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THE GLOBE AND MAIL

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Israeli hostages come home in momentous day for Mideast

Trump declares war 'over' as final 20 living captives freed – but lasting peace remains uncertain

A crowd in Tel Aviv's Hostages Square reacts to a live broadcast of Israeli hostages being released from Gaza on Monday. Seized by Hamas militants during the Oct. 7 attacks, the men spent 738 days in captivity. ODED BALILTY/ASSOCIATED PRESS

NATHAN VANDERKLIPPE
INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENT
TEL AVIV, ISRAEL

First came seven men, re-emerging from Gaza after 738 days of captivity.

Then came the remaining 13, their release inaugurating a momentous day for the Middle East more than two years after a Hamas-led attack on Israel sparked a war that killed tens of thousands. The 20 men were handed over by Hamas, marking the end of their captivity as the last hostages who are still alive after they were seized by militants on Oct. 7, 2023.

The remains of another 28 deceased hostages were also expected to be released, in exchange for 1,950 Palestinian prisoners who began to be delivered by bus on Monday. But by evening, Hamas had promised to return the remains of only four of the dead captives.

The swap between the Israelis and Hamas was part of the first phase of a ceasefire deal brokered by U.S. President Donald Trump last week that has so far halted the war in Gaza. But peace is still uncertain, and the two sides have yet to agree on next steps.

"All of our living hostages have come back to us. What wonder," Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Monday.

In Tel Aviv, thousands gathered to watch and cheer the return of the remaining living hostages, some wiping away tears as speakers swelled with the sounds of the song *They're Coming Home*.

"It's the first time I'm crying. I didn't cry for two years," said Gila Sharabani, a retired lawyer who spent hundreds of days at Hostages Square, a rallying point in central Tel Aviv, bringing hot tea to the families of people taken captive in Gaza and then returning, again and again, as a show of hope.

"Happy is not the word. It's too small," she said. "Unbelievable. Unbelievable."

The U.S. President came to greet released hostages and speak to the Knesset, Israel's parliament, before departing for Egypt for a peace conference intended to chart a new course for the war-torn region.

Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney attended that conference alongside many other foreign leaders. But Mr. Netanyahu declined the invitation, his office said in a statement Monday, citing a conflict with a Jewish holiday. Hamas did not attend either.

CEASEFIRE, A8

Large crowds cheer release of nearly 2,000 Palestinian prisoners in Gaza, West Bank ■ A8

Canada, India set road map to restore ties as Anand and Modi meet

JAMES BRADSHAW

Political leaders in Canada and India are hailing a "new road map" to reset relations between the two countries after Foreign Affairs Minister Anita Anand met with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and senior ministers in New Delhi.

A joint statement on Monday from Ms. Anand and her counterpart, Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, outlines a number of specific measures the two countries plan to take "to restore stability in the relationship."

The road map follows a meeting Prime Minister Mark Carney had with Mr. Modi on the sidelines of the G7 summit in Kananaskis, Alta., in June. Plans include further high-level discussions on bilateral trade and investment, co-operation on climate action and trade in oil and gas, partnerships on artificial intelligence as well as "refreshed collaboration" in higher education.

Ms. Anand visited Mr. Modi and Mr. Jaishankar as part of a multi-day stopover before she heads to China to meet with that country's Foreign Minister. There she will aim to do further fence-mending and ease the economic pain from a trade spat that has targeted key sectors such as canola and electric vehicles.

ANAND, A15

Federal agency failed to track toxic chemicals in town's water, residents say

LINDSAY JONES
PATRICK WHITE

Newfoundlanders living near St. John's International Airport say Transport Canada has failed to track a plume of toxic "forever chemicals" seeping into local drinking water, leaving residents and a university chemist to do the work themselves.

The town of Torbay is one of dozens of sites near airports and military bases where firefighting foams laced with polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) leached into the groundwater and, in some cases, contaminated the drinking water of nearby property owners.

PFAS have been linked to cancer, developmental delays and immune disorders. Last year, Health Canada lowered the recommended safety limit for PFAS in drinking water to 30 nanograms per litre.

Across the country, Transport Canada has 46 sites with groundwater contamination in various stages of investigation and management, spokesperson Sau Sau Liu said. She said the agency regularly samples the water at the perimeters of airports where PFAS were used in order to understand the potential migration of the chemicals.

When test results exceed Health Canada's recommended safety limit, the federal agency says it contacts residents with drinking-water wells to test their water, and notifies local municipalities and health authorities.

NEWFOUNDLAND, A6

Canadian economist Peter Howitt marks his Nobel win with memories, champagne and a warning

SHANNON PROUDFOOT

It was a prompt and persistent Swedish reporter who alerted Peter Howitt to the fact that he'd won the Nobel Prize for economics, before the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences managed to reach him with the news.

The Canadian economist turned off his phone when he went to bed on Sunday night, but a reporter got through to his wife's number right after the announcement in Sweden on Monday morning. Prof. Howitt was completely caught off guard, without a bottle of champagne in the house.

"I'm just thrilled," he said in an interview with The Globe and Mail from his home in North Carolina, adding, "It brings back a flood of memories of things, and people have e-mailed me that I haven't been in touch with for years. It's hard to explain."

Prof. Howitt and his research partner, French economist Philippe Aghion, were jointly awarded half of the Nobel Prize for their work on modelling the "creative destruction" that fuels economic growth. The other half of the prize went to Joel Mokyr, a Dutch-born economic historian who also studies how breakthroughs feed economies.

Prof. Howitt grew up in Guelph, Ont., and got his undergraduate degree at McGill University and his master's at the University of Western Ontario. After completing his PhD at Northwestern University, he spent nearly two decades as a professor at Western, before finishing his career at Brown University, where he is a professor emeritus.

It was during his time at Western that he and Prof. Aghion wrote the seminal 1992 paper the Nobel committee spotlighted. Titled "A Model of Growth Through Creative Destruction," it created a mathematical model of innovation and economic growth, building on the work of Austrian economist Joseph Schumpeter, who coined the term "creative destruction" decades earlier.

NOBEL, A15

VAUGHN RIDLEY/ GETTY IMAGES

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PODCAST Andrew Coyne says deeper issues are at play in the legal battle over the Charter's notwithstanding clause tgam.ca/TheDecibel

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Waterfront Toronto goes big on design, home building

The city approved a plan to deliver a large quantity of housing alongside some remarkable urban planning

ALEX BOZIKOVIC

OPINION

ARCHITECTURE

The waves are coming back in at Quayside. This 12-acre site in Toronto's Port Lands will see construction begin next year on its western portion, in a development that will soon deliver 1,100 market-rental apartments and 550 affordable rentals.

Last week, Toronto City Council approved the plan from Waterfront Toronto and developers Dream Unlimited and Great Gulf. It delivers a large quantity of housing and some remarkable urban design. It also offers a lesson on what a major national rollout of housing – as the federal government has promised – is going to cost.

"We're making a huge housing pivot at Quayside," Joe Cressy, Waterfront Toronto's chief of staff, said in a recent interview. "We think this pivot has made the housing better, and it's only been possible through huge government investment."

Quayside has been a place where dreams go to die. Back in 2017, it was allocated to Sidewalk Toronto, the Google sister company, for its Toronto development. After that crashed, the current team came forward in 2022 with a mandate for a "landmark" neighbourhood. The designers included the Ghanaian-British star David Adjaye, Canadian-British Alison Brooks, and Denmark's Henning Larsen and SLA.

These included a huge building of mass timber, a "community forest," and architectural flourishes. Mr. Adjaye's contribution was "Timber House," a long 12-storey slab made of brawny mass timber. Now, Mr. Adjaye, tarnished by sexual-harassment allegations from staff, has disappeared from the project.

And, as usually happens in Toronto, the architectural vision has been diluted. But it still has spirit.

In the western portion of the plan, Quayside will feature seven buildings, mostly apartments, around a "community forest" – an extensive courtyard planted with a lush forest. This is about two acres of green, car-free public space. It is just what Toronto needs.

Residents will live in high-rise towers along Lake Shore Boulevard and, to the south, in three mid-rise buildings exclusively for affordable housing.

Moving from west to east, the first two planned towers – of 50 and 57 storeys – are by Ontario-born, London-based Ms. Brooks. These will house market condos and are not being built yet. Next door, a 66-storey tower by Copenhagen's Henning Larsen will house a mix of affordable and market rental. At the northeast corner, a 53-storey tower will be designed by London's Allies & Morrison.

The architecture and urban design have seen some flourishes removed. But each building addresses the street and the courtyard with textured facades of concrete and brick, rather than the glass walls that ruin too many Toronto buildings. Include a mix of public programming and retail, and the wild card of the community forest, and this adds up to an admirable example of high-density urbanism.

There's one serious design problem with three affordable-rental buildings – which have replaced the long Timber Tower on the southern edge of the site. They are dressed in an awkward livery by locals Teeple Architects.

The suites, predominantly two-bedroom and larger, are well-planned, but the Teeple team has struggled to reconcile the unusual scale of its 12-storey slab buildings. The team has broken them up visually in an apparent effort to minimize their bulk. The result is a stack of six-storey-high cubes, like a giant's building blocks stacked up on Queens Quay.

A revision is badly needed. Sometimes buildings are big – lean into bigness and make the ground floor work well.

In whatever form, the bulk of this block – five towers, leaving out the two condo towers – will now proceed. Groundbreaking is expected in 2026, and the first new residents expected in 2031.

All the housing gains come with a significant price tag: about $190-million in funding from all levels of government, in addition to millions to create infrastructure on-site, and low-cost financing through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp. That adds up to more than $200,000 per home.

What will Prime Minister Mark Carney and his new Build Canada Homes agency learn from this? Mr. Cressy said Waterfront Toronto (partly owned by the feds) is talking about more potential projects on Waterfront land. Good. There are few better places to build.

However, at $200,000 a home, federal dollars won't go far. The agency's seed capital of $13-billion would deliver about 65,000 homes. Relative to Canada's housing needs, that is a drop in the harbour.

If Quayside is the first step in a housing revolution, the dreams and the cheques will need to get much bigger.

Newfoundland: Water contamination found to be more widespread in Torbay than other tested sites

FROM B1

The federal agency has been providing bottled water to residents who test over the Health Canada threshold, including in Torbay, where some people who live near the airport – particularly around the Pine Ridge Crescent subdivision – have been relying on it for months. Transport Canada says this is an interim measure while long-term solutions, such as home water-filtration systems, are being determined on a case-by-case basis.

Eight communities across six provinces are in the same boat as Torbay, with Transport Canada supplying a total of 167 properties with bottled water. (The federal agency refused to disclose where the other seven communities are located.)

But in the case of the windswept town of Torbay, the contamination appears to be more widespread than the sites Transport Canada has tested so far.

In August, Torbay retiree Ken Baird requested Transport Canada test his tap water, but he was rebuffed, according to correspondence viewed by The Globe and Mail. He turned to an accredited lab, Bureau Veritas, which found PFAS nearly 2½ times the Health Canada threshold in his drinking water.

Flabbergasted, Mr. Baird relayed the results to Transport Canada via an e-mail shared with The Globe. An environmental adviser, Lynn Power, replied on Sept. 4, saying she was looking into it.

Ten days later, Mr. Baird outlined his concerns in a letter to government officials.

"I am left living in a home with unsafe drinking water," he wrote to his local MP, Joanne Thompson, Transport Minister Steven MacKinnon and Premier John Hogan.

He wrote that he and his neighbours were frustrated that Transport Canada had yet to map how groundwater moves through local soil and bedrock – called a hydrogeological assessment – to understand the extent of the contamination, and that the federal agency had yet to provide him and his neighbours who tested above the Health Canada threshold with bottled water.

"They're all passing the buck," Mr. Baird said in an interview. "Every time I think about this, I think of the old ostrich sticking its head in the sand. This issue isn't going away."

On Friday, officials with Transport Canada started knocking on doors in the affected neighbourhood offering to test well water, according to Mr. Baird.

Other levels of government, local citizens and a Memorial University chemistry professor have called for quicker and more comprehensive action from Transport Canada.

Memorial University chemistry professor Karl Jobst found high levels of PFAS in waterways downstream from the airport, leading to a wetland known as The Gully in a residential part of Torbay.

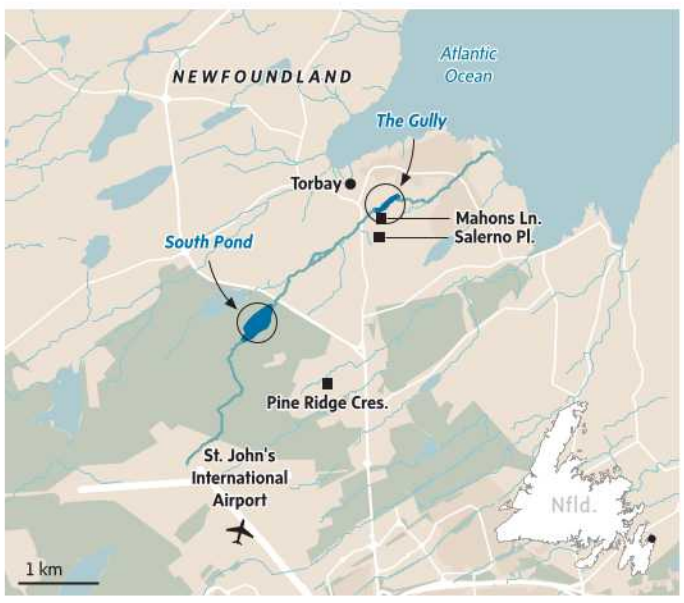
Earlier this year, Dr. Jobst went door to door and offered to test residents' tap water for free, out of concern for the community's health.

The results were troubling. Dr. Jobst and PhD student Emmanuel Tolefe found that four of 15 residences, including Mr. Baird's home on Salerno Place, had tap water with PFAS significantly above Canadian safety limits.

"I'm not convinced that the extent of the contamination has been fully mapped," Dr. Jobst said in an interview.

"People need to know that. If you can identify ultimately what areas are impacted, then you can start implementing solutions."

Ken Baird lifts the cover off a well head at his home in Torbay, N.L. After testing his tap water, he learned the results had PFAS nearly 2½ times the Health Canada threshold. GREG LOCKE/THE GLOBE AND MAIL



THE GLOBE AND MAIL, SOURCE: OPENSTREETMAP

Dr. Jobst said Transport Canada should accelerate testing to identify the extent of the contamination and better understand how PFAS concentrations in drinking water change over time.

One of the affected homes was Diana Kean's beige bungalow on Mahons Lane. Dr. Jobst's lab tested her tap water three times, finding that it contained four to five times Health Canada's recommended safety limit.

Ms. Kean said it was upsetting to learn the results, but that she also felt grateful that Dr. Jobst had offered to test her water.

"I feed my children and my grandchildren – you boil macaroni, you make soup. I was using that water," she said.

In mid-July, she notified Transport Canada of the test results and received a form response.

"Should it be necessary to conduct sampling at your residence, an environmental consultant on behalf of Transport Canada will contact you," read the unsigned e-mail she received on July 21, 2025.

Transport Canada spokesperson Ms. Liu said the agency is aware of Dr. Jobst's testing. She said determining the need for additional sampling and expanding a sampling area is done using an evidence-based, step-by-step approach, based on PFAS sampling results.

Provincial and municipal officials have also criticized Transport Canada's handling of the issue, and warned that the contamination is more widespread than the federal agency's treatment of it suggests.

In correspondence obtained by The Globe, the director of the province's water resources management division (WRMD), Haseen Khan, called on the Town of Torbay to demand that Transport Canada collect more comprehensive water-quality data and expand its testing beyond private wells near the airport.

"WRMD has concerns that the current private well testing area may not encompass the entire area that is potentially impacted by a contaminant plume," Mr. Khan wrote in a letter to the Town of Torbay's chief administrative officer, Sandy Hounsell, on March 31, 2025.

Mr. Khan said the town should demand Transport Canada "fully delineate the area at risk of impacts to human health," and complete a full hydrogeological assessment "to assess the current extent of the contamination" and future impacts owing to factors such as higher precipitation rates caused by climate change.

Mr. Hounsell agreed with the province's assessment. He said he provided the letter to Transport Canada days later, adding, "We do concur with the comments in this letter and would ask that Transport Canada follow through with the recommendations the province has requested."

The intergovernmental friction in Newfoundland is a stark contrast to the situation in North Bay, Ont., where another federal department is addressing PFAS contamination in close collaboration with other levels of government.

In 2017, the Department of National Defence detected elevated PFAS levels leaching from a military base in North Bay and launched regular stakeholder meetings with the province, the city and the local health unit to address the problem. Since then, DND has committed nearly $20-million to remediating the PFAS, which have contaminated the city's primary source of drinking water, Trout Lake.

The Ontario Ministry of Environment, meanwhile, is studying local hydrogeology to determine how water feeds into Trout Lake, said Karin Pratte, North Bay's chief water engineer, who has met personally with the Minister of Defence on the issue.

Wrongfully convicted New Brunswick man dies from cancer

HINA ALAM SAINT JOHN

Robert Mailman spent more than half of his life under the cloud of a wrongful murder conviction.

On Thursday, less than two years after he was acquitted of the crime, the New Brunswick man died from liver cancer. He was 77.

James Lockyer, founding director of Innocence Canada, said Mr. Mailman was with his wife when he died.

"That was very comforting. Apparently it was very peaceful. … He's had a good couple of years since [his vindication], and that's amazing."

On May 11, 1984, Mr. Mailman and childhood acquaintance Walter Gillespie were convicted in the 1983 beating death of George Gilman Leeman in Saint John. His body had been doused with gasoline and set on fire in Rockwood Park, court heard.

Despite strong alibis, the two accused were found guilty of second-degree murder and sentenced to life in prison with no chance of parole for 18 years. Mr. Mailman served 18 years.

Mr. Gillespie remained behind bars for 21 years. Both men steadfastly denied any involvement in the crime.

With the help of advocacy group Innocence Canada, the pair filed for a federal criminal conviction review in December, 2019.

Their bid for an appeal was rejected by the New Brunswick Court of Appeal. And the Supreme Court of Canada declined to grant them leave to appeal a few years later.

As their legal odyssey dragged on, Mr. Mailman's health took a dramatic turn in November, 2023, after he passed out while exercising in his Saint John apartment.

Tests confirmed he had terminal liver cancer. He was given three months to live.

"So I just got to accept it," he said in an interview. "There's no off ramp. I'm going to die. Period."

The following month, then-federal justice minister Arif Virani ordered a new trial for the two men, saying new, significant information had not been submitted to the courts.

Mr. Gillespie died in April, 2024, at the age of 80, two months after a compensation settlement was announced. The cause of his death was not disclosed.

Born on March 14, 1948, in Saint John, Mr. Mailman was the oldest child in a family that would grow to include 15 brothers and sisters.

In prison, Mr. Mailman passed the time working at various jobs in the gym, the library and as a cleaner. And he kept up a strict exercise routine. He said he loved running, especially when it was raining.

"Someone asked me one time, 'Why do you like jogging in the rain?' " he recalled. The answer: "Because no one sees you crying.'"

He once described living under the weight of an unjust murder conviction as "the predicament of my life."

On Jan. 4, 2024, the Crown decided not to call any evidence in the new trial. As a result, Chief Justice Tracey DeWare of New Brunswick's Court of Queen's Bench acquitted the two men of the charges and declared they were innocent in the eyes of the law.

Justice DeWare apologized for the "miscarriage of justice."

In a submission to the court, Innocence Canada highlighted a series of failings in the prosecution of the two men. These included recanted testimony from key witnesses, evidence withheld from the defence, substandard forensic evidence and a disregard for the men's alibis.

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