

BLUE LINE NEWSWEEK *Celebrating 20 Years*

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Executive Digest

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NEWSWEEK

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RCMP members refuse 'red serge' duties

RCMP had to cancel participation on Vancouver's Canada Day parade due to lack of response from officers



July 7, 2016

VANCOUVER - Members of the RCMP across Canada are taking part in quiet protests over what they say is unsustainable under-staffing and an overall morale problem within the force.

Some Mounties are refusing to volunteer for so-called "red serge duty" where they march in parades and appear at events such as fairs, festivals and sporting events in their

ceremonial red uniforms and Stetson hats.

Vancouver's Canada Day parade was the first casualty.

"It is with disappointment that I have to announce that I had to cancel the RCMP participation in this year's Canada Day parade in downtown Vancouver due to a lack of response," Sgt. Maj. Nathalie Caron wrote in an email to employees in B.C. "Thank you to the few that showed interest."

Protest of any kind is rare inside the



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RCMP, which has strict regulations about publicly expressing any kind of comments about the force that could be considered negative.

But as Parliament missed — and appears to be in no rush to honour — a deadline set out by the Supreme Court to give Mounties the opportunity to form a union and collectively bargain with management, many members of the RCMP are organizing online to refuse requests for red serge duty.

“There is a morale problem,” says Const. Richelle Daly. And while she doesn’t endorse the protest, the Edmonton-area traffic cop says she sees first-hand the effect of chronic short-staffing.

“The lack of resources, member fatigue — just the operational burnout seems to be the biggest factor here. And I’m finding that members, when they are looking for overtime, they’re more likely to take the overtime that’s going to be for the front-line members and on the watches rather than doing a red serge duty,” Daly told CBC News.

Last month, RCMP managers in Alberta sent out a request for people to volunteer for a ceremonial troop that would attend six high-profile events per year. If there weren’t enough volunteers by July 1, the email said, people would be assigned to don the red serge.

The protests are largely being organized on social media, where Mounties have also discussed boycotting upcoming parades and other community events across Canada.

“Management should see this as an early warning signal,” says retired RCMP assistant commissioner Cal Corley.

He says front-line officers have been under a great deal of strain and expressions of frustrations are to be expected.

Irritants, according to Corley, are:

- The decision to redistribute resources to combat terrorism.
- Findings that three Mounties murdered in

Moncton, N.B., in 2014 were not properly equipped

- A class-action lawsuit over sexual harassment inside the force.
- Commissioner Bob Paulson’s decision six weeks ago to scrap the closest thing officers had to a union.
- How far the RCMP has fallen behind other police services in pay.

“The only way the RCMP is going to achieve its vision is to engage the membership in more democratic ways, and perhaps what we call non-traditional ways, than it perhaps has in the past,” he said. “It’d be foolish to dismiss it. It really warrants some introspection on the part of the organization and to take this seriously.”

When asked for the force’s reaction to the Canada Day parade boycott, a B.C. RCMP spokesperson responded, “As more and more communities throughout B.C. plan larger celebrations, we are seeing our members, and their families, choose to celebrate Canada Day in the communities where they live and work.”

Corley says it’s positive that the officers are choosing to strike out at a symbolic element of the force, instead of day-to-day policing. And organizers are clear that they won’t boycott Pride parades, regimental funerals or Remembrance Day ceremonies.

The last controversy over red serge duty involved on-duty officers training for the musical ride who were assigned to serve in the honour guard at Paulson’s 2012 wedding. Once the story became public, Paulson later cut a \$912 cheque to repay the federal government.

(CBC - CP)

charged with a criminal offence to community service instead of jail will be piloted in the city this fall.

Tory says the objective of the initiatives is to “arrest” some of the “concerning” trends.

As of early June, 21 people had been shot dead in Toronto, up from the nine recorded in the first five months of 2015.

Jun 30 2016

OTTAWA - The federal government established a travelling task force Thursday that will spend the coming months studying how best to legalize and regulate recreational marijuana use in Canada.

The move is part of Ottawa’s efforts to introduce legislation to legalize pot in the spring of 2017.

No decisions have been made about what the eventual law will look like, Health Minister Jane Philpott said Thursday.

“We have put those questions to the task force and we look forward to their recommendations,” she said. “We will take those recommendations into consideration.”

The group will meet with provincial, territorial and municipal governments over the coming weeks and months, Philpott said.

The task force - made up of experts in public health, substance abuse, law enforcement and justice - will be chaired by former Liberal public safety minister Anne McLellan.

McLellan, who also served as deputy prime minister, said there’s been a deeper understanding of the marijuana landscape over the past decade.

“I think so many people have come to the conclusion, for so many reasons, that the current situation is not working and we need a better way forward,” she said.

“I have, myself, concluded that legalization with a regulatory regime, such as the task force will be exploring, is the way forward.”

Philpott said she did not want to imply that every province will have the same distribution system.

“They may have (the same system) but these are questions that are premature for today,” Philpott said.

The government will also hold an online public consultation that will be open until the end of August.

Jun 30 2016



Jun 30 2016

TORONTO - The federal, provincial and Toronto governments are partnering to combat violence in Canada’s most populous city, which has seen a recent spike in gun crime.

Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale and Ontario Attorney General Yasir Naqvi met with Toronto Mayor John Tory today and announced three initiatives aimed at increasing community safety.

A new intervention fund is being set up to provide counselling and crisis teams in neighbourhoods that have experienced violence, a program to identify and help those at a high risk of criminal behaviour is being expanded and a program to direct youth

TORONTO - The Ontario government vowed Thursday to tackle the “deplorable and inhumane crime” of human trafficking with a plan meant to increase awareness, help investigate and prosecute cases and boost support for victims in the province.

The plan, dubbed the Strategy to End Human Trafficking, would see the province split up to \$72 million between several ministries over four years as it strives to better co-ordinate resources to take on what officials describe as a growing and complex problem.

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Celebrating 20 Years

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It includes the creation of a provincial anti-trafficking co-ordination office meant to foster information sharing between police, social services, child welfare and other sectors, as well as help implement culturally appropriate strategies for indigenous peoples affected by human trafficking.

The government said it will also establish a specialized provincial prosecution team to tackle human trafficking cases and advise local Crown attorneys and law enforcement, though no timeline has been set for either initiative.

The government said Ontario accounts for 65 per cent of human trafficking cases reported to police nationally.

A report issued in December by a legislative committee found Ontario has become a "major hub" for human trafficking and sexual violence, with most of the victims being local underage girls and young women.

Jun 30 2016

WATERLOO - Criminal charges have been withdrawn against a Waterloo Regional Police officer.

Const. Jeremy Snyder was charged in January with assault, mischief and uttering threats in connection with an off-duty incident. He has been on paid suspension from the police service since then.

In court Thursday, Snyder entered into a peace bond - meaning that as long as he has no unwanted contact with his alleged victim and generally stays out of trouble, he will not face any further action over the accusations.

Outside court, Snyder's lawyer said that he hoped his client could return to police work.

Snyder was charged with sexual assault in 2012. He was found not guilty of that offence at trial, and is currently suing Waterloo Regional Police for \$2 million in connection with how they handled the allegations against him.

(CTV Kitchener)

Jun 30 2016

TORONTO - Ontario's Special Investigations Unit says two police officers were "legally justified" in fatally shooting a man outside a Toronto nightclub last year.

The SIU concludes that police were acting in self-defence on July 25, 2015, when they shot Kwasi Skene-Peters, 21, who died from a gunshot wound to the heart.

Police had issued a Canada-wide warrant for Skene-Peters's arrest on two charges of first-degree murder two weeks before the shooting.

The SIU says a fire broke out when officers approached Skene-Peters in his car to arrest him and that two gunshots came from inside the vehicle.

The report says police returned fire only after those initial shots were fired and SIU director Tony Loparco says he has "no doubt" the officers feared for their lives.

The two officers under investigation did not participate in SIU interviews or provide copies of their duty notes.

FRIDAY JULY 1, 2016

Jul 01 2016

REGINA - The minister responsible for Saskatchewan Government Insurance says convictions for hand-held cellphone use while driving are high in part because of better enforcement.

However, Don McMorris also admits too many people are still breaking the law.

Legislation banning the use of hand-held cellphones while driving became law Jan. 1, 2010, in Saskatchewan.

SGI says there were just over 1,800 convictions that year and the number kept climbing to reach about 4,900 in 2014, before dropping back slightly last year to 4,300.

McMorris says there are more police officers on the road and they've learned how to better spot when people are using their hand-held phones while driving.

Distracted driving surpassed impaired driving as the number one contributing factor in fatal crashes in 2012, but McMorris says it's now ranked third behind impaired driving and speeding.

Jul 01 2016

BURLINGTON, Ont. - A man has been charged after two police officers were injured by a knife-wielding man in Burlington, Ont., Thursday afternoon.

The incident happened when the officers were called to a domestic disturbance at a home.

Halton Region police say the officers were "immediately attacked" once they entered the home.

One officer was pushed to the ground and stabbed in the head, the second officer was bitten on the arm while trying to intervene and a family member was also injured during the melee.

Police say officers used a Taser to subdue the 22-year-old man and then arrested him. He is in hospital undergoing a psychiatric assessment, and has been charged with attempted murder, two counts of assault causing bodily harm and two counts of assaulting police officers.

Both of the police officers have returned home, where they're expected to make a full recovery.

Jul 01 2016

BRAMPTON - A Mississauga man has been found not guilty of driving with excess blood alcohol because a judge found police violated his rights by withholding his turban for more than three hours after his arrest.

Not only did the officers involved not comply with Peel Regional Police's own policy on individuals wearing turbans in custody, but one officer wasn't even aware of it, wrote Ontario Court Justice Jill Copeland in a decision released this week.

Sardul Singh, an observant Sikh, was

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arrested following a RIDE spot check in December 2014. As he was being placed in the back of a police cruiser, his turban accidentally fell off.

But it was not returned to him for several hours, including while he was giving breath samples at the Brampton police division, leaving him feeling vulnerable, the judge wrote.

Copeland threw out the breath samples and dismissed the case, finding Singh's right to freedom of religion had been infringed.

"There is no dispute that all of the officers involved in the detention of Mr. Singh were aware of the religious significance of his turban," she wrote.

"Based on the evidence before the court, I find that the officers involved in Mr. Singh's arrest and detention acted in a careless manner in relation to Mr. Singh's right to freedom of religion in relation to the turban . . . I find Mr. Singh not guilty. The charge is dismissed."

A Peel police spokesman said the force is aware of the incident and will be reviewing Copeland's decision and investigating the conduct of the involved officers. Sgt. Josh Colley said officers are responsible for reviewing all directives and updates annually.

Peel Regional Police's policy states that when a Sikh wearing a turban is in custody, the turban should only be removed for the purposes of a search and then returned, or if there are safety concerns, Copeland wrote, noting there was no search or safety concerns in Singh's case.

"In terms of the Peel Regional Police service as a whole, it is commendable that the service has created a policy to proactively address this issue," she wrote.

"Unfortunately, in this case there was a significant problem with implementation of the policy by the officers involved, and with knowledge of the policy on the part of at least one officer."

It was the understanding of the breathalyzer technician at the police division that individuals under arrest were not allowed to wear turbans while in custody, the judge found.

While Singh never inquired about his turban while detained, Copeland said he should never have been put in the position of having to ask in the first place.

(Toronto Star)

SATURDAY JULY 2, 2016

Jul 02 2016

SUMMERLAND, B.C. - B.C.'s police watchdog is looking into a shooting involving police in the Okanagan.

The Independent Investigation Office says a Summerland RCMP officer tried to pull over a vehicle that headed down a dead-end road early Saturday morning.

It says there was a situation that led to police shots being fired.

The suspected vehicle fled the area and the police officer was not injured in the confrontation.

The agency says police have indicated that a man with a gunshot wound who may be connected with the incident checked into a local hospital several hours later.

Jul 02 2016

UPPER SALMON ROAD, N.B. - New Brunswick RCMP are investigating the circumstances surrounding a series of collisions that claimed the life of a 53-year-old man Friday night.

West District RCMP say the man, from Burton, struck two young moose while driving his motorcycle along Route 10 in Upper Salmon Creek around 10 p.m. on July 1. He was thrown from his motorcycle and landed in the southbound lane of the roadway, while his motorcycle came to rest in the northbound lane.

Shortly after, police say an RCMP officer in an unmarked police vehicle came upon the scene of the crash and struck the motorcycle driver, who was lying unresponsive on the road.

"He braked immediately but was unable to come to a complete stop," Cpl. Marc Fortin said in a news release. "According to the initial collision reconstructionist investigation, the underside of the vehicle made contact with the motorcycle driver."

RCMP say both the officer and a nearby resident administered first aid until the paramedics arrived.

RCMP say their investigation is continuing.

(CTV News)

Jul 02 2016

EDMONTON - In a time when murder investigations are as likely to involve a search of a cellphone as a crime scene, and IP addresses can leave a better trail than tire tracks, the separation of investigation into cybercrime and crime is getting thinner.

In Edmonton, police are fighting to keep pace with the change.

"The thing that hasn't changed is humans," Sgt. Phil Palamattam, of the Edmonton Police Service Tech Crimes Unit, said last month.

EPS was an early adopter in the field of "tech crime." In 1994, the force was the first in Canada to form a dedicated tech crime unit in response to the advent of Internet fraud.

More than two decades later, the unit now has three main focuses: forensic video analysis, digital forensics, and cybercrime. Last year, police launched a specialized cybercrime detail that focuses on online activity.

The detail is led by acting Sgt. Jim Gainor and supports investigation into major crimes like homicide and sexual assault. It also probes cyber-specific crimes, like online fraud, extortion and ransomware - a type of bug that blocks access to affected networks and computers until a ransom is paid.

In May, hackers used ransomware to hold hostage the University of Calgary's essential online services - including email, Skype and

internal servers. Just over a week later, the university paid the ransom: the equivalent of \$20,000 in Bitcoin, a form of digital currency that's difficult to trace.

Gainor said ransomware attacks have happened in Edmonton, too, but believes people and businesses are often too embarrassed to report the crime, believing they should have known better.

He points to the UofC case as an illustration of just how nefarious these cyber criminals can be, with the ability to victimize even large, well-established organizations. He urges any organizations or individuals that have been targeted to contact police.


"When it's not reported, it's really difficult for us to really do any work on it and reverse-engineer or look at the actual malware itself," Gainor said.

Gainor said that criminals using the web to expand their reach across the world has fostered an era of unprecedented co-operation between cross-border law enforcement agencies. He said EPS once collaborated with police in the Philippines on a ransomware incident that had roots in a cybercafe in the southeast Asian country.

"There's really no borders when you move into cybercrime," Palamattam said.

A recent success in international pushback against cyber crimes came this week when news broke that a Dutch court had approved the extradition to Canada of B.C. teen Amanda Todd's alleged online tormentor. Todd, 15,

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died by suicide in October 2012 after Dutch citizen Aydin Coban allegedly posted nude photos of her online. Coban is charged with extortion, possession of child pornography and attempting to lure a child online.

Even as advances are made in bringing charges for online offences, Gainor said that on the investigation side, the race to catch up with advances in technology co-opted for criminal activity is never-ending.

"Every day you see new technologies, new apps, new devices, and, for us, we constantly have to evolve to keep up," Gainor said. (Edmonton Journal)

Jul 02 2016

OTTAWA - The growing popularity of programs that protect online privacy is creating a barrier for police and security agencies ability to intercept and use data, documents obtained by the Toronto Star suggest.

Public safety officials warned Minister Ralph Goodale in November that encryption - the ability to mask communications so only the intended recipients can make sense of the message - is hindering their ability to use online communications in investigations.

"Canadians are increasingly using mobile phone networks, the Internet, and other electronic means to communicate and execute transactions with each other," the documents, heavily censored and stamped "secret," read.

"This has led to a significant gap between the technologies available for criminal exploitation and our means to enforce Canada's laws and keep Canadians safe."

Once a fringe set of complicated tools, encryption technology has become more and more mainstream, particularly after the disclosures of NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden. Journalists use encrypted emails to protect sources, businesses use encryption to protect their customers' transactions and governments use encryption to try and protect sensitive information.

Because a number of companies have moved to encryption by default, plenty of Canadians are using encrypted messaging without even knowing it. If you've sent a text on your iPhone, you've used encryption.

Despite perfectly legal and appropriate uses, however, law enforcement has generally focused the encryption debate on the perceived advantages the technology gives to criminals to plot or cover their tracks.

The Toronto Star requested an interview with Goodale to discuss these issues, but the minister was unavailable over the past two weeks. His office noted that the minister recently addressed the encryption debate in a speech at the University of Regina.

"We need a thoughtful discussion about the legal framework that applies to new technologies. On the issue of encryption, for example, is absolute privacy the only 'public good' that needs to be safeguarded, or is there a point at which criminal or terrorist investigations should be properly and lawfully assisted?" the minister's prepared remarks read.

"And if so, where?"

Officials also flagged a number of other issues to Goodale in the documents, including data retention. Canada does not have an overarching law that requires companies to retain data for a certain period, meaning evidence sought by police could already be gone by the time they get around to asking for it.

The fact that many companies keep their data on foreign servers presents jurisdictional challenges. And a recent Supreme Court decision requiring police to obtain a warrant for users' "basic subscriber information" - things like address, Internet Protocol address, or phone numbers - have led to police complaints about increased paperwork.

"The issues outlined above are multifaceted and inherently complex," the documents note.

"While it is possible to consider each issue separately, any solution would need to look to all issues collectively. . . To date, some work has been done to develop and advance solutions to address the issues highlighted above, however certain solutions are much more advanced than others."

Christopher Parsons, a researcher with Citizen Lab at the University of Toronto, suggested that there's little the government can do to prevent encryption in an age where every iPhone or WhatsApp message provides a high level of security.



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"I think that really where the government has to explain things is, (for one) how could it possibly compel third parties who operate outside of the country and have invested so much on privacy and security, what are they going to do? I guess they can try to block Apple and iMessage, but that's not going to work," Parsons said in an interview Friday.

Parsons also questioned framing the encryption debate around criminals and terrorists, rather than ordinary folks trying to protect their privacy.

"The majority of communications that are conducted using encryption are going to be fully lawful. So that means that there's an immediate proportionality issue," Parsons said.

"When we start framing things as we need access to the content to catch the bad guys, it really depends on what we're trying to do. . . I'm inherently suspicious."

(Toronto Star)

SUNDAY JULY 3, 2016

Jul 03 2016

SCOTT, Que. - A Quebec man who police say ran away and jumped in a river when officers tried to give him a breathalyzer test will face several charges.

Quebec provincial police Sgt. Claude Denis said the man was pulled over early Sunday morning after cutting off a patrol vehicle.

The 29-year-old suspect then jumped in the river near the town of Scott, about 45 kilometres south of Quebec City.

Denis added that authorities believed the man may have been inebriated at the time.

He said the suspect was arrested several hours later after he was spotted walking down the road wearing wet clothes that included a stolen pair of firefighter's pants.

Investigators believe the man broke into the shed where the clothes were stored after he escaped from the river.

According to Denis, the man decided to don the pants "because he was cold."

Jul 03 2016

INNISFIL, Ont. - Police in a small central Ontario town had to use bananas to lure a renegade monkey into captivity Sunday morning after it was spotted on the loose in a residential area.

Police say a passerby saw the spider monkey - whose name is Mango - at about 6 a.m.

Buchanan says capturing Mango wasn't easy.

"It was all over the place," Buchanan said of Mango. "We didn't know how to catch a monkey, so we called the Bear Creek Animal Sanctuary."

But before officials from the sanctuary got to the scene, officers had to come up with a way to keep the monkey nearby.

"The police officers had some bananas in their lunch, so they were giving the monkey bananas so it wouldn't take off," Buchanan said. "The monkey hung out, because it liked the bananas."

MONDAY JULY 4, 2016

Jul 04 2016

CALGARY - After years of a police service that "drifted" away from holding its officers accountable for bad behaviour, Calgary's police chief says he's in the middle of a deliberate culture shift.



In the last three months, 28 criminal and bylaw charges were laid against seven CPS members - past and present.

Nine months into his leadership, Chief Roger Chaffin says accountability and transparency are two of his top priorities for the service.

"Losing sight of that or having that drift - and it has drifted - causes much more problems," said Chaffin in a sit down interview with CBC News.

"I think in the chief's job, you should be more popular for your leadership and the rigour that you're held to supporting people and making sure we're going a good job."

Last month, following a lengthy investigation, a number of criminal charges including corruption, bribery, harassment and breach of trust were laid against two current and two former CPS employees.

"Without some rigour to our accountability to the public ... you tend to have these things happen," said Chaffin. "Where a small transgression around something like data integrity, data breaches becomes a corruption issue very quickly."

The chief says accountability needs to be better understood.

"Often it's seen as someone walking around and killing every fly with a sledge hammer," said Chaffin. "I don't want accountability ever to sound like punishment."

"Accountability is a myriad of things where at the end of that spectrum there could be punishment."

Chaffin points out there is a difference between those who make mistakes and members whose conduct is intentionally illegal or unethical.

"One thing about policing ... you make

decisions in split seconds and sometimes they don't go well; I can support that because it's tough job."

Though the chief does have a message for those on the more malicious side of the spectrum.

"I'm not going to have a lot of time and comfort for what they're doing and I'm going to deal with them fairly significantly."

Aside from public perception, Chaffin says the cultural shift is also important for organizational confidence.

Chaffin says he understands a concern among members of a harsh leadership style but believes in the end, confidence among the public and CPS members will be bolstered by his approach.

"Ignoring that and not having accountability and trying to duck and weave for fear of the perception that we're being heavy handed tends to, long-term, set people up for failure," said Chaffin.

"There should never be mortgaging accountability for popularity."

(CBC News)

Jul 04 2016

TORONTO - Members of the Toronto police force say they're offended that Pride organizers agreed to a list of demands set out by Black Lives Matter during Sunday's parade.



The list includes nine demands that range from banning police floats in future parades to increasing funding for spaces for racialized communities.

Members of the group held a sit-in part way through the city's 36th annual Pride Parade, stopping it from moving forward for about a half hour.

It resumed when Pride's executive director, Mathieu Chantelois, signed the list of demands.

The president for the union representing the city's police officers said he's outraged that Pride would accept the demands.

Mike McCormack said that police officers have been supporters of Pride for years, and that it's "stupid" to try and exclude them.

"This is about the Pride parade, this is not about Black Lives Matter," he said in an interview Monday.

"We have been supporting this parade for years, long before politicians and other people. To suggest that police should be removed and not have a float or booths or be allowed in the community space, that's complete and utter nonsense."

He suggested that Black Lives Matter shouldn't be allowed to co-opt another group's event.

But while Pride Toronto's executive director signed the document during Sunday's parade, organizers are now saying that they were really just committing to "having a conversation" about the list.

"There's a number of (the requests) that are quite reasonable, in terms of how we engage with the black, queer community," said Alicia Hall, a co-chair of Pride's board of directors. And the rest of them, she said, will be discussed - including the role of police.

Jul 04 2016

OTTAWA - An Ottawa police superintendent will take on the job of deputy chief of the Durham Regional Police Service east of Toronto starting next month.



Supt. Uday Jaswal will be formally sworn in at a ceremony in Whitby on Aug. 2.

Jaswal has been a police officer in Ottawa since 1995 and a superintendent since 2013. He's worked in guns and gangs, overseen the patrol directorate and steered projects including expanding the use of stun guns within the force.

The University of Ottawa graduate is also the current chairman of the Youth Services Bureau of Ottawa.

Roger Anderson, the chairman of Durham's police services board, said Jaswal quickly rose through the ranks in Ottawa.

"Throughout his career, he has demonstrated outstanding leadership, a commitment to learning and community service, and a spirit of innovation," Anderson said in a news release. "He understands the complexity of policing and the importance of the profession, and is passionate about its future."

(Ottawa Citizen)

Jul 04 2016

PICKERING, Ont. - A 37-year-old man is under arrest after a flaming bag of clothing was thrown over the front desk at police station east of Toronto.

Durham Regional Police say a man entered the station in Pickering, Ont., on Saturday evening carrying a plastic bag with clothes inside.

They say he then set the bag on fire and threw it over the front desk and into the administrative area, where both officers and civilians were working.

The man fled the scene and was chased down by officers, who detained him under the

Mental Health Act.

No one was injured in the incident.

Investigators say a man from Ajax, Ont., will be charged with mischief under \$5,000.

Jul 04 2016

BRANDON - A Brandon police officer will not face criminal charges after an alleged assault that took place in March 2016.

The officer responded to a domestic assault at a residence, following which an adult woman complained about his conduct.

The woman said that the officer questioned her about why she keeps letting her partner back. When she threatened to record the conversation, the officer threw her phone to the ground and pushed her against a door where he held her for some time.

Though she had no serious injuries, the Independent Investigation Unit of Manitoba (IIU) took over the investigation.

After reviewing security footage of the incident, the IIU's civilian director Zane Tessler wrote that the officer's conduct was uncalled for and unjustified, but that the criminal justice system isn't the appropriate way to deal with the matter.

Tessler encouraged her to pursue her complaint against the officer in other forums, and suggested the Brandon Police Service consider internal actions against the officer. (mytooba.ca)

Jul 04 2016

OTTAWA - Canadian police lack the resources to keep pace with the burgeoning threat to children from online sexual predators, federal officials have warned the public safety minister.

An internal briefing note to Ralph Goodale says digital child pornography poses increasing challenges for criminal justice agencies.

The problem is fuelled by the growth of technology allowing online anonymity, new legal hurdles for police and easier travel to places where children can be abused and photographed, the note says.

The Canadian Press obtained a copy of the February memo under the Access to Information Act.

It says although data is limited, some believe online child sexual exploitation has reached "a level of epidemic proportions" that if left largely unaddressed will have devastating consequences for generations of children in Canada and abroad.

"It is therefore essential that the government work with partners and stakeholders to gain a thorough understanding of all the challenges and identify what is needed to tackle this significant threat."

Criminal justice statistics show incidents of child pornography and sexual violence against children increased in 2014 over the previous year despite an overall drop in the rate of violent crime.

Cybertip.ca, a national tipline to report

suspected online sexual abuse of children, has also seen a rise in reporting - including increases with respect to the severity of the acts and images of very young children, the memo adds.

It outlines the many initiatives to target offenders, noting Canada has shown leadership in devising a national strategy, enacting criminal laws and supporting global efforts.

The RCMP is one of the very few Canadian police agencies dedicating resources to develop solutions and sustain undercover operations targeting technologically sophisticated offenders, the memo notes. "Current resources, however, cannot keep pace with the changing scope of the issue."

Pornographers are using digital techniques to shield their identities and communications as they distribute illicit images around the globe.

In addition, the Supreme Court of Canada has ruled that police need judicial authorization to obtain subscriber data linked to online activities.

Civil libertarians applauded the Supreme Court ruling amid public concern about authorities gaining access to customer information with little evident scrutiny or oversight.

Even so, the memo says the new restriction is "causing investigative delays and, in some instances, results in cases being abandoned because thresholds for judicial orders cannot be met."

The government is constantly updating its policies and tools because of ever-changing technologies, said Scott Bardsley, a spokesman for Goodale.

"Public Safety, the RCMP, academics and others continue to study these complicated questions," he said. "We are committed to keeping Canadians safe while respecting their rights and freedoms."

In addition, the government is conducting a broad review to assess whether the RCMP has sufficient resources to carry out its mandate, he noted.

"We look forward to the findings of that review."

TUESDAY
JULY 5, 2016

Jul 05 2016

TORONTO - The province's Special Investigations Unit is looking into an incident in Toronto on Monday in which a 39-year-old man was injured after being hit with a police Taser.

The SIU says Toronto police were sent to a north-end apartment building on Monday afternoon where there was an "encounter" with the man.

At about 6 p.m., some two hours after police arrived at the scene, the SIU says an officer deployed a stun gun.

The man was taken to hospital with a facial injury and is expected to undergo surgery on Tuesday morning.

The SIU has designated one subject officer and two witness officers as part of the investigation.

Jul 05 2016

VICTORIA - The investigation into the death of West Shore RCMP Const. Sarah Beckett, who died three months ago today, continues to be active, said the RCMP.

Beckett, a 32-year-old mother of two, died April 5 when her car was struck in a Victoria area intersection.

The driver of the pickup truck that hit the cruiser was taken into custody and released the next day without being charged.

"You can imagine this is a complex investigation, one which takes time to gather all the evidence and-or exhibits," said Cpl. Janelle Shoihet.

"Once we are in a position to do so, all the investigative findings will be provided to Crown counsel to determine whether charges should be laid."

A criminal investigation into the fatal crash is being led by the RCMP Island District General Investigations Section. The Saanich Police Department has completed an investigation into the collision scene and forwarded a report to the RCMP.

The Independent Investigations Office of British Columbia began their own probe after it was learned that police tried to stop the pickup truck minutes before it struck Beckett's police cruiser.

The IIO investigation is taking place at the same time as the criminal investigation.

In a separate incident, on May 22, the same man believed to be involved in the fatal collision was rescued from the mangled wreckage of a car.

When firefighters arrived, a woman was lying on the ground receiving medical attention from paramedics. Firefighters cut the roof off the truck and freed the badly injured man trapped inside.

Later, one of the police officers at the scene sent an update to Malahat Fire Chief Rob Patterson telling him the injured man might be the individual who was involved in the April 5 collision that killed Beckett.

The IIO is also investigating the May 22 crash.

West Shore RCMP had tried to stop the vehicle for a road check, but it did not stop. The vehicle was found after it rolled over.

(Victoria Times Colonist)

Jul 05 2016

MISSISSAUGA, Ont. - The province's Special Investigations Unit says a Guelph, Ont., police officer's use of force was reasonable in the arrest of a naked man a year ago.

The police watchdog agency says two officers located a man after responding to numerous reports on July 15, 2015, of a naked man walking along the street.

The officers approached the man, who had opened the door of a van and was rummaging through the contents, and apprehended him under the Mental Health Act.

Once handcuffed, the man became combative and kicked out at one of the officers four times, hitting the officer once.

The SIU says one of the officers struck the man once, and he became compliant and was taken to hospital with a fractured nasal bone.

SIU director Tony Loparco says the officer delivered a strike in response to the man lashing out physically, subdued the man with the single punch and no other force was applied after the punch.

Jul 05 2016

WINNIPEG - The doors to Winnipeg's Public Safety Building officially closed on Tuesday morning.



To mark the end of an era, the flag in front of the 50-year-old Princess Street structure was lowered during a ceremony. The Winnipeg Police Museum also showcased pictures of the building over the decades in the front lobby.

Deputy Chief Danny Smyth spent the morning talking with former police officers who spent their careers working in the Public Safety Building and even some who were at the grand opening of the building back in 1966. Tuesday's ceremony brings the 50-year history full circle, he said.

"[The PSB] opened with some fanfare - [as a] state of the art building - and in 50 years, she's looking a little bit weary now," said Smyth.

Police Chief Devon Clunis, who announced in March he's retiring, was joined by other former police chiefs including Jack Ewatski and Keith McCaskill at today's ceremony. Clunis said it's important to honour the history of all members who worked at the old headquarters.

"This building meant so much to so many of us. For many police officers it's their sole career in adult life, so it's important to reflect on that," said Clunis.

A planned march from the PSB to the new police headquarters for a ribbon cutting to officially mark the building's opening was postponed because of a continuing homicide investigation on Portage Avenue.

The Public Safety Building has been vacant since June 22, when the Winnipeg Police Service moved into its new headquarters on Graham Avenue.

Along with city hall, the Public Safety

Building is part of an ensemble of modernist buildings built in the 1960s in the Civic Centre neighbourhood. The city plans to demolish the PSB as well as the Civic Centre Parkade, which has been shuttered since 2012 because of structural concerns.

The parkade land will be sold, and the city is entering into consultations to find the best use for the parcel of land that includes the PSB. An 1875 caveat on the land, which was donated to the city, stipulates it must have some form of public use.

Winnipeg city council voted in 2009 to buy the former Canada Post complex on Graham Avenue to house the city's police headquarters.

City officials considered spending millions to refurbish the PSB to house a variety of other city departments but a city-commissioned report said a refurbishment would be cost-prohibitive. Heritage advocates have decried the pending demolition of the brutalist building.

The new police headquarters project has also been mired in controversy.

Initially council was told the project would cost \$135 million, even though an internal city report pegged the purchase and renovation costs at \$180 million, or close to the same cost as renovating or expanding the PSB.

The new police headquarters project wound up costing the city \$214 million.

The police HQ project also remains the focus of an RCMP fraud-and-forgery investigation that's now 18 months old.

(CBC News)

Jul 05 2016

SURREY, B.C. - One person has been taken into custody after a police incident at the Pacific Highway border crossing in Surrey, B.C.

Surrey RCMP say they received reports from the Canada Border Services Agency around 2:40 p.m. Tuesday that a vehicle failed to stop while heading into Canada from the U.S.

Police say the suspect allegedly had a firearm.

The Mounties followed the vehicle into south Surrey until it turned and headed back toward the same border crossing.

It was stopped on the U.S. side of the border and U.S. officials took an American citizen into custody.

Surrey RCMP are leading the investigation, with help from the Canada Border Services Agency and U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

Jul 05 2016

EDMONTON - An agency that investigates police has ruled an Edmonton officer used necessary force in killing a suicidal man who had shot and wounded another officer.

The Alberta Serious Incident Response Team says police pulled over a suspected drunk driver in May 2015.

It says the 31-year-old man was belligerent

and refused to get out of his vehicle, then tried to pull an officer through the window.

A second officer attempted to shoot the driver with a Taser, but backed away when the man grab a sawed-off shotgun.

The man got out of his vehicle, shot the first officer in the leg and ran off.

As the man turned and pointed his gun again at police, the second officer fired multiple shots, striking him once in the head.

Investigators later discovered that the man had recently sent suicidal messages to an ex-girlfriend.

"He told her if he wanted to commit suicide, he would do it by shooting up a police station as he hated the cops that much," ASIRT said in release Tuesday.

Tests also revealed he had drugs in his system - methamphetamine, oxycodone and prescription drugs used to treat anxiety.

Evidence in the case clearly shows that the man "presented a continuing threat to the lives of the officers, and, as he fled, a threat to public safety," said the agency.

"The use of lethal force was both reasonable and necessary," it said.

Jul 05 2016

VICTORIA - A British Columbia judge says a camp that's been occupied by 100 homeless people in Victoria since last fall must be shut down.

Chief Justice Christopher Hinkson of the B.C. Supreme Court says the camp is unsafe for people living there and for neighbours and businesses.

Hinkson says residents of the so-called tent city on the lawn of the city's court house must leave as soon as they can and move into housing made available by the province.

He has ordered that all fences and obstructions at the camp be removed.

The judge says that in the next three days, anyone without a place to live must identify themselves so they can get help accessing alternate housing.

The province applied for an injunction to shut down the camp after failing in an earlier attempt.

(CFAX)

WEDNESDAY
JULY 6, 2016

Jul 06 2016

OTTAWA - An Ottawa police officer has been demoted for one year after admitting to switching price tags on an expensive hiking bag at a Canadian Tire store while on duty.

Const. Todd Sheppard, who has been on the force since 1998 and is currently a firearms officer, attended a Professional Standards Section hearing Tuesday to face a charge of discreditable conduct under the Police Services Act.

The constable entered the store Feb. 24,

2016 wearing plain clothes and purchased a high-end hiking bag valued at approximately \$150 - but it registered as only about \$20 at the cash, according to an agreed statement of facts.

"As serious and grave as these proceedings are, they are a result of my neglect," Sheppard told hearing officer Terence Kelly, a retired York Regional Police Deputy Chief.

A loss prevention officer reviewed security footage showing Sheppard head to the cash with the expensive bag.

"He notified the cashier by phone not to process the transaction," according to the agreed statement of facts.

While on the phone with the cashier he could hear the constable say he would pay the regular price, "and would not switch the tag because he is a police officer."

The hearing was told the loss prevention officer went to the hiking bag aisle and found the original price tag on the floor and three lower priced bags had missing price tags. By that time, the constable had already left the store.

The store contacted the Organized Fraud Unit and a criminal investigation was opened as well as a complaint from the chief of police, Charles Bordeleau.

Police said Tuesday they reviewed the criminal investigation and decided not to lay criminal charges.

When Sheppard was interviewed by his peers, he admitted to switching the price tags, according to the agreed statement of facts.

The hearing officer found him guilty Tuesday of the discreditable conduct charge. He will be demoted from a first-class constable to a second-class constable for 12 months.

Kelly said the penalty was "acceptable" and noted Sheppard has had no previous Professional Standards actions against him during his lengthy policing career. Before joining Ottawa police, he served more than seven years on the police force in Chateauguay, Que.

(Hamilton Spectator)

Jul 06 2016

OTTAWA - The man in charge of the Canadian Police College in Ottawa has been moved to a new job just as the RCMP puts the final touches on a wide-ranging review into how the Mounties handled allegations of disturbing behaviour at the school.

As the college's director general, Chief Supt. Harold O'Connell oversaw operations at the school in 2014-15 when two instructors engaged in behaviour that led several of their colleagues to allege they'd been subjected to unwanted sexual touching, bullying and harassment in the workplace.

A recent officer transfer notice the details of which were shared with CBC News shows O'Connell has been transferred to an unspecified job within the RCMP's national security division. He did not respond to a request for comment and the force refused to

confirm the move.

The force has also formally launched the process to dismiss at least one of the instructors at the explosives training unit - Marco Calandrini - who was the subject of allegations about disturbing behaviour in the workplace.

In February 2016, after CBC News reported on the controversy at the police college, RCMP Deputy Commissioner Peter Henschel suspended Calandrini and his supervisor, Staff Sgt. Bruno Solesme.

Commissioner Bob Paulson ordered a review of everything that had occurred at the school. In addition to assembling a team of investigators, Paulson also asked former RCMP watchdog Paul Kennedy to provide independent oversight.

Initially the commissioner told CBC News he expected the review to take a maximum of six weeks. That was four months ago.

People close to the investigation have said the review was exhaustive and that extensive interviews were conducted with a host of people who work or worked at the Canadian Police College, RCMP headquarters and its Technical and Protective Operations Facility.

The work has led to several more internal code of conduct investigations as well an effort to undo discipline the Mounties had already doled out to Calandrini, a former member of the Canadian Forces who taught explosive forced-entry techniques at the college.

Calandrini was first suspended with pay along with Solesme in 2014. In the spring of 2015, an adjudication board reprimanded both men and docked them five and seven days pay respectively for disgraceful conduct relating to being nude at work during office hours.

After his suspension, Solesme was assigned back to work at the Canadian Police College. At first it was to administrative duties but by the end of last summer, he had rejoined his former colleagues as an instructor at the explosives training unit.

As for Calandrini, he faced additional allegations of misconduct and in October 2015, he was docked an additional 15 days of pay.

The RCMP has since tied itself in knots in an effort to backtrack on how it initially dealt with Calandrini in order to punish him again.

On June 27, the RCMP served Calandrini with a decision to rescind the discipline Chief Supt. Marty Chesser imposed last fall, stating it was "clearly disproportionate to the nature and circumstances of the contraventions." That means the force will have to refund all of his docked pay.

The force is now seeking to dismiss Calandrini and has served him with a notice telling him he will have to appear before an adjudication board.

Chesser did not respond to CBC's request for comment.

"The RCMP does not publicly comment on internal staffing movements, nor will the RCMP be responding to hearsay," the force responded in an email.

(CBC News)

SPIRITWOOD, Sask. - A new park in Spiritwood, Sask., has been dedicated to the memories of two Mounties who were killed on the job ten years ago.



Constables Robin Cameron, 29, and Marc Bourdages, 26, were fatally shot on July 7, 2006, while trying to arrest a man wanted for an alleged assault during a family dispute.

Curtis Dagenais is serving a life sentence on two counts of first-degree murder and the attempted murder of a third constable, Michelle Knopp, who was injured in the shooting.

Dagenais was captured after a massive manhunt that lasted a week and a half.

Memorial organizer Delphine McAdam says Cameron and Bourdages were loved by the community, which is trying to raise money for a statue to be built of the two Mounties.

Bourdages' widow Natasha Szpakowski and their son Luca spoke at Wednesday's ceremony.

"He deserves to be recognized today and always," she said. "This park is going to be very meaningful to us."

Szpakowski thanked the community and the RCMP for their ongoing support, adding she wants people to know her husband was very proud to be a Mountie.

The Beards' and Okemasis First Nation in Saskatchewan, where Cameron grew up, has already named an educational complex for her. (CKOM, CJWW)

Jul 06 2016

TORONTO - A study has found that one in ten drug overdose deaths in Ontario between 2006 and 2013 involved individuals who had been released from a provincial correctional facility up to a year earlier.

Principal researcher Dr. Nav Persaud of St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto says the highest proportion of overdose deaths occurred immediately following release. Nine per cent died in the first two days and 20 per cent within the first week.

The study published in the journal PLOS ONE also found that three-quarters of the 702 men and women who died of an overdose were under age 45.

Persaud says their overdose death rate is 12 times higher than that of the general population.

Most overdose deaths involved opioids like oxycodone and fentanyl, and in half of the cases there was a person present who could have intervened.

Persaud says educating inmates about the

risks of drug toxicity prior to their release and providing the anti-overdose drug naloxone could help prevent future opioid-related deaths.

Ontario Health Minister Eric Hoskins announced this week that the province will distribute naloxone to newly released inmates.

Jul 06 2016

ST. ANTHONY, Idaho - An actor who played a motorcycle police officer fighting crime on the television series "CHiPs" set in Los Angeles has been sworn in as a reserve officer in a small town in southeastern Idaho.

Erik Estrada became a member of the St. Anthony Police Department on Saturday.

The star of the TV drama based on the California Highway Patrol that ran in the late 1970s and early 1980s plans to help the town of 3,500 protect children from internet predators.

The 67-year-old Estrada tells the *Standard Journal* (<http://bit.ly/29jneul>) he wanted to be a police officer growing up but caught the acting bug.

He has worked with law enforcement agencies the last decade to keep kids safe online.

He says children should learn about internet dangers and avoid giving out personal information.

Jul 06 2016

TORONTO - A Toronto police spokesman has apologized after comments he made regarding a fatal cyclist collision were labelled "victim blaming" by safety advocates.



A 71-year-old cyclist died Tuesday, after he swerved to avoid a left-turning van on Dupont Street and collided with a parked car.

In comments made to Metro and other media outlets, Const. Clinton Stibbe suggested the cyclist was at fault in the collision. He said the cyclist was travelling at a high speed and did not "approach the area with enough care."

But under Ontario law, the victim - riding in the right-hand lane next to parked cars - had the right of way, a fact Stibbe later acknowledged in a mea culpa on Twitter.

"I was wrong. Cyclist had right of way, didn't have to stop for car. Other factors contributed to crash," he tweeted Wednesday morning.

Some members of the city's cycling community thanked Stibbe for setting the record straight, while others took to social media to admonish him.

(Metro)

Jul 06 2016

BATON ROUGE, La. - In a swift move by authorities to keep tensions from boiling over, the U.S. Justice Department launched a civil rights investigation Wednesday into the video-recorded killing of a black man who was shot as he scuffled with two white police officers on the pavement outside a convenience store.

A law enforcement official said a gun was taken from 37-year-old Alton Sterling after he was killed early Tuesday in the parking lot where he regularly sold homemade music CDs from a folding table.

It was not clear from the murky cellphone footage whether Sterling had the gun in his hand or was reaching for it when he was shot. A witness said he saw police pull a gun from Sterling's pocket after the shooting.

The shooting in the Louisiana capital - and shocking videos that found their way all over the internet - set off angry protests and calls for an outside investigation.

Moving quickly just one day after the shooting, Gov. John Bel Edwards asked the Justice Department to take the lead in the investigation.

Baton Rouge Police Chief Carl Dabadie Jr. said that Sterling was armed - Dabadie didn't specify the type of weapon - but that there are still questions about what happened.

"Like you, there is a lot that we do not understand. And at this point, like you, I am demanding answers," Dabadie said, calling the shooting a "horrible tragedy."

Sterling was confronted by police after an anonymous caller reported being threatened by someone with a gun outside the store, authorities said.

In the cellphone video taken by a community activist and posted online, one of the officers tackled Sterling, and the two officers pinned him to the pavement.

Someone yelled, "He's got a gun! Gun!" and one officer pulled his weapon from his holster. After some shouting, what sounded like a gunshot could be heard. The camera pulled away before more shots were heard.

The officers, identified by the chief as Blane Salamoni, a four-year member of the department, and Howie Lake II, who has been on the force for three years, were placed on administrative leave, standard department procedure.

Hundreds protested Tuesday night, and demonstrators gathered again Wednesday. A vigil Wednesday evening drew hundreds of mourners singing, praying and calling for justice.

Police said they have dash-cam video, bodycam video and store surveillance footage of the shooting that will be turned over to the Justice Department.

But Lt. Jonny Dunnam said the bodycam footage may not be as good as investigators hoped for because the cameras became dislodged during the scuffle.

(AP)

Jul 07 2016

OTTAWA - The RCMP is retooling its witness protection program following a secret internal review that called for changes to enrolment decision-making and better reporting on the program's impact.

The changes come less than two years after a full-scale overhaul of the program prompted by high-profile controversies.

The federal witness program, administered by the RCMP, is seen as a key tool in the fight against terrorism and organized crime. It shields people who help authorities by providing everything from short-term protection to permanent relocation and identity changes.

Protectees may be victims, informants, witnesses or others threatened with intimidation or violence. Protection is available to those referred from any police service in Canada, foreign agencies and other federal departments involved in national security or defence.

In 2014-15, the \$9.6-million program admitted 23 protectees, all of whom were granted a secure name change.

The program was thrust into the headlines several years ago when it emerged that a protectee committed a murder while enrolled. Some members have sued over their treatment, while others have been kicked out.

In 2010, a federal inquiry into the 1985 Air India bombing said it was inappropriate for a police agency with an interest in ensuring sources agree to become witnesses to also make decisions about admission into a witness protection program.

As a result, legislative changes that took effect in November 2014 walled off the program from the RCMP's investigative units. The Mounties also introduced new training, standardized procedures and a "psycho-social assessment" to determine whether possible protectees are a good fit.

Still, five people were told to leave the program in 2014-15, while three protectees filed lawsuits.

The RCMP's deputy commissioner for federal policing ordered the review to see whether the program was effectively handling admission and management of clients.

Given the sensitivity of some information in the report, the Mounties decided not to publish it.

However, internal records obtained under the *Access to Information Act* show the review found:

- the witness protection program has "undertaken considerable efforts" to address the concerns identified by the Air India inquiry and the House of Commons committee on public safety and national security;
- opportunities to improve the management

of cases, including deliberations on who gets into the program;

- and a need for new ways to report on the results achieved and their impact.

Senior RCMP management has signed off on the report, including various recommendations to strengthen the program.

"Work is now underway to implement the action plan," said RCMP Const. Annie Delisle, a force spokeswoman. She declined to elaborate on the steps being taken.

Last year a federal advisory committee reported that the witness protection program was "on the right track" following its legislative transformation. However, the committee suggested, among other things, that the program build on its efforts to better accommodate people of various ethno-cultural backgrounds, including aboriginals, and that it usher in cultural sensitivity training.

It appears the witness program will also be scrutinized by the RCMP watchdog, as the initiative is "one of several areas that we intend on examining in due course," said Tim Cogan, a spokesman for the Civilian Review and Complaints Commission for the RCMP.

However, he added, the commission wants the RCMP to have "sufficient time to implement its action plan" before any review takes place.

Jul 07 2016

TORONTO - Correctional officers in Ontario will be getting 4.4-per-cent raises next year, after an arbitrator ruled their salaries had fallen behind those of their federal counterparts and police officers.

The Liberal government agreed in a three-year deal reached in January with 6,000 correctional and probation/parole officers to an across-the-board raise of 1.4 per cent in 2017. As well, it agreed to a 1.4-per-cent lump sum payment for 2016, the second year of the deal.

Remaining wage issues went to an arbitrator, who awarded an additional "special wage adjustment" of three per cent for correctional officers and two per cent for probation officers, effective Jan. 1, 2017.

The government said in January the deal, reached just hours before workers were set to strike, was "net zero," meaning the 1.4-per-cent increase in the third year of the deal was offset by savings elsewhere.

It argued in arbitration that there should be special wage adjustments, but says now that even with the two- and three-per-cent increases the deal as a whole is still cost neutral.

"The increases are being funded by savings achieved within the collective agreements," Dara McLeod, a spokeswoman for Treasury Board President Liz Sandals, said in a statement.

"Specifically, the additional increases will be offset through changes to employee benefits and entitlements over the three-year term of the contract, including capping of termination payments and freezing progression through the pay grids."

Jul 07 2016

TORONTO - Minimum ages for marijuana consumption may vary across Canada when it becomes legal, but authorities will be firmly against drug tourism and cross-border movement of the substance, the Liberal government's point man on the issue said Wednesday.

The government also wants consistent nationwide impaired-driving laws for marijuana, said Bill Blair, parliamentary secretary to the justice minister, as the country formulates a new drug law ahead of a spring 2017 deadline.

"We would like to see consistency and a consensus across the country on the best way to keep our roadways safe," Blair, the former Toronto police chief, said at an interview in his Toronto constituency office.

He said provinces should have a say, but legalization led by individual regions, such as in the United States, causes a "difficult situation" in which state laws sometimes contradict federal laws.

The government said in April it will introduce legislation to legalize marijuana's recreational use. It has formed a task force that will report back in November.

Blair cautioned the government has not made firm decisions on many aspects of legalization, which will be heavily influenced by the task force's report. But he said the government does "not necessarily" need a nationwide marijuana consumption age, citing different ages provinces have for alcohol use.

Canada intends to implement regulations to "discourage" drug tourism, as the country is taking a strict public-health approach and is not out to make money, he said.

Blair said people will not be able to take marijuana out of the country due to international conventions restricting drug movement. The government may also increase penalties for trafficking, which would remain an issue without adequate quality controls on foreign marijuana, he said.

He and other politicians have said that for now, unregulated marijuana sales remain illegal, despite their flourishing since the Liberals came to power.

But enforcement, handled by municipalities, has been inconsistent, and many marijuana shops continue to openly defy the law.

Blair said enforcement is ultimately not a federal matter, though he is satisfied with the current level of enforcement.

"It doesn't mean everybody needs to be in jail," he said.

(National Post)

Jul 07 2016

MONTREAL - Four Montreal police officers have been arrested, with two facing various charges including perjury, attempting to obstruct justice, soliciting and obtaining sexual services, Chief Philippe Pichet said Thursday.

Faycal Djelidi faces nine charges and David Chartrand four, Pichet told a news conference.

The other officers were not named and no charges were announced against them.

Pichet said the probe began last December after irregularities were noticed with regard to the control of informants.

He said the force tried to address the problems at the administrative level before launching an internal investigation.

"Protecting our sources and our criminal intelligence is crucial and a constant concern for us," he said.

He said nobody was currently in danger due to the officers' actions.

Djelidi and Chartrand are each charged with perjury and obstructing justice, while Djelidi is also charged with breach of trust, soliciting, and obtaining sexual services.

The two officers, who worked as investigators in a multidisciplinary and youth co-ordination unit, have been suspended without pay.

Jul 07 2016

OTTAWA - The Liberal government has appointed a former auditor general to review the RCMP's response to lawsuits from four members of the force alleging harassment.

The government says the move is the latest step to ensure all RCMP employees feel safe and respected in the workplace.

As a special adviser, Sheila Fraser will provide recommendations on the policies and procedures the national police force pursued after Catherine Galliford, Alice Fox, Atoya Montague and Susan Gastaldo filed legal

proceedings against the RCMP.

Fraser's appointment is effective immediately and concludes at the end of March.

Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale had already asked the RCMP watchdog to revisit the broader issue of bullying and harassment within the force.

The Civilian Review and Complaints Commission for the RCMP is looking at whether recommendations it made three years ago have been implemented.

In its 2013 report, the watchdog said the force must take swift and effective action on complaints of workplace bullying and harassment to restore the shaken confidence of both members and the public.

It called for a more independent process, strict timelines for responding to accusations and force-wide training on the issue. The commission's report is expected next year.

In addition, new legislation has revamped the way such cases are handled within the force and training has also been stepped up.

The Mounties have pledged zero tolerance for harassment.

RCMP Commissioner Bob Paulson told a Commons committee earlier this year that the force has grappled with a bullying and intimidation problem, but he stressed that it had made strides.

Jul 07 2016

MORRIS-TURNBERRY, Ont. - Provincial police say a young driver tried to elude an officer by driving his car through a corn field about 85 kilometres northwest of Kitchener, Ont.

OPP say the officer began pursuing the

SUV on Wednesday night after observing "a blur of a motor vehicle" - clocked at 191 km/h in a 90 zone.

They say the officer thought the driver was going to stop when the BMW slowed and pulled onto a private laneway, but the driver then began an "off-road adventure" through a corn field.

Police say after the vehicle bottomed out and nearly got stuck on several occasions, the driver looped back around toward the laneway where the officer used his cruiser to block the exit.

An 18-year-old Markham, Ont., man is charged with dangerous driving, flight while pursued by peace officer, racing a motor vehicle and driving while under suspension.

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