

Gaza offensive

Israel to call up 60,000 reservists for expanded military operation **A13**

Fighting words

Poillievre comes out swinging against PM after byelection win **A4**



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TORONTO STAR

WEATHER HIGH 23 C | MIX OF SUN AND CLOUDS | MAP A16 THURSDAY, AUGUST 21, 2025

A new line in the sand

Critics question a provincial plan to transfer a swath of Wasaga Beach to the local government, saying it will lead to fewer protections for parkland



PATTY WINSA
BUSINESS REPORTER

A Ford government plan to take a large swath of Wasaga Beach, the world's longest freshwater beach, out of Wasaga Beach Provincial Park and transfer ownership to the town has critics fearing the move could jeopardize sensitive land and lead to the sell-off of provincial parkland elsewhere. The province is planning to transfer the parcel to assist with the

town's revitalization, but critics question why the province is proposing to amend the provincial parks act, meant to permanently protect the land, to allow the transfer when there is already a process within the act to do so. Environmentalists say the proposed amendment could lead to land being removed from other provincial parks, which the government denies. Currently, "if you remove more than one per cent or 50 hectares (of

a provincial park), it requires a vote in the legislature," said Ontario Green Party Leader Mike Schreiner about the Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act, "which I think brings more transparency and accountability to the issue and gives the public an opportunity to speak out." "And to lower that threshold, I think, indicates that the government intends to remove other parkland in the future," he said. **SEE WASAGA, A11**

Queen's Park is proposing to remove about 60 hectares of land from Wasaga Beach Provincial Park and transfer it to the town.

R.J. JOHNSTON/
TORONTO STAR
FILE PHOTO

STAR INVESTIGATION

Ford unaware of Therme audit flags

Premier confidant in spa project despite concerns raised in Europe

EMMA MCINTOSH
INVESTIGATIVE REPORTER
ANA PEREIRA
BUSINESS REPORTER

Premier Doug Ford says he wasn't aware that the company behind a planned mega-spa at Ontario Place has twice had a European auditor flag concerns about its finances. The auditor's warnings about Therme Group RHTG, first reported by the Star, are contained in the

company's 2022 and 2023 financial statements, filed in its home country of Austria. The reports were written after the government signed a lease with Therme for Ontario Place, and show the company has faced unresolved financing issues that made its future a "significant uncertainty." "No, I haven't heard that at all," Ford said at an unrelated press conference Wednesday when asked if his government knew

about the auditor's warnings. Ford also shrugged off concerns about the Austrian company's finances, saying its Ontario Place spa is "going to move forward." Experts previously told the Star the concerns raised in the company's Austrian financial statements are serious warnings about its future financial stability, though not a sign Therme Group is facing imminent trouble. **SEE FORD, A2**



CITY HALL

Mayor calls out feds over refugee funding

Shortfall threatens to spark new battle over shelter costs for asylum seekers

BEN SPURR
CITY HALL BUREAU CHIEF

Toronto looks headed for another showdown with the federal government over refugee shelter funding, with Mayor Olivia Chow warning Ottawa's latest offer will leave the city more than \$100 million short. The shortfall could risk a repeat of the desperate scenes two years ago when asylum seekers slept on downtown sidewalks. In a letter to council members on Wednesday, Chow said Ottawa can't "walk away" from its duty to house refugee claimants. "As you know, providing safe shelter for refugee claimants is a federal responsibility and the city and province cannot shoulder the cost," Chow wrote in the letter, which was obtained by the Star. The mayor said Ottawa has "arbitrarily decided" to pay only about a quarter of what the municipality expects to spend on sheltering refugee claimants in 2025, an allocation she described as a "funding cut" that was equivalent to a property tax increase of more than two per cent this year. The mayor asked councillors to tell their MPs that the federal government should fund 95 per cent of municipalities' costs for housing asylum seekers, a request made by the Ontario Big City Mayors this week. **SEE REFUGEES, A7**

INSIDE

Cell tower plan draws backlash

Etobicoke residents oppose project amid unproven 5G health concerns **A3**

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