charity over the last few weeks. We look forward to an opportunity to talk directly to Canadians and set the record straight.” Meanwhile, Marc said, “Both Craig and I look forward to speaking about the work of WE Charity to assist with delivering the CSSG under oath.”

The federal government, including Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Finance Minister Bill Morneau, and Minister of Diversity and Inclusion and Youth Bardish Chagger have been under fire since last month when the program and the contract were announced. The family PM’s family too has been tugged along in the scandal, with the claims being made that his mother Margaret Trudeau, brother, and wife Sophie were paid for making appearances at charity events.

Minister Chagger has already sat in front of the committee last week, and revealed that WE stood to earn \$43.53 million by administering the program. The federal government had initially said that the charity would get \$19.5 million, out of which \$5 million would have gone towards not-for-profits. Last week, Chagger said that an additional \$10.5 million would have been made available to WE to help smaller not-for-profits participate in the program, and another 13.53 million would have been given to WE to create an additional 20,000 volunteer placements.



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Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) for employers suffering due to COVID-19
Up to 75 per cent wage subsidy allowing up to \$847 per week for employers who suffered at least a 15 per cent drop in revenues in March, and 30 per cent in April and May

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

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GROUP EDITOR & CEO - Y MEDIA GROUP
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Ford announces Accelerated Build Pilot Program, expected to deliver up to 640 LTC beds by 2021 in Mississauga



The Ontario government announced a new innovative Accelerated Build Pilot Program that will enable the construction of two new long-term care homes in Mississauga in a matter of months, not years. By working with Trillium

Health Partners and Infrastructure Ontario, the province intends to add up to 640 new long-term care beds by 2021. The pilot program is part of the government's plan to create new long-term care beds across the

province that meet modern design standards, including features such as air conditioning and private or semi-private rooms, beginning immediately. Details of the government's plan were outlined by Premier Doug

Ford and Dr. Merrilee Fullerton, Minister of Long-Term Care. "Our government won't accept the status quo in long-term care. We made a commitment to seniors and their families to improve the quality of Ontario's long-term care

homes, and we intend to follow through," said Premier Ford. "Not only have we recently announced a plan to get shovels in the ground faster on over 120 long-term care projects in our pipeline, we are also exploring innovative partnerships to get more beds built sooner across the province starting with these two pilot projects in Mississauga." Through a range of accelerating measures such as modular construction, rapid procurement and the use of hospital lands, the government and its partners are targeting completion of the projects in 2021, years faster than the traditional timeline. Trillium Health Partners will work with Infrastructure Ontario to manage the day-to-day construction oversight, monitor commissioning, and provide timely status reporting on progress. Large urban centres like Mississauga are areas of high ser-

vice need and have a critical need for additional long-term care capacity, but they are difficult to build in due to issues like land availability and land cost. To overcome land availability and cost challenges, the homes will be built on land already owned by Trillium Health Partners. "The pilot is bold and innovative and aims to ensure that more seniors get access to modern homes in a fraction of the time," said Minister Fullerton. "Between 2011 and 2018, just 600 beds were added to Ontario's long-term care system — that's less than one bed per home. Our government intends to do better to meet the needs of our aging population." 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.

Regional Councillor Gurpreet Dhillon opposes opening of marijuana store in Ward 9 & 10

A press statement released by Brampton Regional Councillor Gurpreet Singh Dhillon has opposed an application for a cannabis store to be located in Ward 9 & 10 at 65 Braydon Boulevard. The Councillor says majority of his constituents already oppose selling of marijuana in residential areas in Brampton. He says, "A vast majority of my constituents have been strongly opposed to marijuana being sold within residential neighbourhoods in Brampton since it was legislated by the province in 2019. If this shop is approved, the Castlemore and Springdale areas will be significantly impacted." The application to open up shop has been submitted to the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario (AGCO), which is a provincial regulatory agency that reports to the Ministry of the Attorney General.



According to Dhillon's statement, it has reached the Public Notice phase that permits residents from the municipality to submit their concerns and feedback for the AGCO's review. Dhillon encourages all residents who are against the Cannabis Retail Store to submit an online form through the following steps : 1. Go to the following link: <https://www.iagco.agco.ca/prod/pub/en/Default.aspx?PossePresentation>

=PublicNoticeSearch
2. Select Category: Cannabis
3. Insert File number: 932332
4. Select "File Objection/Submission"
5. Fill out the form with personal information and feedback, then select "Submit" He said, "I encourage everyone to speak out and fill out the forms on the AGCO website."

MPP Amarjot Sandhu welcomes funding announcement for new Malala Yousafzai Public School in Brampton



The Ontario government recently announced it is investing over \$500 million to build 30 new schools and make upgrades to 15 existing facilities. The province has given Peel District School Board approval for a new elementary school, the Malala Yousafzai Public School. The investment will provide a new, quality learning environment for the students of Brampton, as well as new child care rooms. This project is part of the province's capital investment program to support students with better learning spaces. "The funding for this new school is great news for our community," said Amarjot Sandhu, MPP for Brampton West. "This investment will provide a quality learning environment and new opportunities for the children of Brampton." Ontario's investment in new and updated schools will create the foundation for a modern learning environment for hundreds of students across the province. This investment will also generate nearly 900 new licensed child care spaces. "From modernizing our curriculum to revitalizing our classrooms and their facilities, we are investing in our students and giving them every tool to achieve their full potential," said Education Minister Stephen Lecce. "Our financing of the new Malala Yousafzai Public School further demonstrates our government's historic investment in Ontario's schools and our overall commitment to supporting our students and families." Highlights of the new school construction include:

- 850 elementary student spaces.
- 73 new licensed child care spaces.
- 4 new child care rooms.

 The Malala Yousafzai Public School will be located in Brampton, Ontario.

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YUDHVIR JASWAL
CHIEF EDITOR & CEO
yudhvir@southasiandaily.com
647-272-8182

VARINDER SINGH
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

MITUL PANIKER
CONTENT EDITOR

DR. PUSHPINDER BRAR
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

GURPREET SINGH LOONA
OPERATIONS MANAGER

SUNIL VERMA
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Feds announce an increase in Canada Childcare Benefit



Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Ahmed Hussen has announced that starting Monday, the Canada Childcare Benefit (CCB) will be increased again for the 2020–21 benefit year to keep pace with the cost of living. This is on top of the one-time additional \$300 per child qualified CCB recipients received with their May 20 payment as part of the Government’s response to COVID-19. This means that for the 2020–21 benefit year, the maximum benefit will be \$6,765 per child under age 6 and \$5,708 per child age 6 through 17. This additional tax-free support ensures that the benefit continues to play a vital role in supporting Canadian families by helping to pay

for things their children need such as healthy food, clothes and activities they can do together at home. For example, a family with two children under the age of 6 and an income of \$30,000 will receive \$13,530. That is \$252 more than last year and \$3,080 more than in 2015, before the introduction of the Canada Child Benefit. “Parents know how expensive raising a child can be. That is why I am pleased to announce on the 4th anniversary of the Canada Child Benefit, that it is again going to be raised. This means more money tax-free in the pockets of Canadian families each month,” he said.

HOUSE OF COMMONS SITTING TODAY TO DISCUSS FEDERAL WAGE SUBSIDY PROGRAM EXTENSION, SPECIAL PAYMENT TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

New Updates to the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy would

- ✓ Extend it through the Fall
- ✓ Make it more accessible to support more businesses
- ✓ Create a top-up subsidy of up to an additional 25% for the hardest hit employers

The House of Commons is all set to discuss an extension to the federal wage subsidy program, and a special payment to people with disabilities. Finance Minister Bill Morneau has sought an extension of the wage subsidy program to December in a bid to help businesses retain their employees. The original program covered 75 per cent of wages, up to a weekly maximum of \$847 for eligible companies and non-profits. Eligibility included a 30 per cent drop in revenues. Proposed changes would see the program pay on a sliding scale based on revenue drops ; meaning the hardest-hit businesses will be eligible for a 25 per cent increase to the previous maximum payment. Conservative Leader Andrew Scheer has expressed concerns over the wage subsidy. Speaking ahead of the sitting, he said, “We have major concerns around the wage subsidy. We’ve highlighted ideas to make it simpler. You need a degree in mathematics to fully understand all the permutations and combinations they’ve come up with.” He said his party supports the bill that grant up to \$600 to people with disabilities. The Bloc Québécois meanwhile, said its MPs will support the wage subsidy bill. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s itinerary relays he will be a taking a personal day, prompting the opposition to accuse him of deliberately avoiding questions.

Face masks and coverings now mandatory on GO Transit



Metrolinx has made masks and face coverings mandatory for all GO Transit customers, starting July 21, Tuesday. Riders will be required to wear masks inside stations, on platforms, and while riding on buses and trains. The initial announcement was made last week, when Metrolinx said it would join several transit agencies around the province by making masks mandatory on all vehicles, including GO trains, buses, and UP Express trains. The transit operator has taken multiple safety measures, including interactive stations in a Health and Safety kiosk in the York Concourse, frequently scheduled deep cleaning which includes the use of specialised HEPA Vacs, application of a long-acting antimicrobial germ protecting barrier on all vehicles and high-touch areas in stations, and installation of polycarbonate screens on buses and in stations to protect customers and staff.

Survey reveals people want school children to wear masks in schools, buses



A brand new poll reveals people want children returning to school in the fall to wear masks at least for a part of the time. The latest survey conducted by Leger and the Association for Canadian Studies found that 41 per cent of people polled believe school children should be required to wear a mask while on the bus, or in school. Another 21 per cent respondents nodded to wearing masks, but only when a student is outside of class during recess, lunch, or if on the bus. 28 per cent meanwhile, believe masks should be optional. The online poll involved 1,524 Canadians over the age of 18. A report quoted Leger vice-president Christian Bourque as saying support for masks at school may increase as more jurisdictions adopt mandatory mask measures. He said social norms are already changing. The poll meanwhile, suggested several parents are concerned from a health perspective about sending their children to school or daycare. 62 per cent respondents have qualms sending their children back to school.

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Ontario Place to host on-site events and festivals amid COVID-19 pandemic ; Govt to spend \$2M to reopen Ontario Place



The Ontario government is providing Ontario Place with \$2 million to support on-site activities, including several innovative festivals and events that give people the opportunity to safely reengage in arts and culture experiences. As the province safely and gradually reopens, these initiatives will help with the economic recovery of the arts, entertainment and hospitality sectors in Ontario. Details were provided by Lisa MacLeod, Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries, during an announcement alongside leaders in the entertainment industry at Ontario Place.

“Ontario’s heritage, sport, tourism and culture industries were hit first, the hardest, and will take the longest to recover from COVID-19,” said Minister MacLeod. “As we gradually reopen the province, Ontario Place offers exciting opportunities to safely come together to enjoy arts and culture experiences, while supporting the province’s economic recovery.”

This summer’s line-up at Ontario Place includes:

Lavazza Drive-In Film Festival will feature the latest international films from different countries including France, Spain, China, Russia, the US, the UK, Brazil, India and Canada, with a special focus on Italy. It will run from July 20-31. Toronto Shines will present the best in live entertainment, comedy and current and classic films. It is running now through October.

DriveInTQ, a new initiative launched by the City of Toronto, will offer free drive-in film screenings in August with programming by Hot Docs, imagineNATIVE and TIFF. Toronto Undergraduate Jazz Festival, a not for profit organization that creates opportunities for young jazz artists to showcase

their talent, will present a virtual jazz festival in the Trillium Park on September 5-6. Toronto International Film Festival will run from September 10-19, with 50 new feature films, five programmes of short films, as well as interactive talks, film cast reunions, and Q&As with cast and filmmakers tailored to fit the moment with physical screenings, digital screenings, and at drive-ins, including Ontario Place. In addition to the summer line-up, Ontario Place continues to offer small boat rentals and a casual dining experience at Vista Eatery, a patio overlooking Lake Ontario. Visitors can also safely enjoy the sweeping waterfront views, trails and green space offered by the Trillium Park and William G. Davis Trail, while still practicing physical distancing. With Ontario Place open for public use, staff and partners are working to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for everyone. Visitors are encouraged to review the current COVID-19 updates before visiting the site and are asked to respect health and safety guidelines to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Businesses not able 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. Government and public health officials will review proposals and contact businesses for feedback or clarifications. Proposals may inform the potential loosening of restrictions as Stage 3 progresses. Proposals will receive initial feedback within 10 days of submission. A sector could be allowed to reopen or resume activities based on Stage 3 proposals submitted by businesses.

4 males, 1 female from London, Ontario arrested, charged by Peel Police in Brampton gunpoint carjacking incident

Peel Police officers from the Central Robbery Bureau have arrested four men and one woman in relation to a gunpoint carjacking that occurred in the Brampton. On Friday, July 17, 2020, at approximately 2:50 a.m., two men were in the area of Olivia Marie Road and Messina Avenue in the City of Brampton. They were meeting each other to complete the sale of some high-end sneakers. One of the victims was operating a 2019 Mercedes Benz GLC SUV. After the sale, all merchandise was placed in the trunk of the SUV. At approximately 2:58 a.m., a grey sedan pulled up in front of the residence, two male suspects exited the vehicle and pointed guns at the heads of the men who had just completed their sale. The suspects demanded the keys to the Mercedes, which had the shoes in the trunk. The victim complied and turned over the keys to the vehicle, and both cars fled the scene and the victims contacted police regarding the carjacking.

The victim’s vehicle was later located in the area of Horizon Drive and Farrah Road in the City of London. Investigators executed a search warrant with the assistance of the London Police Service and arrested three men. Investigators also recovered the outstanding stolen vehicle, a large portion of the stolen property, and an imitation firearm.

Three men from the City of London, 18-year-old, Illia Ayo, 20-year-old Stephan Ayo, and 20-year-old Jahvahn George were charged with Robbery, Imitation Firearm-Use While Committing Offence, and Disguise with Intent. Madout Lual, a 21-year-old man from London, was also charged with Possession of Property Obtained by Crime and Fail to Comply with Undertaking.

All four were held for a bail hearing, transported to the Region of Peel and attended the Ontario Court of Justice on Saturday, July 18, 2020.

Emma O’Connor, a 21-year-old woman from London, was arrested for Possession of Property Obtained by Crime and has a first appearance date in September of 2020.



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PM NARENDRA MODI LIKELY TO TRAVEL TO AYODHYA ON AUGUST 5 FOR RAM MANDIR 'BHUMI PUJAN'.
NEW DELHI: IN HIS FIRST VISIT TO AYODHYA AS THE PM, NARENDRA MODI IS LIKELY TO TRAVEL TO THE TEMPLE TOWN FOR 'BHUMI PUJAN' (FOUNDATION STONE-LAYING CEREMONY) OF RAM MANDIR ON AUGUST 5. THE CEREMONY, WHICH IS LIKELY TO HAVE 100-150 GUESTS, WILL MARK THE BEGINNING OF TEMPLE CONSTRUCTION WHICH COULD TAKE ABOUT THREE YEARS TO COMPLETE. UNION HOME MINISTER AMIT SHAH, DEFENCE MINISTER RAJNATH SINGH AND UP CM YOGI ADITYANATH ARE LIKELY TO BE AMONG THE INVITEES.

'For years, one dynasty has been trying to destroy Modi': JP Nadda on Rahul Gandhi's video attacking PM on China issue

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) president Jagat Prakash Nadda on Monday accused Rahul Gandhi of preferring briefings from the Chinese instead of believing India's armed forces after Congress leader launched an attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi over border issues. Nadda said Rahul's attempts to politicise defence and foreign policy matters show one dynasty's desperation to wash their past sins of 1962 and weaken India. This came after Gandhi attacked Modi saying that he has fabricated a fake strongman image to come to power which has now become India's biggest weakness as he has to protect the idea of "56 Inch". Hitting back, Nadda wrote on Twitter, "We saw yet another (failed) edition of 'Project RG Relaunch' today. Rahul Gandhi Ji was, as usual, weak on facts and strong on mudslinging. Attempts to politicise defence and foreign policy matters shows one dynasty's desperation to wash their past sins of 1962 and weaken India."

"Since the 1950's, China has made strategic investments in one dynasty that has given them rich dividends. Remember 1962, giving away of a UNSC seat, losing a lot of land to China in the UPA years, MoU Signed with much fanfare in 2008, funds to RGF and more," he added. Nadda further added that Rahul Gandhi prefers briefings from Chinese instead of be-

lieving India's Armed Forces. "In recent years, be it Doklam or the present, Rahul Gandhi Ji prefers briefings from the Chinese instead of believing India's armed forces. Why does one dynasty want a weak India and a strong China? Many leaders in Congress also disapprove of one dynasty's shenanigans!" wrote Nadda. "For years, one dynasty has been trying to destroy PM Narendra Modi. Sadly for them, PM Modi's connect with 130 crore Indians is deep-rooted. He lives and works for them. Those who want to destroy him will end up only further destroying their own party," he added. Earlier, Rahul released a video attacking PM Modi on the China issue. "PM fabricated a fake strongman image to come to power. It was his biggest strength. It is now India's biggest weakness," the caption of the video said. In the video message, speaking on "China's Strategic Game Plan" the Congress leader said: "What is China's strategic and tactical game plan? It is simply not a border issue. The worry I have is that the Chinese are sitting in our territory today. Chinese don't do anything without thinking about it strategically." "In their mind, they have mapped out the world and they are trying to

shape the world. That's the scale of what they are doing. That's what Gwadar is, that is what belt and road is. It is a restructuring of the planet. So when you are thinking about the Chinese you have to understand that that is the level at which they are thinking," he added. Now at the tactical level, they're trying to improve their position. Whether it is Galwan, whether it's Demchok or whether it is Pangong Lake. The idea is to position themselves, he said. "They are disturbed by our highway they want to make our highway redundant and if they are thinking larger scale, they want to do something with Pakistan in Kashmir. So it is not simply a border issue. It is a border issue designed to put pressure on the Prime Minister of India," the Congress leader said. "And they are thinking of putting pressure in a very particular way. And what they are doing, is that they are attacking his image. They understand that in order for Mr Narendra Modi to be an effective politician; in order for Mr Narendra Modi to survive as a politician, he has to protect the idea of-- Chhapan Inch. And this the real idea the Chinese are attacking. They are basically telling Mr Narendra Modi that if you do not do what we say, we will destroy the idea of Mr Narendra Modi as a strong leader," he added.

'Fed up': Omar Abdullah to sue Chhattisgarh CM Baghel for linking his release with Sachin Pilot's revolt



A statement by Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel linking Rajasthan Congress leader Sachin Pilot's rebellion with Omar Abdullah's release from detention may land him in a legal soup. Former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister has said Baghel will be hearing from his lawyers as he was "fed up of the downright malicious and false allegation."

In a statement, National Conference said it rejects Baghel's false accusations on Omar Abdullah's release. "Baghel has maliciously suggested that the release of our Vice President Mr Omar Abdullah from preventive detention was somehow related to Mr Sachin Pilot or the present political situation unravelling in Rajasthan."

The Party unequivocally rejects such malicious, false and politically motivated statements that are used for convenient political posturing, it said.

"It is within the province of public knowledge that the release of Mr Omar Abdullah happened after judicial intervention was sought from the Supreme Court and the illegal order of detention of Mr Abdullah was challenged. Given the indefensible nature of the illegal detention order the same was revoked by the Government during the course of the proceedings before the Supreme Court," the party said.

We have taken cognizance of the libellous statement of Mr Baghel and we are presently in the process of consulting our lawyers and shall be initiating appropriate legal action against the aforesaid statement, it said.

In a newspaper interview, Baghel had asked why Omar Abdullah was released while Mehbooba Muftij is still languishing, wondering if it was due to Sachin Pilot's relationship with Abdullah family.

"...And as far as Sachin Pilot is concerned, not that I have been track-



ing the Rajasthan events so closely, but it does make one curious why Omar Abdullah was released? He and Mehbooba Muftiji were booked under the same Sections of the law, while she is still languishing, he is out. Is it because Mr Abdullah is brother-in-law of Sachin Pilot?" he was quoted as saying by the newspaper.

Pilot, who rebelled against Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, is married to Omar Abdullah's sister Sara Abdullah.

Tweeting the statement of his party, Abdullah said, "I am fed up of the downright malicious and false allegation that what Sachin Pilot is doing is somehow linked to my or my father's release from detention earlier this year. Enough is enough. Mr @bhupeshbaghel will be hearing from my lawyers. Cc @RahulGandhi @INCIndia @rssurjewala." Trying to downplay the controversy, Baghel responded in a tweet, "Please do not try to turn this tragic demise of democracy into an opportune moment @OmarAbdullah ji. The 'allegation' was only a question asked, and we will keep asking it, as will the country."

On this, Abdullah said the Congress party does not know the difference between its friends and opponents.

"You can send your answer to my lawyers. This is what is wrong with the @INCIndia today, you don't know your friends from your opponents. This is why you people are in the mess you are in. Your "question" was malicious & will not go uncontested," he said.

Baghel again tried to placate Abdullah and tweeted, "The tragic demise of democracy began with the imprisonment of the leaders who believe in democracy like Mr Abdullah, Ms Mufti and other leaders of Kashmir. The release of @OmarAbdullah is duly welcomed but we shall continue to demand the release of all others. I hope the Govt of India hears this long-standing demand and answers our calls."

RAHUL GANDHI LISTS GOVT'S ACHIEVEMENT, CRISIS IN RAJASTHAN IS ONE OF THEM

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday added a reference to the political crisis in Rajasthan to question the priorities of the central government amid the fight against the coronavirus pandemic raging in the country.

Gandhi in a tweet in Hindi listed the "achievements of the government" from February till July as he blamed the Centre for trying to destabilise the Ashok Gehlot-led Congress government in Rajasthan. The former Congress president also mentioned Madhya Pradesh, where the 15-month-old Congress government led by Kamal Nath fell in March after a rebellion by 22 party legislators. "Achievements of the government during the Corona period: ? February - Hello Trump ? March - Toppled government in MP ? April - Lighting candles ? May - 6th anniversary of the government ? June - Virtual rally in Bihar ? July - Attempt to topple the government in Rajasthan," Rahul Gandhi said in a tweet in Hindi.

This is the first time Rahul Gandhi has spoken publicly about the crisis in Rajasthan triggered by Sachin Pilot and other MLAs of the party revolted on July 10.

He also added an "atmanirbhar" jibe to continue his attack on the government. "That is why the country is 'self-sufficient' in the battle of corona," the lawmaker from Kerala's Wayanad added. Before this, Gandhi had Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his direct line of attack as he released a video on Monday to throw a jab at the Centre on the ongoing border row with China. He had said the Chinese are attacking PM Modi's image as "they understand that for him to survive as a politician, he has to protect the idea of 'Chhapan Inch' (56-inch)". The video was the second of his series to share his thoughts on national issues. The Congress has targeted the Prime Minister since the June 15 clash in the eastern Ladakh's Galwan Valley in which 20 Indian Army soldiers were killed, accusing him of giving away Indian territory to China. The attack has mostly been led by Rahul Gandhi and the verbal duel has been on since then.



INDIA'S COVID-19 FATALITY RATE DROPS BELOW 2.5%; NOW AMONGST LOWEST IN THE WORLD. CENTRE, THE STATE/UT GOVERNMENTS HAVE RAMPED UP THE TESTING AND HOSPITAL INFRASTRUCTURE BY COMBINING PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR EFFORTS, HEALTH MINISTRY WENT ON TO SAY.

Covid-19: Govt wants you to stop wearing valved N95 masks

The Union health ministry has warned all states against use of N95 masks with valved respirator, saying these can be detrimental as the valves do not prevent the virus from escaping out of the mask. The ministry has prescribed the use of home-made protective cover described on the website of the ministry. Prof (Dr) Rajiv Garg, director general of health services, issued the directive in a letter to the health secretaries of all states on Monday. "It has been observed that there is an inappropriate use of the N95

mask (particularly with valved respirator) by the public other than designated health workers. In this regard, I would like to draw your attention to the advisory on the use of home-made protective cover for face and mouth available on the website of the MoHFW," the letter says. "It is to bring to your knowledge that the use of valved respirator N95 masks is detrimental to the measures adopted for preventing the spread of the coronavirus as it does not prevent the virus from escaping out of the mask," the letter says. The advisory has asked the

states to prevent inappropriate use of N95 masks. The government had in April issued an advisory on the use of home-made protective cover for face and mouth, asking people to wear it, particularly when they step out of their residences. The advisory stressed such face covers must be washed and cleaned each day, as instructed, and stated that any used cotton cloth can be used to make this face cover. It also listed the procedures of making such home-made masks, asking to ensure it fits the face well and there are no gaps on the sides.

‘Rahul Gandhi, note your achievements’: Union minister’s biting comeback

In a lacerating comeback, Union minister Prakash Javadekar listed out Rahul Gandhi’s “achievements” over the last six months to counter what the former Congress chief called the Centre’s “achievements” in the time of coronavirus. Launching a counter-offensive, the minister found fault with Gandhi tweeting daily, prophesying that the Congress will be reduced to a party that only tweets. Gandhi, on a daily basis, has been challenging the Centre’s narrative on various issues and raising questions. Asking the Congress MP to take note, the information minister, answering in identical fashion as Gandhi’s tweet, listed out six “achievements” of the 50-year-old leader.

The list went like this:
Feb: Shaheen Bagh & riots
March: Losing [Jyotiraditya] Scindia and MP government
April: Instigating labourers
May: 6th anniversary of historic poll defeat [Congress]
June: Advocating for China
July: Party [Congress] destroyed in Rajasthan
Going further, the BJP leader then asked the Congress leader to also note the country’s achievements in “war against coronavirus”. “India has the least average cases, active cases and death rate than the US, Europe and Brazil. By making fun of candle lights, RahulGandhi

ji you have insulted the people of India and brave Corona warriors,” said the minister. The torrents of criticism followed Rahul Gandhi’s satirical dig to high-light priorities of the central government amid the fight against the coronavirus pandemic raging in the country. It also included a reference to Rajasthan Congress crisis. “Achievements of the government in the Covid-era: February -- Namaste Trump, March-- toppling the government in Madhya Pradesh, April -- making people light candles, May -- government’s sixth anniversary, June -- Bihar virtual rally, July -- Attempt to topple the government in Rajasthan,” Gandhi said in a tweet.

OVER 23% OF DELHI’S POPULATION EXPOSED TO CORONAVIRUS, SHOWS SERO-SURVEY RESULTS

More than 23% of Delhi’s 1.9 crore population showed evidence of past exposure to Sars-Cov-2, which causes the coronavirus disease, in almost six months and that a large number of infected people remain asymptomatic, the result of the sero-prevalence study conducted in the national capital shows. The Union health ministry said in a statement that 21,387 samples were collected in accordance with laboratory standards and were tested between June 27 and July 10 to determine the extent of the spread of the coronavirus disease in Delhi. “Nearly six months into the epidemic, only 23.48% of the people are affected in Delhi, which has several pockets of dense population,” the Union health ministry, which commissioned the study, said in a statement. The seroprevalence study was conducted jointly by the National Center for Disease Control (NCDC) and the Delhi government “following a rigorous multi-stage sampling study design.” Blood samples were taken from randomly selected people as part of the survey, which involves rapid tests for antibodies, to study the scale of undetected infections. The samples were tested to ascertain the population-level presence of the IgG antibody, which indicates past infection. “This can be attributed to the proactive efforts taken by the Government to prevent the spread of infection including prompt lockdown, effective containment and surveillance measures, including contact tracing and tracking, as well as citizen’s compliance to COVID Appropriate Behaviours,” the health ministry said in the statement. The ministry, however, warned that a significant proportion of the population is still vulnerable. “Therefore, the containment measures need to continue with the same rigour. Non-pharmacological interventions such as physical distancing, use of face mask/cover, hand hygiene, cough etiquette and avoidance of crowded places etc, must be followed strictly,” it added.

ORDER ON SACHIN PILOT, REBELS’ PLEA ON JULY 24, RAJASTHAN SPEAKER ASKED TO WAIT

The Rajasthan high court said on Tuesday that it will pronounce its verdict on the writ petition filed by Sachin Pilot and 18 other dissident Congress MLAs, challenging the disqualification notices issued to them by the state assembly speaker, on Friday. The speaker has been asked to take no action against the MLAs till then. The MLAs were served the disqualification notice after the Congress party complained to speaker CP Joshi that the lawmakers had defied a whip to attend two Congress legislature party (CLP) meetings last week on Monday and Tuesday. In its complaint to the speaker, the Congress had sought action against Pilot and the MLAs supporting him under the 10th Schedule of the constitution. The Pilot camp, however, has argued that a party whip applies only when the Assembly is in session. Sachin Pilot, who has maintained he is not joining the BJP, was sacked as deputy chief minister of the state last month and also as head of Rajasthan Congress unit. Govind Singh Dotasra has been appointed as the new head of the state unit. Even as the court hearing was on, the Congress held another legislature party meeting at the luxury resort where all its MLAs have been sequestered since the beginning of the crisis. Once again, team Pilot was missing. “Neither Congress nor BJP want Assembly to be dissolved and election to take place...Entire country is watching the way you’re fighting. Your respect has increased manifold. It’s not something ordinary. All of you have phones, there’s no pressure on anyone,” said chief minister Gehlot at the CLP meet. CM Gehlot, who admitted in a TV interview that he has not been on talking terms with his former Number 2 for the last 18 months, has been trenchant in his criticism of Sachin Pilot. In rather unpleasant remarks yesterday the CM called Pilot “nikamma (worthless) and nakaara (good for nothing)”. Repeating his earlier charge, he said Pilot has been trying to dislodge his government. Gehlot also claimed that some MLAs of the Pilot camp, whose phone were snatched away, have been held captive. The CM added the dissident lawmakers have been “calling us and crying over phone while explaining their ordeal”. Sachin Pilot, when the drama began, claimed the support of 30 MLAs, however that number now stands at 18. On the other hand, Gehlot claims the support of over 100 MLAs. In the 200-member assembly, 101 is the majority mark. With 72 MLAs, the BJP has been watching the developments from the sidelines.

PM Modi to address high-profile USIBC summit on economic revival after Covid-19

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will deliver the keynote address at the India Ideas Summit on Wednesday, news agency ANI reported quoting a statement from the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO). The summit is being hosted by US-India Business Council. This year marks the 45th anniversary of the formation of the council. “US-India economic partnership has been one that has been growing in importance for both countries. We have seen that the pandemic has created enormous disruption on global supply chains including in the pharmaceutical sector and the US-India partnership is one of the trusted partners,” USIBC president Nisha Biswal had said last week, ahead of the two-day summit. Biswal said India stands to benefit as the companies look to diversify their global supply chains. The participants in the summit will discuss wide range of topics including the impact of coronavirus on global supply chain and healthcare collaboration between the US and India. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, External Affairs S Jaishankar, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Commerce and Railways Minister Piyush Goyal, Deputy Secretary of US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Eric Hargan, Senator Mark Warner, Representative (California) Ami Bera, India ambassador to the US Taranjit Sandhu, US ambassador to India Kenneth Juster and many more diplomats as well as dignitaries are expected to participate in the summit. The summit will also feature senior executives from top US and Indian companies, like Lockheed CEO Jim Taiclet and Tata Sons Chairman N Chandrasekaran. “This year’s focus is on ‘Building a Better Future’. As Prime Minister Modi navigates the twin challenges of managing the health impact of Covid-19 and the associated global economic disruption, he has articulated the importance of the US-India Partnership in ushering an era of economic renewal and inclusive opportunity,” said Vijay Advani, USIBC global board chair. Speaking on the H-1B visa issue, Biswal said it is USIBC’s strongly held view that both the US and India benefit when workers, ideas, or innovations are allowed to move more freely across both borders.





A MASKED UIGHUR BOY TAKES PART IN A PROTEST AGAINST CHINA, AT THE COURTYARD OF FATIH MOSQUE, A COMMON MEETING PLACE FOR PRO-ISLAMIST DEMONSTRATORS IN ISTANBUL, TURKEY. (REUTERS)

US ADDS 11 COMPANIES TO ECONOMIC BLACKLIST OVER CHINA’S TREATMENT OF UIGHURS

The US Commerce Department on Monday added 11 Chinese companies implicated in what it called human rights violations in connection with China’s treatment of its Uighurs in Xinjiang in western China to the US economic blacklist.

The department said the companies were involved in using forced labor by Uighurs and other Muslim minority groups. They include numerous textile companies and two firms the government said were conducting genetic analyses used to further the repression of Uighurs and other Muslim minorities.

Blacklisted firms cannot buy components from US companies without US government approval.

It was the third group of companies and institutions in China added to the US blacklist, after two rounds in which the Trump administration cited 37 entities it said were involved in China’s repression in Xinjiang. “Beijing actively promotes the reprehensible practice of forced labor and abusive DNA collection and analysis schemes to repress its citizens,” Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross said in a statement.

The Chinese Embassy in Washington declined to comment. In May the Chinese Foreign Ministry criticized US entity list additions, arguing

the United States “overstretched the concept of national security, abused export control measures, violated the basic norms governing international relations, interfered in China’s internal affairs.”

The companies added to the blacklist include Nanchang O-Film Tech, a supplier for Apple’s iPhone, which hosted Apple chief executive Tim Cook in December 2017, according to O-Film’s website. It is also a supplier to Amazon.com Inc and Microsoft, according to an April congressional letter. The US companies did not immediately comment.

The list includes two subsidiaries of Beijing Genomics Institute, a genomics company with ties to the Chinese government, Senator Marco Rubio said.

He said the additions will “ensure that US technology does not aid the Chinese Communist Party’s crimes against humanity and egregious human rights abuses against Uyghurs and other minorities in Xinjiang, including the forced collection of DNA.”

Also added are KTK Group Co, which produces more than 2,000 products used to build high-speed trains, from electronics to seats; and Tanyuan Technology Co, which assembles high thermal conductive graphite reinforced aluminum composites.

Another company is Changji Esquel Textile Co, which Esquel Group launched in 2009. Esquel Group produces clothing for Ralph Lauren, Tommy Hilfiger and Hugo Boss.

In a letter to Ross on Monday, Esquel Chief Executive John Chen asked its unit be removed from the list. “Esquel does not use forced labor, and we never will use forced labor. We absolutely and categorically oppose forced labor,” Chen wrote.

Efforts to reach other companies in China for comment were unsuccessful outside of normal business hours.

Also on the blacklist is Hetian Haolin Hair Accessories Co. On May 1, US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) said it was halting imports of the company’s hair products, citing evidence of forced labor. On July 1, CBP seized in Newark a shipment of almost 13 tons of hair products worth over \$800,000 with human hair that it said originated in Xinjiang.

Commerce previously added 20 Chinese public security bureaus and companies including video surveillance firm Hikvision, as well as leaders in facial recognition technology SenseTime Group Ltd and Megvii Technology in connection with China’s treatment of Muslim minorities.

PHASE II TRIAL FINDS CHINESE COVID-19 VACCINE IS SAFE, INDUCES IMMUNE RESPONSE

A phase II clinical trial of a Covid-19 vaccine candidate, conducted in China, has found that it is safe and induces an immune response, a study published in The Lancet says.

Scientists, including those from the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, said the trial sought to evaluate the safety and immunogenicity of the vaccine candidate.

They said the results provide data from a wider group of participants than their earlier phase I trial, including a small sub-group of participants aged over 55 years and older.

However, the researchers cautioned that no participants in the current trial were exposed to the novel coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2, after vaccination. So they said it is not possible for the current study to determine whether the vaccine candidate effectively protects against SARS-CoV-2 infection.

In the trial, the researchers used a weakened human common cold virus (adenovirus, which infects human cells readily but is incapable of causing disease) to deliver the genetic material which codes for the novel coronavirus spike protein into the cells. The scientists said these cells then produced the coronavirus spike protein, and travel to the body’s lymph nodes where the immune system creates antibodies. They said these antibodies then recognise the spike protein and fight off the coronavirus.

“The Beijing approach is based on the backbone of a conventional human, common-cold virus to which some people have pre-existing antibodies and they therefore make a lower response in some people to the vaccine because people have pre-existing antibodies to their vector, so may clear it before it has a chance to work properly,” explained Danny Altmann, Professor of Immunology at Imperial College London in the UK, who is unrelated to the research team.

According to the scientists, 508 participants took part in the trial of the new vaccine candidate. Of these, they said 253 people received a high dose of the vaccine, 129 received a low dose, and 126 received a dummy treatment, a placebo. The study noted that about two thirds of the participants were 18-44 years old, a quarter were aged 45-54 years, and 13 per cent were 55 years or older.

The participants were monitored for immediate adverse reactions for 30 minutes after injection, and were followed for any injection-site reactions within 14- and 28-days post-vaccination, the study noted. It said serious adverse events reported by participants during the whole study period were also documented, and blood samples were taken from them immediately before treatment, and 14- and 28-days post-vaccination to measure antibody responses.

The findings revealed that 95 per cent (241/253) of the participants in the high dose group, and 91 per cent (118/129) of those in the low dose group showed either T cell or antibody immune responses at



day 28 post-vaccination.

According to the researchers, the vaccine induced a neutralising antibody response in 59 per cent (148/253) and 47 per cent (61/129) of the participants, and binding antibody response in 96 per cent (244/253) and 97 per cent (125/129) of participants, in the high and low dose groups, respectively, by day 28. The study noted that the proportion of participants who had any adverse reactions like fever, fatigue and injection-site pain were significantly higher in vaccine recipients, than those who were given the placebo.

However, the scientists said, most adverse reactions were mild or moderate. They said the most common severe reaction was fever. The researchers cautioned that pre-existing immunity to the human adenovirus which was used as the vector (the Ad5 vector) for this vaccine, and increasing age could partially hamper the specific immune responses to vaccination, particularly for the antibody responses.

“Since elderly individuals face a high risk of serious illness and even death associated with Covid-19 infection, they are an important target population for a Covid-19 vaccine. It is possible that an additional dose may be needed in order to induce a stronger immune response in the elderly population, but further research is underway to evaluate this,” said study co-author Wei Chen from the Beijing Institute of Biotechnology in China.

Since the trial participants were not exposed to the coronavirus after vaccination, the scientists said it is not possible for the current study to determine the efficacy of the candidate vaccine. They said it is also not possible to say from the current research if there are any risks associated with the antibody induced by vaccination when exposed to the novel coronavirus.

JOE BIDEN CAMPAIGN PITCHES INDIAN AMERICAN VOTERS AS KEY TO WHITE HOUSE



Indian Americans have mostly voted for Democrats in the presidential elections. On November 3, they can do more, Democrats believe, and put former Vice-President Joe Biden in the White House.

“The Indian American vote — the AAPI more broadly — can be an absolute difference maker,” Tom Perez, chairman of the Democratic National Committee, said at a power-packed pitch to them at a virtual town-hall recently, pointing to their demographics in the three Rust Belt swing states of Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania that put Donald Trump in the White House in a stunning upset in 2016.

The broader group AAPI in Perez’s remarks, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, include people of Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Korean, Japanese and Indonesian descent. President Donald Trump won these three states narrowly by 0.2, 0.7 and 0.8 percentage points, respectively — 10,704, 46,765 and 22,177 votes. Together, they gave him their cumulative 46 electoral votes, a 304-227 victory over Hillary Clinton and the White House. (There are in all 538 electoral votes that decide a presidential elections in the US, not the popular vote, which Clinton won, in this instance by more than 3 million; 7 electors voted against their pledges).

Indian Americans of voting age are in sufficient numbers in these states to obliterate Trump’s lead and put Biden across the finishing line, Democrats have argued.

There are 125,000 Indian American voters in Michigan, 156,000 in Pennsylvania and 37,000 in Wisconsin, according to an analysis by AAPI Victory Fund, a Democratic group dedicated to ensuring the victory of AAPI candidates that had hosted the town-hall.

The number of Indian Americans who voted in these three states in 2016, or did not, could not be immediately ascertained. But the countrywide turnout for the community was 62%, according to AAPI Data, the study cited by AAPI Victory Fund. It was the highest among AAPI communities with Japanese Americans, and was 6 points above the national turnout of 56%.

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