

SYRIA

# ASSAD REGIME FALLS

■ Insurgents capture Damascus as dictator flees to Russia, bringing family's decades-long rule to an end

■ It's unclear whether rebel factions will follow Islamist HTS, designated a terrorist group by Canada and the U.S.



Syrian opposition fighters celebrate the collapse of the government in Damascus on Sunday. OMAR SANADIKI/ASSOCIATED PRESS

MARK MacKINNON  
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ANALYSIS

Thirteen violent years after Syria first rose up, the Arab Spring has finally prevailed in Damascus.

On Sunday, the country got the change it first demanded in February, 2011, when a wave of pro-democracy revolutions was sweeping through the Middle East. Bashar al-Assad's regime is gone, the dictator having flown to Moscow on Sunday, where the Kremlin-run TASS news agency reported he and his family had

been granted asylum.

The tragedy is that it took a prolonged and horrific civil war, and cost more than 500,000 lives, to reach an ending that Mr. al-Assad, the British-trained ophthalmologist who inherited a dictatorship from his father, could have facilitated at the start by gracefully stepping aside.

Instead of listening to the people when they took to the streets against him, Mr. al-Assad ordered his army to shoot. Today, much of the country lies in ruins. The economy has shrunk to less than half its 2010 size. One in five Syrians – five million people – live outside the country as refugees. Entire neighbourhoods were reduced to rubble by the multisided

fighting in which the regime used prohibited chemical weapons and crude barrel bombs to suppress its enemies.

As recently as two weeks ago, Mr. al-Assad – assisted by Russia and Iran – appeared to have won a Pyrrhic victory over his opponents. The insurgents were largely confined to the northwestern province of Idlib, where they were protected by the Turkish military. Mr. al-Assad's hold on Damascus looked secure.

Then came the perfectly timed rebel offensive that began on Nov. 27. The Russian military, which had waded decisively into Syria's war back in 2015, was distracted by Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine, which drew mil-

itary assets away from Syria. Similarly, the Lebanese militia Hezbollah – a proxy force that Iran had sent into Syria to defend the regime at the start of the civil war – was too battered by 14 months of war with Israel to again save Mr. al-Assad's regime.

Without the support of those allies, Mr. al-Assad's army quickly collapsed. The insurgents entered the cities of Aleppo, Hama and Homs one after another last week, heading first to the main prison in each city to free those held captive in the regime's notorious jails.

On Sunday, Damascus fell into rebel hands with only a few shots fired.

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MOMENT IN TIME

NEWS PHOTO ARCHIVE



EVANS/THREE LIONS VIA GETTY IMAGES

CAROL SINGING, 1955

For more than 100 years, photographers and photo editors working for The Globe and Mail have preserved an extraordinary collection of news photography. Every Monday, The Globe features one of these images. This month, we're celebrating Christmas.

When St. Hilary of Poitiers created what is believed to be the first Christmas hymn in the fourth century, he couldn't possibly have imagined either Porky Pig or Mariah Carey. St. Hilary is often credited with writing *Jesus, Light of All the Nations*, which is a far cry from the popular Christmas carols of today. In the photo above, a Canadian family entertains

neighbours with festive songs – a once-traditional activity that embraced everything from the saintly to the secular – on a snowy night. There are almost no recording artists of note in the past 100 years who have not recorded a holiday song. A 1985 version of *Blue Christmas*, imitating animated Hollywood star Porky Pig, is perhaps a low moment in the history of Christmas music, but still popular. However, nothing compares to Ms. Carey's ubiquitous and ear-wormy *All I Want for Christmas is You*. Recorded in 1994, it's become a seasonal favourite, with more than two billion streams on Spotify. Oh St. Hilary, what hath you wrought?

PHILIP KING

COLUMNISTS

KELLY CRYDERMAN

OPINION



LESLIE BECK

OPINION



JOHN TURLEY-EWART

OPINION

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The Globe and Mail is committed to maintaining the highest ethical, legal and editorial standards. SANDRA E. MARTIN, STANDARDS EDITOR, standardseditor@globeandmail.com

Drought, heat threaten future of popular Christmas trees, researchers say

HINA ALAM FREDERICTON

University of New Brunswick forestry professor Anthony Taylor was heading down a highway in the spring of 2018 when his wife pointed out clumps of red-coloured trees.

Prof. Taylor recognized them as dead balsam firs, and so began a research project to examine what was killing the trees favoured by many Canadians to decorate their homes at Christmas.

Six years later, in a paper recently published in the journal *Frontiers in Forests and Global Change*, Prof. Taylor and his co-authors identify the cause of the die-off in western New Brunswick and eastern Maine as drought and high temperatures brought on by climate change.

"Identifying the broad scale climate anomalies, such as a drought, associated with the reported sudden balsam fir mortality in 2018 could prove useful to determine the likelihood of future mortality in response to climate change," the study says.

Prof. Taylor said he was shocked by "that much" death of balsam firs.

The balsam fir accounts for about 20 per cent of all trees in New Brunswick. But with its fragrant needles and triangular shape, the tree is most commonly associated with Christmas. More than 95 per cent of Christmas trees grown in the province are balsam fir and about 200,000 of those are exported, mostly to the United States, Prof. Taylor said.

After his highway observation, Prof. Taylor, along with James Broom of the University of New Brunswick and Loïc D'Orangeville from Université Laval, began



Red needles are seen on a balsam fir in New Brunswick. DR. ANTHONY R. TAYLOR/THE CANADIAN PRESS

analyzing various causes that could have killed the trees, including pests and climate data.

New Brunswick had a drought in 2017 with warm, dry days in the summer and a hot fall, and their analysis showed that balsam fir is particularly susceptible to drought and high temperature. "This dry, warm growing season the year before, significantly stressed out these trees and led to their demise the year after, in 2018," Prof. Taylor said. The team also looked at historical data and found a similar weather event in 1986 when balsam firs had died because of drought and heat the previous year.

Fred Somerville, president of the Canadian Christmas Trees Association, said balsam fir is one of the most popular trees for Christmas, the others being Scotch and white pines and Fraser fir. Balsam fir, he said, likes cold winters and warm, damp summers.

Mr. Somerville, who has a farm in Alliston, Ont., about 90 kilometres north of Toronto, said climate change is making weather unpredictable.

A lack of rain kills young trees or even newly planted saplings, Mr. Somerville said. Growth of older trees is stunted when they don't get enough rain, and they lack that bright green sought after at Christmas, he said.

Matt Wright, a Christmas tree farmer who manages M. Wright Farm and Forest Ltd. in Nova Scotia, said climate change and heat are affecting most conifers, including balsam fir. "The roots are struggling because of the heat," he said, adding that new pests are emerging that attack the trees.

Prof. Taylor said heat and drought have weakened balsam firs, making them more vulnerable to pests and diseases.

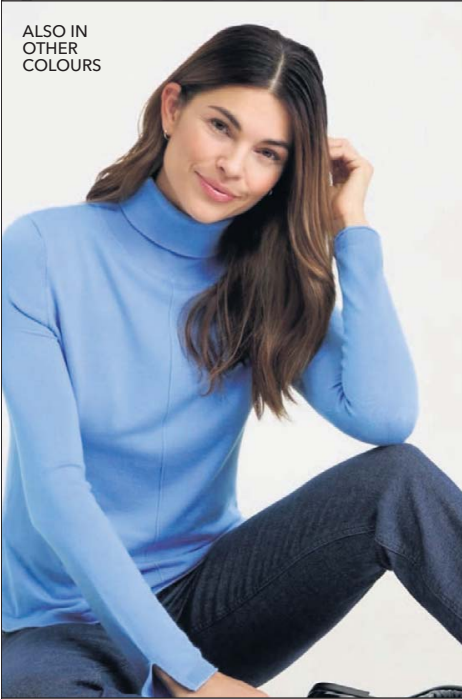
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# Ottawa was warned about Indigenous procurement program: former auditor

Garry Hartle received many complaints about problematic joint ventures but says he was ignored when he raised the issue

**BILL CURRY** OTTAWA  
**TOM CARDOSO** TORONTO

A former auditor for the federal government's Indigenous procurement program says Ottawa hamstrung auditors and repeatedly ignored warnings that the program was being abused by non-Indigenous companies.

Garry Hartle was one of the auditors who regularly reviewed whether companies complied with a federal policy designed to encourage the flow of government contracts to Indigenous-owned businesses. He served as an auditor from 2016 to 2023.

Mr. Hartle said in an interview that he warned Indigenous Services Canada about alleged abuses tied to a key aspect of the program that allows Indigenous and non-Indigenous companies to team up to access federal contracts, so long as the Indigenous business retains control. Critics have warned that some of these joint ventures are not truly Indigenous-led.

He said he received many complaints from Indigenous companies about problematic joint ventures when he was an auditor.

"If you do away with the joint ventures, the program wouldn't be abused," he told The Globe and Mail, suggesting there are systemic issues that go beyond the handful of companies that have been singled out for criticism.

The government's Procurement Strategy for Indigenous Business earmarks certain federal contracts for Indigenous companies. The competition pool for these "set-asides," as they're called, is much smaller than what it is for most contracts.

The House of Commons committee on government operations is holding hearings into concerns related to the PSIB, including into the joint-venture mechanism, which has been criticized by some Indigenous business owners and groups as a backdoor that allows for non-Indigenous companies to access less competitive contracts.

Mr. Hartle, who is scheduled to appear at the committee on Tuesday, said he also warned Indigenous Services Canada about specific cases of alleged fraud. He said as well that the department implemented changes to the auditing process that limited auditors' ability to review companies participating in the program.

Companies and joint ventures



Garry Hartle was one of the auditors who reviewed whether companies complied with a policy designed to encourage the flow of government contracts to Indigenous-owned businesses. DAVE CHAN/THE GLOBE AND MAIL

looking to do work under the PSIB must first register with the government's Indigenous Business Directory and need to prove they are majority-owned and controlled by Indigenous individuals.

Over time, the government undermined the program's audit function, which has contributed to skepticism about the effectiveness of the program, said Mr. Hartle, who worked as a third-party contractor.

Until recently, auditors were responsible for confirming a business' indigeneity before certain set-aside contracts could be awarded – but after 2021, high-ranking staff at Indigenous Services Canada determined the department would take on this work itself, Mr. Hartle said.

"We were given the name of a person to send the name to, and that person, who was an employee of Indigenous Services Canada, would check and make sure that this person was Indigenous."

Mr. Hartle said this change came about following pressure from Indigenous groups, which were lobbying the government to do something about what they saw as a large number of non-Indigenous companies accessing the program.

But the decision ultimately hamstrung auditors' ability to do their jobs, he said.

Indigenous Services Canada made other changes to the audit policy, too. According to Mr. Hartle, auditors were told they could no longer contact businesses directly during audits. Instead, they'd have to send questions to the government, which would then relay them to the company. In practice, however, the people

relaying these questions weren't experienced enough, he said. Ultimately, this slowed down the process and weakened audits, leading to a game of broken telephone.

"That didn't work, because junior staff didn't understand the program, didn't understand what was being asked for. Everything was getting confused, and there would be delays."

The House of Commons committee on government operations is holding hearings into concerns related to the Procurement Strategy for Indigenous Business.

Indigenous Services Minister Patty Hajdu responded to Mr. Hartle's comments on Sunday.

"I was just made aware of these deeply troubling allegations, and I am extremely concerned," she said in an e-mailed statement. The minister pledged that "misuse or exploitation" tied to the program will "come to an end" through immediate steps to reform the Indigenous Business Directory.

A separate statement from Indigenous services department spokesperson Eric Head said a recent review led to the removal of approximately 1,100 businesses from the directory "to make sure only eligible businesses benefit."

The department defended the practice of having public servants interact with businesses rather than third-party contractors, say-

ing it allows contractors to be independent.

Political scrutiny of joint ventures and the Indigenous procurement program grew out of hearings into contracting issues related to the government's ArriveCan app, which faced criticism over high costs because of heavy use of outsourcing.

The Globe reported in 2023 that two of the main ArriveCan contractors – Coradix Technology Consulting and Dalian Enterprises – were awarded work on the project through the Indigenous procurement program. Dalian is an Indigenous-owned company that has said it has just two employees. It regularly landed contracts under the program through a joint venture with the larger Coradix, which is non-Indigenous. Both have since been suspended from federal contracting and are challenging the decision in court.

Mr. Hartle is not involved with the current reviews of Coradix and Dalian and did not comment on their suspensions.

The Canadian Council for Indigenous Business has called for stronger oversight of joint ventures, but also said some have been extremely successful at growing the Indigenous economy.

Mr. Hartle, 80, performed audit work for the department in part through Roundpoint Consulting, an Indigenous company, though Mr. Hartle is not Indigenous.

During his career as an auditor, Mr. Hartle said he has also worked for the Canada Revenue Agency and the government of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Hartle was the lead auditor at the federal department in a file

involving Canadian Health Care Agency (CHCA), a large non-Indigenous contractor for nurses in remote communities that partnered with a small, one-person foot-care company in Northern Ontario owned by a First Nations nurse.

In October, citing court records, The Globe reported that Mr. Hartle had found the joint venture was not in compliance with the program. It was eventually removed from the Indigenous Business Directory. The audit finding was challenged in federal court by CHCA, but the case was ultimately abandoned without a ruling.

The court records included a letter from Mr. Hartle to a senior program manager at the department, saying his review had found Pearl Chilton, the Indigenous nurse in the joint venture, was left with a large tax bill because of a "serious misrepresentation" by CHCA. He also concluded that the joint venture was run by CHCA and not the Indigenous partner.

In a 2017 e-mail presented in court, CHCA's lawyer, James Rhodes, criticized Mr. Hartle's determination that the joint venture was not in compliance as unfair, saying the company was not provided with an opportunity to fully respond to all allegations during the review process.

CHCA did not respond to requests for comment.

In 2021, the government told departments they should aim to direct 5 per cent of their contracts to Indigenous businesses. This target, however, may have created an incentive for abuse, according to experts who have given testimony to the Commons government operations committee.

In September, Assembly of First Nations Regional Chief Joanna Bernard told MPs that she estimates the true percentage of spending going to legitimate Indigenous businesses under the PSIB is closer to 1 per cent.

The Indigenous procurement program allows for joint ventures, Mr. Hartle said, "so that Indigenous companies could learn and gain experience, in order to take on bigger and bigger things." Instead, most joint ventures are "forever enriching the non-Indigenous venture."

Mr. Hartle said the department knew about cases of alleged fraud yet chose to do nothing about them.

"It wasn't just from me that they were made aware of the fraud," he said. "There were companies that were listed in the Indigenous Business Directory that were truly Indigenous, firms that were quite upset about the fact that you would give the major part of the contract to a definitely non-Indigenous firm – because they knew about what was going on."

## Costs of treating cancer expected to exceed \$37-billion by 2034

**KELLY GRANT**  
HEALTH REPORTER

Of all the struggles Vanessa Percoco faced during her fight against cancer, the ones she least expected were financial.

Ms. Percoco, who was just 31 when she was diagnosed with colorectal cancer in 2022, was surprised at the essentials that weren't covered by the public-health system in her home province of Quebec. She had to pay for take-home medications to ease the side effects of chemotherapy, supplies to keep her colostomy bag in place and physiotherapy and nutrition counselling to help restore her health.

Ms. Percoco estimates that, with the help of family and friends, she spent \$15,000 over two years for expenses related to her cancer care. She sometimes asked herself which should come first: medication or rent.

"That's not a normal stress," she said. "It's not fair to have to think like that."

Ms. Percoco's experience is far from unique, according to a new study from the Canadian Cancer Society. The report, to be released Monday, predicts the disease will cost Canadian society \$37.7-billion in 2024. Eighty per cent of those costs will be borne by public-health systems and the taxpayers who fund them, but 20 per cent – or \$7.5-billion – will come from the bank accounts of cancer patients and their caregivers.

People with cancer spend, on average, \$33,000 over their lifetime on expenses related to their care, said Jennifer Gillis, senior manager of surveillance for the Canadian Cancer Society and co-chair of the Canadian Cancer Statistics Advisory Committee.

"The impact of that \$33,000 is not equally felt," she added. "For people on low incomes or fixed incomes, that can represent years of saving for a down payment,



Vanessa Percoco, seen in her home in Saint-Eustache, Que., estimates she spent \$15,000 for expenses related to her cancer treatment. ANDREJ IVANOV/THE GLOBE AND MAIL

their education, their kids' educations – so many things that are really meaningful to them."

The new study, which was produced in partnership with Statistics Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada, lays out the financial cost of cancer not only to individuals, but also to a medical system that will require more public money over the next decade to fight the disease.

The direct cost of cancer to provincial and territorial health ministries is expected to rise to \$37.4-billion a year in 2034, a 24-per-cent increase from \$30.2-billion this year.

Lung cancer, the most frequently diagnosed and deadliest type of the disease in Canada, is expected to have "the steepest increase and highest overall societal cost in 2034," according to the report – despite encouraging recent declines in lung-cancer rates and mortality.

The overall cost of treating cancer is expected to keep rising in part because Canada's population is growing and aging. Getting old is a major risk factor for cancer. In 2000, about 138,000 people in Canada were diagnosed with cancer. This year, that figure is expected to be around 247,000.

As well, improvements in cancer detection and treatment are helping patients live longer, which means more years of expensive care than was the case decades ago, when cancer often killed patients quickly. As of 2018, there were more than 1.5 million Canadians living with or beyond cancer, the report said.

"This is a great news story, that more people are doing well and are surviving through their cancers," said Darren Brenner, a cancer epidemiologist at the University of Calgary and co-chair of the Canadian Cancer Statistics Advisory Committee. "So all of these factors combined –

growth in the population, longer survival with more complex and costly care – is really driving the increases in cost."

The study projects that treating the three most common types of cancer – lung, breast and colorectal – will cost the health system nearly \$13-billion this year. The most expensive cancer to treat on a per-patient basis is multiple myeloma, a blood cancer for which it costs just more than \$500,000 to treat a single patient over their lifetime, mostly because of high-priced drugs and treatments, including stem-cell transplants.

The second most expensive is leukemia, with an average treatment cost of nearly \$267,000 a person.

When looking at the financial toll of cancer on individuals, the study said 49 per cent of those costs come in the form of out-of-pocket spending on essentials such as medical supplies and prescription drugs. Time costs, including hours spent in hospital waiting rooms or travelling to specialized cancer clinics, accounted for 34 per cent of individual costs. Indirect costs, such as lost income, made up the rest.

Ms. Percoco, who lives in the Montreal suburb of Saint-Eustache, bore all those types of costs as she fought through three gruelling surgeries, chemotherapy and nearly two years of living with a colostomy bag.

After working as a special-needs educator, she had gone back to school to become a special needs classroom teacher. She was three weeks into a teaching contract in the spring of 2022 when she became too sick to work because of what she soon learned was colon cancer. She was left without an income or private health benefits.

"I survived," Ms. Percoco, now 33, said. But she thinks often of cancer patients who weren't as fortunate, and who had to spend their final months "looking for money, bothering people, depending on people. I don't think that's fair."

# Nobel awards signal a pivotal moment for AI

For the first time, four laureates, including Canada’s Geoffrey Hinton, are being honoured for work directly related to artificial intelligence

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In Sweden’s frost-tinged capital, there are rituals that herald the approach of another Nobel Prize ceremony. Receptions, lectures and tuxedo fittings are all under way, in keeping with more than a century of tradition. But in one respect, Tuesday’s iconic celebration of intellectual achievement will be different from previous years. For the first time, four Nobel laureates, including Canada’s Geoffrey Hinton, are being honoured for work directly related to artificial intelligence. If anyone still needed a sign that AI has arrived, here it is. The technology that is transforming how we work, learn and communicate has ascended to the highest level of scientific acclaim. And the world is celebrating – albeit with worried glances. The ambivalence was evident on Saturday when Dr. Hinton, who is a co-winner of this year’s Nobel Prize in physics, spoke with reporters alongside winners of the chemistry and economics prizes. The first question – put solely to Dr. Hinton – was whether he regretted his achievement. Dr. Hinton, a professor emeritus at the University of Toronto who has been called “the godfather of AI” explained that he has no sense of having done anything wrong in helping to lay the foundations of today’s AI revolution more than 40 years ago because the consequences of his research were unknown, and would be for decades. However, he added, AI is now developing so much faster than anticipated that some of those consequences have become a serious concern. At this rate, he said, we may be within five to 20 years of witnessing the birth of a “superintelli-



Nobel laureate Geoffrey Hinton gives a lecture in physics at Stockholm University in Sweden on Sunday. PONTUS LUNDAHL/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

gence,” an AI that can out-think humans. “I wish I’d thought about safety earlier,” he said. Dr. Hinton is well-known for voicing his reservations about AI, which caused him to depart a position with Google in 2023. When his Nobel was announced in October, he told The Globe and Mail that he hoped the award would give him a bigger platform for talking about the risks of AI. That has certainly come to pass. This week, Dr. Hinton is commanding more than the usual amount of attention for a Nobel laureate in a city that is filled with them. In addition to being the focus of news conferences and panels, his every step is followed by a film crew shooting a documentary about his life. The irony is that Dr. Hinton is associated with a technical leap so profound it has been compared at various times to fire or the Industrial Revolution, but its use could ultimately threaten social stability and perhaps humanity itself. Canada has had Nobel laureates before, but never quite like this. For Dr. Hinton, it’s a world away from the 1980s, when he first began working on neural networks – the interconnected programming structures that are the

heart of today’s learning algorithm. At the time, he was drawing on earlier research at the intersection of physics, computer science and neuroscience, most notably by fellow physics prize winner, John Hopfield of Princeton University. But he could barely have imagined then how far neural networks would come, or what they would achieve in his own lifetime. To put things in perspective, Dr. Hinton added that the advances he was part of would certainly have been made by others in his absence. “I think that if I had not done that research, maybe it would delay what’s happening now by a few weeks,” he said. That may be true. But in this universe, it is Dr. Hinton who finds himself in the role of prophet and guide, explaining why society must work to ensure that AI is developed for “the greatest benefit to humankind,” as Alfred Nobel put in the directions for his prize. Exactly how that is to be achieved is not so clear. “It’s a complicated question,” said Demis Hassabis, chief of DeepMind Technologies, and co-winner of this year’s Nobel Prize in Chemistry. “I think it’s not just a technology question, but it’s some-

thing the international community needs to come together on.” The challenge is that AI is a “dual purpose technology,” he said. It causes harm as easily as it can improve human life. It is the former possibility that brought this year’s economics laureates into the discussion, including Daron Acemoglu, an MIT professor whose Nobel-winning work is focused on how societal institutions can lead to drastically different outcomes for economies and for people. A key feature of societies that do better is inclusiveness, something that AI may undermine because its benefits are uneven. “AI promises to be a disruptive change for good and bad, so there is a danger that it will actually widen a lot of gaps,” Dr. Acemoglu said. In the good column, scientists have conveyed genuine excitement about the use of AI in research. “I think we’re on the cusp of a new golden era of discovery that’s helped by and powered by some of these tools,” Dr. Hassabis said. His own Nobel offers such an example. Together with colleague Jonathan Jumper he is receiving a share of the chemistry prize for developing AlphaFold2, an algorithm based on the same kinds of neural networks developed by Dr. Hinton that can predict the structure of a protein based on its genetic sequence. It is a key step toward developing therapies that act on proteins to prevent disease. In particular, Dr. Jumper, who is collecting his Nobel before turning 40 next year, exemplifies a generation of researchers who are now looking to use AI to best effect. Although they will share the same stage this week, more than half a century separates him from Dr. Hopfield, who on Sunday called the mystery of how the mind emerges from the brain “the deepest question posed by our humanity.” Between them stands Dr. Hinton, both a participant and witness to the dizzying acceleration that AI has undergone. This week may end with tuxedos back in their closets. But if Canada’s latest Nobel laureate is right, a nascent presence that could be a future boon or antagonist to humanity’s best interests isn’t going anywhere.

# More than three-quarters of Earth’s surface permanently drier: UN

KATE HELMORE  
MATTHEW McCLEARN

An area of Earth larger than India has transformed from humid lands to dryland over the past three decades, destroying food systems, driving poverty and leading to water shortages across the globe, according to a new UN report. The report, prepared under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification’s Science-Policy Interface – the UN body for assessing the science of land degradation and drought – found that between 1990 and 2020, more than three-quarters of the Earth’s land became permanently drier. More than 40 per cent of the global land mass (excluding Antarctica) is now classified as drylands – up from 37 per cent in previous decades. Twice as many people worldwide live in drylands today compared with 1990. The report found that an area larger than Canada – equivalent to 7.6 per cent of all land – had been permanently transformed, for example from humid landscapes to drylands, or from forests into grasslands. China saw the largest total area permanently transformed; as a percentage of their total area, South Sudan and Tanzania were hit hardest. Ibrahim Thiaw, the convention’s executive secretary, called it “an existential threat affecting billions of people” in a written statement. Should high greenhouse gas emissions continue, the authors forecast further expansion of drylands, including throughout the entire Mediterranean region, northern Venezuela, northeastern Brazil and large swaths of southern Africa. They would also grow on this continent, in central Mexico and across the American Midwest.



People walk through a part of the Amazon River that shows signs of drought in Santa Sofia, on the outskirts of Leticia, Colombia, in October. Twice as many people worldwide live in drylands today than in 1990. IVAN VALENCIA/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Jonathan Overpeck, dean of the University of Michigan’s school of environment, said the report highlights the problem more comprehensively than previous efforts. But he said that while the report is “sophisticated and impressive,” it understates the problem’s extent. That’s because it focuses on moisture available through precipitation, but overlooks water locked up in ice. In many regions, snow and ice allow “moisture in the warmer months, because instead of raining in the winter, you get the snow, which persists on the land longer. ... It’s sort of like a natural reservoir.” But climate change is melting that ice in mountainous regions including the Himalayas, the Andes and the Alps. Prof. Overpeck added that the report also didn’t take into account the role of melting perma-

frost, which causes soil and vegetation to dry out. “That’s really devastating for forests in Northern Canada and other parts of the boreal forest around the globe,” he said. Though aridity and drought are often conflated, they are in fact distinct: The main difference is that while droughts can persist for months or years, they eventually end, allowing people and ecosystems to recover. But rising aridity is a permanent change that can’t be waited out; the only option is to adapt. “There’s no going back from aridity,” said Narcisa Pricope, one of the report’s authors. Greenhouse gas emissions lead to increased aridity through trapping more heat in the atmosphere. These increased temperatures exacerbate water evaporation, therefore removing moisture from soil.

Aridity is a vicious cycle. As the soil becomes drier it is less able to sustain ecosystems, which means fewer plants grow, so less dead plant matter is absorbed by the soil. Dead plants within soil – detritus vegetation – trap moisture, which in turn feeds the soil and the ecosystem. However, agricultural practices can also contribute to dryness – notably the use of fertilizer, which robs the soil of moisture-rich biodiversity, or by tillage, whereby soil is fractured, leading to increased runoff, erosion and a surface crust that water cannot infiltrate. When more than half the world’s agricultural land and its soils are degrading, UNCCD chief scientist Barron Orr said, “your risk goes up, you have less cover and you are exacerbating the aridity trend.” However, while increased arid-

ity is a worldwide crisis, it presents an opportunity for Canadian agriculture, said Evan Fraser, director of the Arrell Food Institute at the University of Guelph. Canadian producers still have access to huge areas of arable land and water, alongside infrastructure and energy, such as solar and hydro, he said. Compared with other agricultural countries, production in Canada is also efficient and well regulated, with sustainable practices that have the capacity to carry into a drier and more arid future. The Canadian resilience to dry conditions can be seen in arid landscapes within the Prairies, said Margot Hurlbert, a researcher at the University of Regina. Despite a four-year drought, farmers have nevertheless managed to maintain yields through practices such as crop rotation, minimizing tillage and allowing soil to recover during some growing seasons. Planting less water-intensive crops are also a key part of the solution, she said. However, simply because these measures have worked during past droughts does not mean they will continue to work, Prof. Hurlbert said. “We know droughts will get more intense over the next few years. The key is balance and recovery and diversifying the risk.” To Mr. Orr, sustainable, water-focused agricultural policies in Canada and elsewhere are key to fighting increased aridity on a global scale. By subsidizing and promoting practices that lead to healthy soil – which in turn sequesters carbon – overall worldwide emissions can be reduced. “Aridity is resulting from cascading effects that stem from climate change,” he said. “But we could try and have a positive, enhancing feedback loop too, maybe not as rapid but nonetheless long-term.”

## JAY-Z ACCUSED IN LAWSUIT OF RAPING MINOR WITH SEAN COMBS, CALLS IT BLACKMAIL

NEW YORK Jay-Z was accused of raping a 13-year-old girl with Sean Combs in a lawsuit filed Sunday by an unnamed plaintiff. He vehemently denied the allegation and accused the lawyer who brought the suit of trying to blackmail him with false claims. The allegations against the billionaire rapper and hip-hop mogul came as part of the flurry of litigation against Mr. Combs, who is facing federal sex trafficking and racketeering charges and

at least 30 lawsuits accusing him of sexual misconduct. One of those lawsuits, filed in October, accused Mr. Combs and an anonymous celebrity of raping the teen at an after-party following the Video Music Awards in New York in 2000. On Sunday, the plaintiff amended the lawsuit to name Jay-Z as the other celebrity, asserting in court papers that he and Mr. Combs took turns raping her after she arrived at the party

and drank part of a drink that made her feel “woozy and light-headed.” Jay-Z called the claims “idiotic” and said that he came from a world where “we protect children.” Mr. Combs has denied all allegations of sexual assault and misconduct and has pleaded not guilty to the criminal charges. The lawsuit was filed by Tony Buzbee, a personal injury lawyer in Houston, who has filed at least 20 sex assault lawsuits against

Mr. Combs and used a phone hotline, Instagram and a news conference to find clients. In an extensive response, Jay-Z, 55, said he had received a demand letter from Mr. Buzbee appearing to seek a settlement but that the letter had the opposite effect: “It made me want to expose you for the fraud you are in a VERY public fashion. So no, I will not give you ONE RED PEN-NY!!,” the statement read. The statement went on to say:

“My heart and support goes out to true victims in the world, who have to watch how their life story is dressed in costume for profitability by this ambulance chaser in a cheap suit. You have made a terrible error in judgment thinking that all ‘celebrities’ are the same. I’m not from your world. I’m a young man who made it out of the project of Brooklyn. We don’t play these types of games.” NEW YORK TIMES NEWS SERVICE



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# First Uyghur refugee arrives in Canada

Ottawa has committed to resettle people from persecuted minority groups who have fled repression in China

STEVEN CHASE  
SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY  
REPORTER

A Uyghur woman is the first refugee from China's persecuted minority groups to arrive in Canada under a federal government resettlement effort launched in 2023. Neither the government nor those helping Uyghurs are releasing details about her, including the third country she arrived from, out of fear for her safety. The woman arrived by plane and landed in Toronto on Dec. 5, two sources say. The Globe and Mail is not identifying them because they were not authorized to discuss the matter publicly. The Canadian government has

committed to bring in Uyghurs and other Turkic minorities who have fled repression in China. This follows from a February, 2023, vote in the House of Commons where MPs voted unanimously in favour of Motion M-62, which called on Ottawa to accept 10,000 Uyghurs and other minorities, and a February, 2021, vote where MPs also backed a declaration that Beijing's treatment of these people amounted to genocide. Renée Proctor, a spokeswoman for Immigration Minister Marc Miller, said in a statement that Canada remains "deeply concerned about the serious human rights violations in Xinjiang affecting Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims." Those who have fled China may still face threats, including the risk of forced return, she said. "Canada is offering safe haven to Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims who are living in third countries and are in need of protection," she said. "Applications are being received and processing is

under way. Approved clients will receive settlement services to assist them in integrating to life in Canada." She said Ottawa will not "provide further information about our operational efforts as it could put these vulnerable people at further risk." Sameer Zuberi, a Liberal MP from Montreal who led the campaign for Motion M-62, called the arrival of the first Uyghur under the immigration resettlement program a "historic moment" for Canada. "This is a non-partisan issue. It is a humanitarian issue," he said, adding that Canadians are aware the Uyghurs are subject to "grave and serious crimes against humanity." He and Mehmet Tohti, executive director of the Uyghur Rights Advocacy Project, were at Toronto's Pearson Airport to greet the Uyghur refugee on Dec. 5. "This is only the beginning," Mr. Tohti said in a statement. "We look forward to welcoming many more refugees in the months and years to come, ensuring they find

safety, dignity, and opportunity here in Canada." Tens of thousands of Uyghurs and other Turkic minorities have fled China for countries in Central Asia and Turkey and are at risk of being sent back. Beijing has been pressing these countries to deport critics in these diasporas to China, or restrict their advocacy. A Uyghur Human Rights Project report in 2023, titled On The Fringe of Society: Humanitarian Needs of the At-Risk Uyghur Diaspora, described what it called a developing humanitarian crisis among those in self-imposed exile in states such as Turkey, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. All these countries are reliant on Chinese foreign investment. "As the Turkish government moves closer to China in the name of international economic partnerships and bilateral alliances, Turkey has become more dangerous for Uyghurs," the report said. Xinjiang has been a particular concern for rights activists, Western governments and academics,

who have said that China has imposed an unprecedented system of forced labour on the millions of Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims who live in the region. Michelle Bachelet, a former United Nations high commissioner for human rights, visited Xinjiang in 2022, and her office's report from August concluded that China has committed "serious human-rights violations" against Uyghur Muslims in the region, which may amount to crimes against humanity. Ms. Bachelet's report detailed "allegations of torture, sexual violence, ill-treatment, forced medical treatment, as well as forced labour and reports of deaths in custody." It also discussed a sharp decline in birth rates in the Xinjiang region between 2017 and 2019. Forced labour and forced relocation to work in other provinces, China's critics say, are the latest stage in a government-directed effort to exert control in Xinjiang, which Beijing has previously described as being infected with extremism.

# South Korea martial law fallout deepens; prosecutors close in on Yoon

HYUNJOO JIN  
JOSH SMITH

South Korea's leadership crisis deepened on Sunday as prosecutors named President Yoon Suk Yeol as a subject of a criminal investigation over last week's martial law attempt, a media report said, and his former defence minister was arrested. Mr. Yoon survived an impeachment vote in the opposition-led parliament late on Saturday, prompted by his short-lived attempt to impose martial law on Tuesday, but the leader of his own party said the President would effectively be excluded from his duties before eventually stepping down. That proposal, which appeared to win tacit approval from the Yoon-appointed Prime Minister on Sunday, drew condemnation from opposition lawmakers who said it was another unconstitutional power grab to delegate authority without resignation or impeachment. Thousands of people rallied in front of the parliament in Seoul on Sunday, calling for the impeachment and arrest of Mr. Yoon and the disbandment of his ruling party. Mr. Yoon's martial law declaration on Tuesday plunged Asia's fourth-largest economy and a key U.S. military ally into its greatest political crisis in decades, threatening to shatter South Korea's reputation as a democratic success story. The leader of Mr. Yoon's People Power Party, Han Dong-hoon, told a news conference alongside the Prime Minister on Sunday that Mr. Yoon would not be involved in foreign and other state affairs before his early resignation.



Thousands of people rally near the National Assembly in Seoul, South Korea, on Sunday, calling for the impeachment and arrest of President Yoon Suk Yeol and the disbandment of his party. KIM SOO-HYEON/REUTERS

But National Assembly speaker Woo Won-shik said it was unconstitutional to delegate presidential authority to the Prime Minister and the ruling party without impeachment. Mr. Woo proposed a meeting of rival parties to discuss ways to suspend Mr. Yoon's presidential power immediately. The main opposition Democratic Party called for the immediate suspension of Mr. Yoon's presidential duties and for stripping him of authority to control the military. The DP called for the arrest of Mr. Yoon and related military officials implicated in the martial law fiasco. Mr. Yoon shocked the nation

on Tuesday night when he gave the military sweeping emergency powers to root out what he called "anti-state forces" and obstructionist political opponents. He rescinded the order six hours later, after parliament defied military and police cordons to vote unanimously against the decree. Yonhap news agency reported that prosecutors had "booked" Mr. Yoon, a process in South Korea that involves formally naming subjects of investigation. Prosecutors could not immediately be reached for comment on the report. The commander of South Korea's special forces that stormed parliament last week after a mar-

tial law declaration said on Monday he was ordered to block lawmakers from entering the chamber to prevent a vote to lift the emergency measure. Colonel Kim Hyun-tae, the commanding officer of the 707th Special Missions Group, told reporters he took all responsibility for his troops' raid on parliament but said he was acting under orders from the defence minister. "We were all victims who were used by the former defence minister, Kim Yong-hyun," the commander told reporters outside the Defence Ministry in Seoul. "The members of the Group are not guilty. Their only guilt is that they followed the orders of their com-

mander," he said, fighting back tears. Three minority opposition parties filed a complaint with the prosecution against Mr. Yoon, former defence minister Kim Yong-hyun and martial law commander Park An-su, accusing them of insurrection. The crime of leading an insurrection is punishable by death or life imprisonment, with or without prison labour. Mr. Kim, who stepped down on Wednesday after Mr. Yoon rescinded martial law, was seen as a central figure in the debacle. He had proposed martial law to the President, according to a senior military official and the impeachment filings. The prosecution's special investigative team arrested Mr. Kim on Sunday and seized his mobile phone, it said in a brief statement to reporters. Before the arrest, investigators questioned the former defence minister, who voluntarily appeared at the Seoul Central District Prosecutors' Office around 1:30 a.m. local time on Sunday, Yonhap news agency reported. The national police raided Mr. Kim's office on Sunday as part of an investigation into claims of treason against Mr. Yoon and top ministers, Yonhap said. Opposition lawmakers allege Mr. Yoon mobilized military forces to block a vote by lawmakers seeking to nullify what they said was an unconstitutional martial law decree. Hours before Saturday's impeachment vote, Mr. Yoon addressed the nation in a televised speech to apologize for his martial law decree, saying he would put his fate in the hands of his party.

REUTERS

# CSIS to brief Poilievre on national-security threats despite his lack of clearance

STEVEN CHASE  
SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY  
REPORTER

Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre's office says he will receive a briefing on national-security matters from the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, though without being required to obtain special clearance that he has said would constrain his ability to publicly hold the government to account. The move follows a month after Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who has repeatedly criticized Mr. Poilievre for refusing top-level security clearance, announced he would ask security services to find another way to brief his rival on foreign interference targeting the Conservatives. The Official Opposition Leader's office said Saturday the briefing will take place this coming week. "We are interested in what CSIS has to say," said Sebastian Skamiski, director of media relations for Mr. Poilievre's office, in a statement. He said the Privy Council Office (PCO), a central agency of the federal government, confirmed to the Conservative Leader's office that the briefing would be offered under rules that allow CSIS to brief people regardless of that person's security classification.

"On Dec. 5, 2024, PCO confirmed our position," Mr. Skamiski said, adding the agency told the Conservatives in an e-mail that "the government is in a position to disclose the classified information pursuant to legislated authorities Threat Reduction Measures (TRM)." In October, the Prime Minister appeared before a public inquiry to answer questions about his record in fighting foreign interference. During testimony, Mr. Trudeau redirected the focus to the Official Opposition, and announced he had been given the names of past and present Conservative parliamentarians and candidates who are linked to foreign interference. He criticized Mr. Poilievre for not applying for clearance. Near the end of that month, Mr. Trudeau alleged that Mr. Poilievre's refusal to obtain a security clearance was a dereliction of his duty. "The leader of the Opposition has failed at his responsibility to keep his own MPs safe from foreign interference," Mr. Trudeau said on Oct. 30. "So, I have asked the security services to figure out a way to give some information to the Leader of the Opposition so that he can actually fulfill his responsibility of protecting Canadians, including those within his own caucus." This spat between Mr. Trudeau and Mr. Poilievre began in June

after the release of a report by the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians, which said some parliamentarians are collaborating with foreign governments such as China and India to advance their own interests. NSICOP also said Beijing and New Delhi allegedly interfered in Conservative leadership races. Mr. Poilievre has refused to apply for the security clearance necessary to read the unredacted report. He said the obligations of this clearance would restrict his ability to discuss and hold the government to account on what he had learned. He has maintained since June that CSIS officials can brief him under the agency's threat-reduction-measure mandate if federal officials feel there are foreign interference concerns about his party or caucus that should be brought to his attention. "Should the Government have relevant information, they are empowered by Section 12.1 of the CSIS Act to brief an individual using Threat Reduction Measures (TRM), regardless of security clearance status," Mr. Skamiski said Saturday. CSIS spokesperson Lindsay Sloane said the service has several mechanisms available through the CSIS Act to share information. "In typical circumstances, classified information is shared only

with those who hold an appropriate security clearance and a relevant need to know," she said in an e-mailed statement Saturday. "Under a threat reduction measure, certain information can be disclosed to reduce a threat. CSIS has considered the available mechanisms for sharing information with the Leader of the Official Opposition, as they related to the specific facts of this situation and the related national-security threats," Ms. Sloane said. "In this instance, CSIS has determined that the disclosure of some information to the Leader of the Official Opposition through a threat reduction measure is appropriate. Plans for the briefing are now being finalized to ensure this information is conveyed to the Leader of the Official Opposition." Stephanie Carvin, a former national-security analyst and a professor at Carleton University, said she's concerned in this tussle between the Liberals and Conservatives that security is becoming politicized. "Canada has largely avoided the politicization of intelligence that we've seen in other democracies, such as our closest allies, U.S. and the U.K.," she said. "At every opportunity, I feel like Parliament has shirked its responsibility to treat this seriously. It bothers me that political parties would use this as a chance to score points."

On Thursday, 2022 Conservative leadership contender Patrick Brown outlined interventions by India in testimony before MPs. Mr. Brown, the Mayor of Brampton, said an Indian consul-general meddled in his leadership bid, though he does not believe foreign interference by New Delhi influenced the outcome of the race that elected Mr. Poilievre. Mr. Brown, who was ultimately disqualified from that race after allegations he violated financing rules, told the parliamentary committee that his campaign co-chair, Conservative MP Michelle Rempel Garner, received an angry phone call from the consul-general to demand that he stop using the term of "Sikh nation." Ms. Rempel Garner resigned from his campaign in mid-June that year, saying she was considering entering Alberta politics, and the concern over "Sikh nation" was later raised at a conference call with top campaign aides. "The concern that was raised was that I had used the term on a number of occasions, 'Sikh nation,' and the consul-general had expressed directly to MP Rempel Garner that this was something they obviously didn't agree with; that it could be used in nationalistic terms toward the Sikh community," Mr. Brown told the committee. "What was agreed upon was that I wouldn't use the word 'Sikh nation.'"

# Syrians abroad celebrate after Assad regime falls

Excitement over the end of a brutal dictatorship was mixed with anxiety about whether to return home

SAMANTHA EDWARDS  
EMMA GRANEY

Syrian nationals around the world, including many refugees, celebrated the fall of the Assad regime Sunday, as excitement about the end of a brutal dictatorship was mixed with anxiety about whether to return home to an uncertain political future. Deposed president Bashar al-Assad, and before that, his father, Hafez, were in power for more than 50 years.

In Calgary, what had been planned as a rally to demand a free Syria quickly pivoted to a celebration, with hundreds of Syrians gathered outside City Hall, bundled against the cold, cheering and dancing. Some wrapped themselves in flags, some were crying, others singing. A local Middle Eastern sweet shop offered free treats.

Khadija Alsaeid, 18, fled the Syrian city of Aleppo with her family about 10 years ago. “It’s amazing, you don’t know the joy we feel,” she said at the rally. She hopes she can return to her hometown. “As much as I love Canada, as much as I love the mountains, I would love to go back one day there. It’s my city,” she said.

She acknowledged Syria faces an uncertain future, but said the most important thing is that the Assad regime is gone. What matters now, she said, is that the fight for freedom did not go in vain.

In just two weeks, a coalition of rebels led by a Turkish-backed jihadi group captured hundreds of square kilometres of territory including capital Damascus, freeing prisoners of the regime’s notorious detention camps along the way. Early Sunday, Mr. al-Assad fled the country and arrived in



A protest-turned-celebration is held for the freedom of Syria from ousted president Bashar al-Assad and his family’s 50-year rule, at city hall in Calgary on Sunday. PHOTOS BY JUDE BROCKE/THE GLOBE AND MAIL

Moscow, where Russian state media says he and his family were granted asylum.

The news of his sudden overthrow after a 13-year civil war and five decades of his family’s autocratic rule raised hope among the millions of displaced Syrians scattered in neighbouring countries and beyond that they could return home.

Thousands of Syrians in Lebanon poured across the Masna’a border on Sunday, waving Syrian opposition flags and shooting off fireworks. In Turkey, which is home to the largest population of Syrian refugees, people lined up at a border crossing with suitcases and duffel bags. “To the displaced all over the world, free Syria awaits you,” rebel commander Hasan Abdul Ghani wrote on Telegram, urging Syrians abroad to return home.

Marwa Khobie, executive director of the Syrian Canadian Foundation, says she believes that many of those who fled the violence, including some of those who have lived in Canada for a



Khadija Alsaeid, 18, fled the Syrian city of Aleppo with her family about 10 years ago.

long time, will want to return permanently.

“I think most Syrian refugees want to move back and rebuild their country because this is their home. This is where they were raised and had all of their busi-

nesses,” she said. “There are some concerns because we don’t know if we’re actually going to reach what we have hoped and fought for years. But so far, we’re feeling optimistic.”

Michael Molloy, who opened the Canadian embassy in Syria in the 1980s, said the number of displaced people who decide to return to Syria could depend on future leadership. The leader of the most powerful rebel faction is Ahmed al-Sharaa, whose *nomme de guerre* is Abu Mohammed al-Golani when he was a commander of al-Qaeda in the Syrian civil war. He severed ties with the group in 2016. Signalling his efforts to secure an orderly transition, he declared Sunday that Syrian state institutions would remain under the supervision of the Assad-appointed prime minister until a handover.

Although the rebels have proven their military capabilities, Mr. Molloy said it’s yet to be seen how they would govern.

“If the new regime is tolerant and tries to reunite the country

through peaceful means, then I think we’ll see the traffic going to Syria. If they don’t establish order very quickly, we could in fact see another exodus and that’s going to make things very complicated for Turkey because that’s the obvious way to get out,” he said.

He noted, however, that the type of migration he’s most concerned about is people associated with the Assad regime trying to escape to Canada. “The Assad regime did not tolerate any dissent whatsoever. So they had people who were complicit in large numbers: police, intelligence people, people at the highest levels of the government. ... Many of them should end up in front of the Hague court.”

In a statement, Foreign Minister Mélanie Joly said: “We will collaborate with our partners throughout this transitional period to support the Syrian people. We remain committed to holding the Assad regime accountable before the International Court of Justice for the torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and punishment of its own people.”

For Syrians in Canada, many of whom have started new lives, built families and careers, the idea of moving back is complicated.

Bassam Al Rashed Abazed came to Canada in 2017 with his wife and three children. Since then, they’ve had another child. When it’s safe, he plans to visit Syria, where one of his sisters and many of his aunts, uncles and cousins still live. But he’s unlikely to move back permanently.

“I want to help build our country again,” said the 44-year-old. “But my eldest daughter is in Grade 10. Her first language is English now. I think it’s better for her to study here in Canada, and the other kids, too.”

Ahmad Habboub became a Canadian citizen in October. The Calgary resident said he would like to go back to Syria, but his family home in the city of Homs has been destroyed. He also wants to complete his postsecondary studies here first. But one day? “I hope so.”

## Trump calls for immediate ceasefire in Ukraine

ELLEN KNICKMEYER  
JOANNA KOZLOWSKA WASHINGTON

U.S. president-elect Donald Trump on Sunday pushed Russian leader Vladimir Putin to act to reach an immediate ceasefire with Ukraine, describing it as part of his active efforts as president-elect to end the war despite being weeks from taking office.

“Zelensky and Ukraine would like to make a deal and stop the madness,” Mr. Trump wrote on social media, referring to Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelensky.

In a television interview that aired Sunday, Mr. Trump also said he would be open to reducing military aid to Ukraine and pulling the United States out of NATO. Those are two threats that have alarmed Ukraine, NATO allies and many in the U.S. national security community.

Asked on NBC’s *Meet the Press* if he were actively working to end the nearly three-year-old Ukraine war, Mr. Trump said, “I am.” He refused to say if he had spoken to Mr. Putin since winning the election in November. “I don’t want to say anything about that, because I don’t want to do anything that could impede the negotiation,” Mr. Trump said.

Mr. Trump’s call for an immediate ceasefire went beyond the public policy stands taken by the Biden administration and Ukraine and drew a cautious response from Mr. Zelensky. It also marks Mr. Trump wading unusually deeply into efforts before his Jan. 20 inauguration to resolve one of the major global crises facing the lame-duck Biden administration.

Mr. Trump made his proposal after a weekend meeting in Paris with French and Ukrainian leaders in Paris, where many world leaders gathered to celebrate the restoration of Notre Dame cathedral after a devastating fire. None of the advisers travelling with him appeared to have expertise on Ukraine.

Kyiv would like to close a deal, Mr. Trump wrote on his social media platform Truth Social. “There should be an immediate ceasefire and negotiations should begin.”

“I know Vladimir well. This is his time to act. China can help. The World is waiting!” Mr. Trump added. He was referring to mediation efforts by China that many in the West have seen as favouring Russia.

Mr. Zelensky described his discussions Saturday with Mr. Trump, brought together by French President Emmanuel Macron,

as “constructive” but has given no further details.

Mr. Zelensky cautioned that Ukraine needs a “just and robust peace, that Russians will not destroy within a few years.”

“When we talk about an effective peace with Russia, we must talk first of all about effective peace guarantees. Ukrainians want peace more than anyone else. Russia brought war to our land,” he said Sunday in a post on the Telegram messaging app.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov responded to Mr. Trump’s post by repeating Moscow’s long-standing message that it is open to talks with Ukraine. Mr. Peskov referenced a decree by Mr. Zelensky from October, 2022, that declared the prospect of any talks “impossible” as long as Mr. Putin was Russia’s leader.

That decree came after Mr. Putin proclaimed four occupied regions of Ukraine to be part of Russia, in what Kyiv and the West said was a clear violation of Ukrainian sovereignty.

Mr. Trump’s former national security adviser H.R. McMaster warned there was no such thing as a quick fix to ending Russia’s war with Ukraine.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

## GHANA’S FORMER PRESIDENT JOHN MAHAMA IS SET TO RETURN AFTER RIVAL CONCEDES ELECTION

ACCRA, GHANA Ghana’s former president John Dramani Mahama is set to return to office in the West African nation’s presidential election after the ruling party candidate, Vice-President Mahamudu Bawumia, on Sunday conceded defeat and voters vented anger at the government’s handling of the economy.

Ahead of the official announcement, Mr. Bawumia told reporters that he respects the decision of Ghanaians to vote for change. “I’ve just called His Excellency John Mahama to congratulate him as president-elect of the Republic of Ghana,” he said at his residence in the capital, Accra.

Previously president of Ghana between July, 2012, and January, 2017, Mr. Mahama, 65, acknowledged the call from the ruling party candidate in a post on the X platform, describing his victory as “emphatic.”

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CHILDREN'S AID FOUNDATION OF CANADA



A man looks inside as a fire burns in a room in the Tishrin palace of ousted Syrian president Bashar al-Assad in Damascus's al-Muhajirin area on Sunday. A group of heavily armed jihadists led the lightning offensive that finally brought an end to the Baathist regime. OMAR HAJ KADOUR/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



People wave Syrian flags as they gather in front of the parliament in Vienna, Austria. ELISABETH MANDL/REUTERS



A woman waves a Syrian opposition flag as she celebrates at Umayyad Square in Damascus. BAKR AL KASSEM/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

# Syria: As the rebels' victory became clear, residents of the capital poured into the streets

■ FROM, A1

Videos emerged online a day earlier showing members of Mr. al-Assad's army deserting their posts and changing into civilian clothes.

"This victory is for all Syrians," Ahmed al-Sharaa, the leader of the most powerful rebel faction, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, or HTS, said in a speech from the Syrian capital's historic Umayyad Mosque. "We are the rightful owners [of this country], we have been fighting, and today we have been rewarded with this victory."

As the rebels' victory became clear, residents of the capital poured into the streets to tear down a statue of Mr. al-Assad's father, Hafez, and then to loot the presidential palace that had been the seat of the Assad dynasty for much of its 54-year rule.

The next target for some was the Iranian embassy, where Syrians smashed windows and tore down posters of former Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah and former Iranian military commander Qassem Soleimani, two key allies of Mr. al-Assad. Mr. Nasrallah was killed in an Israeli air strike on Beirut in September, while General Soleimani was assassinated by the U.S. in 2020.

The length and depravity of the civil war transformed the uprising against Mr. al-Assad. Instead of a transition to Syria's pro-democracy figures – something that could perhaps have been managed back in 2011 – it was a group of heavily armed jihadists that led the lightning offensive that finally brought an

end to the Baathist regime. The largely secular ex-army officers who led the initial armed opposition to Mr. al-Assad (under the umbrella of the Free Syrian Army) were gradually eclipsed by Mr. al-Sharaa and HTS, a former al-Qaeda offshoot.

What happens next in the country will largely be decided by the 42-year-old Mr. al-Sharaa, whose *nomme de guerre* is Abu Mohammed al-Golani. On Sunday, he announced that Mr. al-Assad's last prime minister, Mohammed Ghazi al-Jalali, would oversee the running of state institutions for an unspecified transition period.

Mr. al-Sharaa – who was greeted with cheers of "God is great!" on Sunday as he strode through the centre of Damascus, surrounded by armed men – called for an end to all fighting, and forbade acts of retribution against those who had previously served Mr. al-Assad.

But HTS, which is designated as a terrorist group by Canada and the United States, even as it has sought to moderate its image in recent years, doesn't control all of Syria. The Turkish-backed Syrian National Army, itself a coalition of smaller armed groups, holds sway in parts of the north of the country. Kurdish forces,

under U.S. protection, run a mini-state east of the Euphrates River, near the country's border with Iraq. In recent days, as HTS approached Damascus from the north, other rebels of unknown affiliation emerged in Daraa – the city that first rose up against the regime in 2011 – and converged on the capital from the south.

It's unclear whether the other rebel factions will agree to a process led by Mr. al-Sharaa and HTS, or whether the various groups will now turn their guns on each other. Damascus was placed under a 4 p.m. to 5 a.m. curfew Sunday night.

There were already signs on

Sunday of more chaos ahead. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported that the Turkish military, which fears the creation of an independent Kurdish state, shelled Kurdish-controlled parts of Syria, and there were clashes between the Turkish-backed SNA and Kurdish forces in the northern city of Manbij.

Meanwhile Israel, which regarded Mr. al-Assad as a foe but also worries about the rise of an Islamist government on its northeastern border, occupied the Syrian-controlled side of Mount Hermon in the Golan Heights, a step Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said was taken "to ensure that no hostile force embeds itself right next to the border of Israel."

Israel also carried out at least three air strikes inside Syria on Sunday, including one attack that reportedly struck a scientific research centre in Damascus and another that hit a building used by Mr. al-Assad's notorious *mukhabarat* intelligence service.

Despite the many uncertainties, most Syrians believe their future is far brighter now that Mr. al-Assad is gone.

"This day has been a dream for 13 years," said Asaad Hanna, an exiled Syrian journalist and former member of the White Helmets rescue group that rose to international fame for its efforts to save the victims of air strikes carried out by the regime and its Russian allies.

"I'm still dizzy, not sure if this is true, but we are a free country right now," Mr. Hanna said. "I'm going home as soon as possible."



People celebrate at Umayyad Square in Damascus. Celebrations erupted across Syria on Sunday after rebels swept into Damascus and declared Mr. al-Assad had fled the country. BAKR AL KASSEM/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



An opposition fighter steps on a broken statue of Mr. al-Assad’s father and former Syrian president, Hafez al-Assad, in Damascus. HUSSEIN MALLA/ASSOCIATED PRESS



An opposition fighter celebrates as Syrian rebels burn down a military court in Damascus. HUSSEIN MALLA/ASSOCIATED PRESS



‘This victory is for all Syrians,’ top rebel commander Abu Mohammed al-Golani said in a speech from the Syrian capital’s historic Umayyad Mosque. MAHMOUD HASSANO/REUTERS

# Moscow faces potential loss of its crucial Syrian bases

GEOFFREY YORK  
AFRICA BUREAU CHIEF  
JOHANNESBURG

The toppling of Bashar al-Assad’s regime in Syria will send shock waves through the Mediterranean region and as far away as Central Africa, as Moscow suffers a heavy blow to its capacity to prop up its network of allies.

Russia’s naval and air bases in Syria are crucial resupply hubs for its ambitious strategy of expanding its military influence in Libya, West Africa and Central Africa, where it has deployed thousands of soldiers and military contractors over the past several years.

With the sudden defeat of the Russian-backed government in Damascus, those bases are now in serious peril. This, in turn, could greatly weaken the Kremlin’s military presence in countries such as Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso and the Central African Republic – the African allies that it has cultivated at great cost in recent years.

In a statement on Sunday, the Russian foreign ministry tried to minimize the threat to its bases in Syria. “There is no serious threat to their security at the moment,” it said, although it confirmed that the bases are “on high alert.”

For years, however, those bases have sent Russian warplanes on bombing attacks against the Islamist rebels who have now seized power in Syria, so it is doubtful that the new government will freely concede that the Russians can stay.

Tartus, home of Russia’s naval

base in Syria, and Latakia, home of Russia’s Khmeimim air base, were long considered to be politically loyal to Mr. al-Assad. But on the weekend, social media videos showed crowds of people in both regions celebrating the demise of Mr. al-Assad and destroying statues of him, suggesting that Russia could face a hostile atmosphere around the two bases, even though the rebels have not moved against them so far.

Moscow’s supply flights to its African bases normally stop at Khmeimim for refuelling. Without this option, its military could face the difficult task of trying to fly directly from Russia, which would only be possible from southern Russian airfields.

Its naval base at Tartus, meanwhile, is its only Mediterranean base and its only formal overseas naval base. Tartus has played a key role in shipping thousands of tons of military equipment to Libya, where Russian forces are supporting General Khalifa Haftar, the warlord who dominates the eastern part of the country. Russian military supplies also flow from Libya to the Russian allies in West Africa.

If the two bases close, Moscow will struggle to find other resupply hubs in the region. “There are few good alternatives,” said John Lechner, a researcher who studies Russia’s overseas operations, in a report published by the Foreign Policy Research Institute this weekend.

“If Moscow loses its bases in Syria, Russia’s Africa operations are in a difficult position no matter what, at least in the near term,” he said.

One option is for Russia to try

to establish a naval base in Libya, which is reportedly one of its long-standing strategic goals. But the United States would be expected to oppose this strongly.

Moscow could also seek a naval base in Sudan or Algeria, but both are considered unlikely in the short term. It might prefer to try to negotiate a deal with Syria’s new government to allow it to keep its existing bases, if the rebels allow it. The Russian foreign ministry said on Sunday that it is maintaining contact with all Syrian opposition groups.

While the defeat of the Assad regime is a threat to Russia’s logistical support for its African allies, it could also have a psychological effect, shaking their confidence in Moscow’s ability to provide military protection against the rebels and rival militias that jeopardize their grip on power.

“Assad’s collapse would damage the global perception of Russia as an effective partner and protector, potentially threatening Russia’s partnerships with African autocrats and its resulting economic, military, and political influence in Africa,” the U.S.-based Institute for the Study of War said in a report last week, before Mr. al-Assad was ousted.

Syria has served as the blueprint for the “regime survival package” that Russia offers to any allies that are threatened by insurgents, the institute noted.

The potential closing of its bases in Syria would also weaken the Kremlin’s strategic objectives in the region, including its goal of projecting power in the Mediterranean and Red Seas and threatening NATO’s southern flank, the institute said.

## How it happened: Two seismic weeks that toppled Syria’s government

**Wednesday, Nov. 27: Rebel offensive begins**  
Armed opposition groups launch a large-scale attack on areas controlled by government forces in northwestern Syria and claim to have wrested control of over 15 villages from government forces in northwestern Aleppo province. The government and its allies respond with airstrikes and shelling in an attempt to halt the insurgent advances.

The attack on Aleppo follows weeks of simmering low-level violence, including government attacks on opposition-held areas. Turkey, a main backer of Syrian opposition groups, says the rebels began a limited offensive to stop the attacks, but it expanded as government forces began to retreat.

**Thursday, Nov. 28: The offensive expands**  
The offensive expands to reach the countryside of Idlib province amid reports government troops are retreating.

**Friday, Nov. 29: Rebels enter Aleppo**  
The insurgents enter Aleppo, Syria’s largest city, for the first time since they were pushed out in 2016 after a grueling military campaign by Syrian government forces backed by Russia and Iran. They meet with little resistance.

**Saturday, Nov. 30: Aleppo falls under insurgent control**  
The rebels say they control Aleppo, raising a flag over the city’s citadel and occupying the international airport. The Syrian armed forces claim to have redeployed troops and equipment in preparation for a counterattack.

By evening, the insurgents have seized at least four towns in the central Hama province and claim to have entered the provincial capital.

**Sunday, Dec. 1: The government fights back**  
The Syrian military launches a counterattack with troops and airstrikes on Idlib and Aleppo. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi visits Damascus, telling Bashar al-Assad that Tehran will support the counteroffensive.

But Mr. al-Assad receives little, if any, help from his allies. Russia is busy with its war in Ukraine, and Iran has seen its proxies across the region degraded by regular airstrikes. Lebanon’s Iran-backed Hezbollah has been weakened by a yearlong conflict with Israel.

**Monday, Dec. 2-Wednesday, Dec. 4: Fighting rages near Hama**  
The insurgents push south, advancing to within 10 kilometres of Hama, the country’s fourth-largest city and a key crossroads in central Syria, about 200 kilometres north of Damascus. State media reports fierce fighting in the province, and both state media and a British-based observer group say government forces, backed by Russian airstrikes, have recaptured some territory.

Turkey urges Mr. al-Assad to hold talks with the opposition.

**Thursday, Dec. 5: Insurgents capture Hama**  
After several days of fighting the rebels sweep into Hama. Dozens of jubilant fighters are seen firing into the air in celebration in Assi Square, the site of massive anti-government protests in the early days of the uprising in 2011. The Syrian army says it has redeployed to positions outside the city to protect civilians.

**Friday, Dec. 6: Rebels advance on Homs**  
Rapidly advancing now, the rebels seize two towns on the outskirts of Homs, Syria’s third-largest city. About 40 kilometres south of Hama, Homs is the gateway to Damascus and the location of one of Syria’s two state-owned oil refineries. Capturing it would cut the link between Damascus, Mr. al-Assad’s seat of power, and the coastal region where he enjoys wide support.

The government denies reports that its military has withdrawn from the city.

Top diplomats from countries including Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Turkey, Iran and Russia, hold talks on Syria in the Qatari capital, Doha.

**Saturday, Dec. 7: Homs falls and Mr. al-Assad’s grip weakens**  
Opposition forces take Homs after government forces abandon it. The insurgents say they have encircled Damascus and are carrying out the “final stage” of their offensive.

The UN special envoy for Syria, Geir Pedersen, seeks urgent talks in Geneva to ensure an “orderly political transition,” as Syrian state media denies Mr. al-Assad has fled the country.

**Sunday, Dec. 8: Mr. al-Assad is toppled**  
Syrian state television airs a video statement by a group of men saying that Mr. al-Assad has been overthrown and all prisoners have been set free. HTS commander Abu Mohammed al-Golani visits the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus and calls Mr. al-Assad’s fall a victory for “the Islamic nation.”

Russian officials and Iranian state TV say Mr. al-Assad has left Syria. Russian state news agencies later report he and his family are in Moscow and were granted asylum.

Prime Minister Mohammed Ghazi Jalali says Syria’s government is ready to “extend its hand” to the opposition and hand over its functions to a transitional government.

The subject who is truly loyal to the chief magistrate will neither advise nor submit to arbitrary measures - Junius

ON THE BRINK

# The pillars of immigration are crumbling

For decades, Canada’s immigration system was a model – the model – for the rest of the world. Year after year, hundreds of thousands of newcomers chose Canada as their future.

The remarkable thing was that nothing particularly remarkable happened. There was no crisis, there were no headlines. New Canadians simply went about building their new lives and, in doing so, helped to build Canada.

That success rested on three pillars: a competently administered system with clear rules, a clear-eyed approach that placed a high value on attracting the most skilled migrants and a strong consensus that immigration benefited Canada.

All of those pillars have crumbled in the past couple of years, as the federal Liberals ramped up permanent-resident admissions and, even more significantly, allowed hundreds of thousands of temporary residents to enter the country. The idea was to alleviate what the federal government saw as labour shortages, but the unprecedented change came as housing markets were under unprecedented strain.

The results were predictable (although perhaps not to the federal cabinet). The added weight of newcomers further destabilized housing markets, driving up rents in major urban centres – with temporary residents themselves bearing much of the resulting pain.

The federal Liberals have been forced to roll back many of their recent changes to the immigration system. Most notably, Ottawa now plans to massively reduce the number of temporary migrants by the end of 2026. After several years of record growth, Canada’s population is projected to decline in 2025 and 2026, underscoring the magnitude of the Liberals’ about-face on immigration.

But that upheaval in Canada’s immigration system may just be the beginning. The effects of the Liberals’ missteps are continuing to ripple through other parts of the immigration system. And Ottawa also continues to undermine the economic migrant framework that has served Canada so well for decades. This week, this space will look at the pressures on Canada’s immigration policies – pressures that are pushing an already-stretched system to the brink.

One of the biggest pressure points is the refugee claim system. There have been backlogs for years, but they have soared to dangerous levels under the Liberals, with 260,142 cases outstanding at the end of October. Even in the (impossible) event that no new refugee claims were made, it would take nearly three years to eliminate that backlog. The incentive to file a flimsy claim – and remain in Canada for years waiting for it to be heard – is obvious.

Even when all appeals are exhausted, thousands of claimants find a way to remain in Canada, with data from the Canada Border Services Agency showing that people ordered deported even prior to 2011 remain in this country.

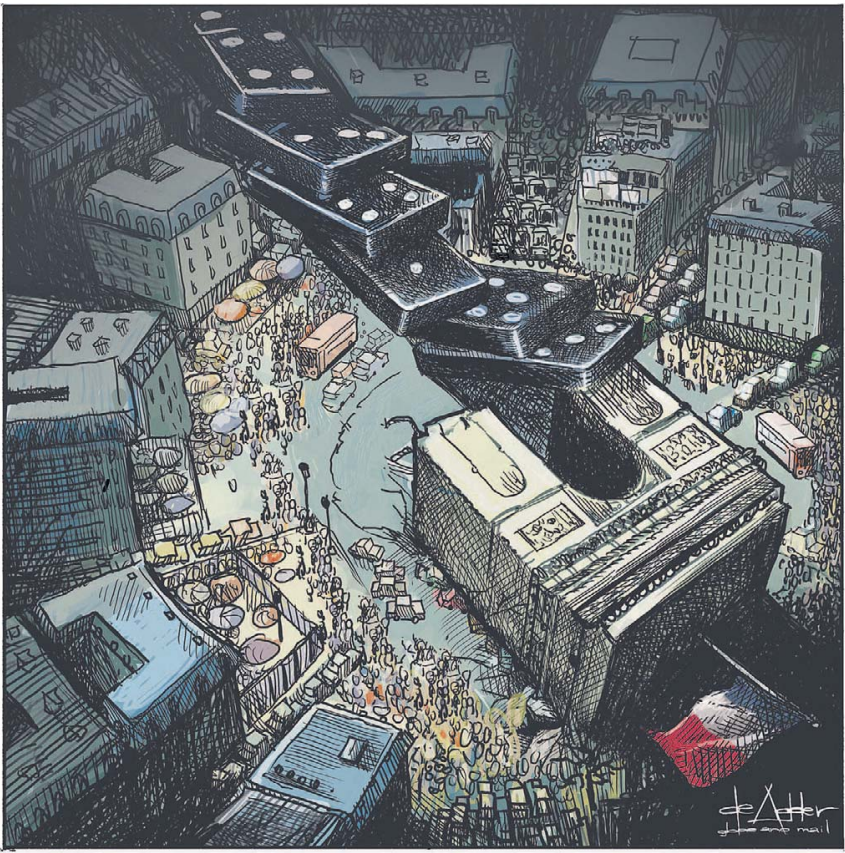
The security of Canada’s border with the United States, long taken for granted, is now a pressing issue. Part of that is owing to U.S. president-elect Donald Trump brandishing tariffs as threats, but there is also the worrying scenario of large numbers of migrants fleeing to Canada rather than being rounded up and deported by the Trump administration.

Those are big problems, and the federal government is responding, even if that response may be late and insufficient.

But there are problems of Ottawa’s own making that threaten to further undermine the immigration system. One is the Liberals’ continued insistence on using immigration to micromanage the labour market. That was the foundation of the government’s error on the immigration file in the post-pandemic years: buying into the pitch from business lobbies that huge numbers of temporary migrants were needed to close a massive labour shortage.

That same interventionist mindset is still at work, corroding the points-based system for permanent residents. Rather than simply aim to bring in the highest-skilled migrants, the Liberals have whittled down the points system to instead grant permanent residency to less qualified candidates who can fill perceived skills gaps. And then there is the bigger threat to the points system of using it as a vehicle to allow large numbers of international students to remain in Canada, even though they would not have otherwise qualified.

The federal Liberals’ mistakes on immigration have pushed Canada’s once-enviable system to the brink. And their failure to learn from their mistakes threatens to push it even further.



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ACROSS THE TABLE

Re “At War” (Letters, Dec. 5): Negotiation is not capitulation. De-escalation is not appeasement.

By escalating and prolonging this painful war in Ukraine, I believe we in the West are trying to beat Vladimir Putin at his own game; we are playing into his hands. The logic goes: We must fight back against Mr. Putin’s aggression, otherwise we’ll show that might makes right. But trying to fight fire with fire serves to spread it; countering violence with violence can be seen as tacit approval of it.

Show Mr. Putin that there’s more than one way to get something. The West should exemplify the conduct it claims to desire and fight at the negotiating table, rather than on the battlefield.

It is 2024, almost 2025. Are we really still murdering each other en masse?

Pushing for a ceasefire to pause the death and destruction is not cowardice. It is courage to speak out and push for peace.

■ **Iain McInnes** Ottawa

COLD, HARD TRUTH

Re “In Canada’s Arctic, armed forces face evolving challenges securing the critical – and contested – Northwest Passage” (Dec. 2): In the early 1960s, the geographical branch in what was then the Department of Mines and Technical Surveys had summer jobs for geography students to do field work in the Arctic. I had a job for two summers.

Parts of the Arctic, especially the High Arctic, were still to be explored. During those two summers, I got to know a Canada that was then much smaller in population than today, but incredibly optimistic, even proud. I was idealistic and hoped that Canada’s North was going to be welcomed and celebrated as an important part of our future.

Sadly that hasn’t happened, at least not yet, but I know that it must, and will.

■ **Reiner Jaakson** Oakville, Ont.

Canada refers to the Northwest Passage as an “internal waterway,” while other countries consider it an “international strait.”

According to the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, any strait that joins two parts of the high seas or economic zones, regardless of its length, is considered available to transit by ships of all states for their “innocent passage.” That is, so long as they do not present a threat to the adjacent states.

The reason for this is that such straits are maritime highways and

thus essential for international navigation and freedom of the seas. Many states have argued diverse interpretations of this critical right for their own benefit, but the convention’s rule remains today, 42 years later, legally binding.

■ **Morris Maduro**  
Professor of international law (retired); Edmonton

In 1986, Canada drew “straight baselines” around the Canadian Arctic Archipelago, which includes the Northwest Passage. Then-external affairs minister Joe Clark said that “these baselines define the outer limit of Canada’s historical internal waters.”

(Since time immemorial, Inuit have used these waters and treated the ice and the land as one.)

When Canada drew the baselines, it received only two indications of non-acceptance, sadly from Canada’s two greatest allies. The United States sent a letter in February and Britain a note in July, half a year after the baselines were proclaimed, purportedly acting on behalf of the European Community (before the EC permitted joint action).

Then-U.S. ambassador Paul Cellucci said he asked the U.S. State Department to re-examine its position that the passage is an international strait, noting that it was in U.S. security interests that the Northwest Passage “be considered part of Canada.”

■ **Robert Hage** Ottawa

BAD BET

Re “Investors have fled preconstruction condos and no one knows when they are coming back” (Report on Business, Dec. 2): While it is unfortunate that some condo investments are failing from the perspective of cash flow and capital gains, investors should not have our sympathy nor empathy.

The losses they are suffering should be no surprise to any of them, as they accepted the risk in reliance of the hyperbole emanating from the mouths of agents and developers. Find the agent who forecasted a price of at least \$800,000, and see what else their tea leaves are saying about prices of any asset six years in the future.

■ **Richard Austin** Toronto

ON YOUR OWN, KID

Re “I let my nine-year-old ride his bike alone to the store because independence is crucial” (Dec. 2): How times have changed.

About 75 years ago, my five-year-old sister caught a bus in rural Warwickshire to go to the nearby town. She crossed the town to reach school.

One day, she got on the bus back and loudly announced, “I am supposed to meet some visitors and take them home and I don’t know what they look like.” The visitors quickly identified themselves.

Even 45 years ago, our kindergarten teacher here expected her pupils to come to school by themselves. One mother, worried that her child had to go a block along a busy highway, accompanied her and then hid behind a hedge so the teacher could not see her.

■ **Anna Leggatt** Toronto

In 1957, when I was 9, riding a bike around town was normal behaviour. My parents didn’t evidence any concern.

That same year I walked, usually alone, just over two kilometres to public school in north Guelph. We all did. Now I can see dozens of cars lined up at school to pick up children.

Have the children of boomers become worrywarts, or is their caution warranted? If so, a sad commentary on our society.

■ **Peter Hamblly** Hanover, Ont.

In the book *Achtung Baby: An American Mom on the German Art of Raising Self-reliant Children*, the author describes moving with her family to Berlin. In particular, she noted that children were permitted – no, encouraged – to find their way on public transport and bicycle when they are capable of safely wayfinding, and not an arbitrary age.

There seems little doubt that encouraging safe independence is an important step to raising the confident children that most parents want.

■ **Paul Thiessen**  
Pediatrician (retired); Vancouver

SCRATCH THAT

Re “Deficient diets” (Letters, Dec. 5): A letter-writer’s suggestion of a return to home economics, to battle issues such as scurvy, reminds me of a dear friend’s story of a visit from her grandson and his girlfriend.

She offered to make them lunch. They said, no, sit, we will do it.

They went to the kitchen. Several moments later, they returned.

“But Grandma, you only have ingredients.”

■ **Kate Lynch** Toronto

Letters to the Editor should be exclusive to The Globe and Mail. Include name, address and daytime phone number. Keep letters under 150 words. Letters may be edited for length and clarity. E-mail: [letters@globeandmail.com](mailto:letters@globeandmail.com)

OPINION

# With al-Assad gone, can Syrians unite?

Given that key foreign powers are stepping back, Syria may enjoy an interlude of greater breathing space

JOHN ZADA

OPINION

Toronto-based writer, author and a co-founder of The Conciliators Guild, an international conflict-resolution organization

The 53-year rule of the al-Assad family has come to an end, in what has been the final chapter in Syria's frozen civil war. In a little over a week, and facing little resistance from the Syrian military, opposition rebels have hoppedscotched across the country to finally take its capital Damascus on Sunday morning. Former Syrian president Bashar al-Assad, a much-reviled dictator notorious for his cruel and repressive tactics, has fled to Moscow. Scenes of jubilation – of

tearful exiles returning and families reunited – have erupted across the country amidst talk of “a new era.”

A coalition of armed Sunni groups have filled in the vacuum left by the retreating regime and its recently weakened and distracted backers: Iran, Hezbollah and Russia. The head of the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) faction and a former al-Qaeda leader who has rebranded himself as a moderate with meticulous PR polish, Abu Mohammed al-Golani, intends to lead a transition towards a new Syrian government.

It's early to say what this tectonic shift will ultimately mean for Syria and a convulsing Middle East. But given the country's former geographical linchpin position as part of the “Axis of Resistance,” the implications stand to be considerable. The road ahead, comprised of both challenges and hopes, will be long and uncertain.

Internally, much will depend on whether the new conglomerate of victors will be able to share power without turning their guns on each other – much as Libyans did in the aftermath of Moam-

mar Gadhafi's ouster in 2011. The ability to maintain cordial relations with other Syrian ethnic groups will also be key. Mr. al-Golani, playing the part of the wizened and high-minded politician, has talked a big game of reconciliation and of protecting Syria's minorities, including Christians, Shias, Ismailis, and Alawites. Remarkably, and true to his word so far, there have been few reports of retribution or acts of abuse against other ethnicities. Yet even if this policy endures in name, the reality is that any new Syrian government established by former or current jihadists would skew in the direction of a theocracy. Religious minorities in Syria would eventually suffer.

One of Syria's most ethnically diverse areas, along its northeastern border areas with Turkey and Iraq, may be the first flashpoint in this regard. It is expected that Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan, a long-time supporter of the resistance to Mr. al-Assad, will use his preferred Sunni faction, the Syrian National Army (SNA), to fight Syria's main Kurdish-led militia, which he claims threat-

ens Turkey. The Kurds, which helped neutralize ISIS with American military co-operation and protection, are especially vulnerable now that incoming U.S. President Donald Trump has said he will end U.S. military involvement in Syria.

While Turkey is slated to benefit from Mr. al-Assad's overthrow, its regional rival Iran has suffered a massive blow to its prestige and ability to project power in the region as a result. Tehran has been a very close confidante of Syria since the early days of the Islamic Revolution and has invested billions in the country. Having already suffered a huge blow from the crippling of its proxy in Lebanon, Hezbollah, and facing the prospect of a more serious Israeli military strike, Iran will have even fewer military options in the Levant. The Axis of Resistance has lost whatever remaining viability and credibility it had in the days prior.

What any of this means for Syria's relationship with Israel is anyone's guess. Since Israel's creation in 1948, the two countries have been locked in a perpetual state of war. Though these recent

events will help Israel further its goals in relation to Iran and Hezbollah, the emergence of an emboldened new government across the Golan Heights may cause Israel to eventually lament the loss of Mr. al-Assad. But it may also turn out that the need to rebuild Syria and the desire to end its perpetual state of war and trauma will prevent the igniting of major new conflicts.

And this is where the ray of hope that comes with any political reset is to be found. With the Iranians driven out, the Russians on their way out, and the United States now slated to leave, Syria may enjoy an interlude of greater breathing space in which to forge its new era. If its emerging leaders can mostly agree and make good on their claims of treating their people with respect, it will be a step in the right direction for the region – however imperfect the arrangement. But if the usual and much-entrenched patterns of group dominance, religious dogma, and rule through fear win the day and become the foundation of the new Syrian state, this rare moment of reckoning will be lost.

# Trump's threats should remind us of Canada's underpopulation risk

DOUG SAUNDERS

OPINION



Donald Trump's tariff threats have been a sobering reminder of Canada's enduring flaw: the still-inadequate size and density of our consumer, investment and labour markets.

The challenge of underpopulation, formerly just a hindrance to our living standards and competitiveness, and to the quality of our institutions and infrastructure, has been transformed into a front-and-centre risk by the prospect of demagogic isolationism south of our border.

Canada is almost unique in this regard. One analysis, by Bloomberg, of the impact of the 20-to-25-per-cent tariffs the president-elect has threatened to impose on most trade partners, found they would have wildly different effects on various countries. One certain victim would be the United States itself, whose citizens would face formidable inflation, especially if they were applied to Canada's largest export, petroleum.

Most trade partners would be relatively unaffected in the long run, because they would be able to fall back on their domestic economies and neighbouring countries. The European Union, with 450 million consumers in its 27-country free-trade zone, would actually experience a small net increase in trade under this projection – as would China, with billions of increasingly prosperous consumers in its neighbourhood.

But Canada, with no major domestic or regional consumer



Trucks head toward the U.S. Pacific Highway Port of Entry from south Surrey, B.C., in November. The U.S. consumer market accounts for more than three-quarters of Canada's trade. JENNIFER GAUTHIER/REUTERS

backstop and even fewer alternative sources of investment, would be swept under: In the face of a 20-per-cent U.S. tariff, the analysis found, our net exports would decline by a third. Given that trade accounts for two-thirds of Canada's economy, and the consumer market of the U.S. accounts for more than three-quarters of our trade, the impact on our well-being would be profound.

The past decade has seen a new seriousness in Canada around dealing with our historic population shortfall. Both Conservative and Liberal policies this century have mostly kept permanent-resident growth at around 1 per cent of population a year – a reasonable rate for a more economically sustainable future population.

During the past two years, how-

ever, we've become distracted by some serious missteps and excesses by the Liberal government and the provinces on temporary and student migration – numbers that placed strains on rental-housing supply and infrastructure without contributing to population growth, to employment-generating business formation and to housing investment the way actual immigration does. Ottawa's reversal of these errors has included a reduction of more important permanent-immigration rates from slightly more than 1 per cent to slightly less.

That's not a terrible setback in the short run, but there's a risk that Trump-driven bad economic times, combined with a public turn against immigration, could result in a more serious short-

term cut in numbers, which would further exacerbate those very problems.

But nothing focuses the mind like a pending tariff war. This is an important time to be reminded that our population sparsity is having two other detrimental effects.

First are Canada's productivity and growth figures, which have been slumping since the mid-2000s and are currently far behind soaring U.S. levels. A study this year by economist Wulong Gu at Statistics Canada examined the causes of the slowdown – a decline of investment per worker of 20 per cent from 2006 to 2021. The major root cause, the study found, is “an increase in industry concentration and a decline in firm entry rates.” Not enough new

businesses are being created, leading to near-monopoly situations in many sectors that remove business incentives to invest and innovate. This has been caused in large part by “low population growth and weak-demand shock” in the years following the 2008 financial crisis, but also by the fact that there just aren't enough people to create new companies and provide an incentive for competitors to invest.

Second is Canada's housing shortage, creating one of the Western world's worst affordability crises. Some observers, again distracted by the short-term burst in temporary numbers, have assumed that this must be a result of immigration. In fact, the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corp. concludes that we could easily be building more than enough housing to cover permanent population growth under existing regimes. The problem, according to a number of analyses, is gaping labour shortages in the building trades and related fields: We simply don't have enough people to build the homes we've contracted.

The problem here is not just population but the composition of new Canadians: A Statscan analysis in September found our immigration mix is skewed too much toward high-skill, high-education newcomers (plus unskilled temporaries), with insufficient medium-skill tradespeople needed to build houses and infrastructure.

The Trump threat has shown how vulnerable and dependent our thin population makes us. We need a united front to fight it this time – but it should also remind us to stay resolute in our population goals, so that we're not so vulnerable in the future.

# Alberta's government faces off against another enemy: the police

KELLY CRYDERMAN

OPINION



Albertans can be relieved – a decades-long irritant will soon largely be snuffed out. After what the government describes as a thorough analysis and consultation, it is taking “bold steps” to restore public trust.

Alberta has used photo radar to help enforce speed limits since 1987, but the current number of sites will be dramatically scaled back, according to the province. In recent years, both NDP and United Conservative Party governments have been whittling down the province's reliance on cameras. The newest development is the province's plan to shut down 70 per cent of the current 2,200 sites within a matter of months.

And to prove how serious it is, the responsible Minister of the Crown donned a custom-made apron for the announcement

held last week at an Edmonton restaurant. A slab of meat stood in the backdrop. And on his apron: The words “Cash Cow” contained in a red circle with a diagonal slash.

“This is a historic day for Alberta drivers as we turn up the heat, we fire up the grill, and say goodbye to the photo radar cash cow,” Alberta Transportation Minister Devin Dreeshen told reporters.

The government plans to review every photo radar site in the province over the next four months. Ticketing on provincial highways will end, and photo radar will largely be restricted to school, playground and construction zones.

Photo radar at major intersections will be restricted to catching people plowing through a red light instead of nabbing speeders. And a government that is usually completely okay with Alberta being an outlier notes it's problematic the province has way more photo radar sites than others across Canada.

“The war on cars is coming to an end,” Mr. Dreeshen said earlier on social media, drawing a line

from 2010 and then-Toronto mayor Rob Ford.

There might be pluses and minuses of a site-by-site review, and a real debate about whether photo radar cameras come at the expense of public trust. But it's difficult now to separate the policy from the preconceived UCP termination that 70 per cent of sites need to be shut down, and the glib visuals of the beef-on-a-bun newser.

In contrast, Calgary Chief Constable Mark Neufeld held a news conference after Mr. Dreeshen's that was devoid of props. No one likes getting a speeding ticket, he conceded.

Traffic fine revenue is split on a 40/60 basis, between the province and municipalities. Chief Constable Neufeld said some of the latter percentage is put toward the traffic-safety and policing budget.

But there's a whole list of other reasons why photo radar sites are needed, he said. Camera-generated tickets are a rare aspect of a police officer's job that can be automated. And even if police forces had the officers to catch the num-

ber of speeders that cameras do, which they don't, there are many high-speed roadways where there's not enough room to pull motorists over.

And according to data, drivers are motivated to slow down at intersections where there is a camera, even if the realization comes slowly – perhaps only after they get a ticket in the mail weeks later. All types of collision numbers drop down, the chief said. Comparing Alberta to other provinces isn't an apples-to-apples juxtaposition, he added.

Chief Constable Neufeld also took to task Mr. Dreeshen's tone, saying police chiefs aren't pleased with him referring to automated traffic enforcement as “cash cows” or “fishing holes.” This is actually a real debate about how best to decrease injuries and deaths, he noted.

Despite the minister's contention in June that he would talk to municipalities and law enforcement officials on this proposed policy change, Chief Constable Neufeld – also president of the Alberta Association of Chiefs of Police – said he made eight separate

requests to meet with the minister but nothing materialized. Mr. Dreeshen said he met with other Calgary police officers but “the chief didn't show up.”

The UCP has opened political battles on far too many fronts at once. Now it's not only teachers, doctors, nurses, academics, municipal politicians, environmentalists, the federal Liberals and New Democrats – it's police chiefs, too. It's a tiring way to govern.

The government's stunts have real-world consequences, too. Already, people are showing less respect for institutions, including policing, and having a cabinet minister speak about a policing tool in such a disparaging way doesn't help, Chief Constable Neufeld said. “A loss of trust serves nobody, and makes the job of the honourable police members doing the work on the front lines all the more difficult.”

Even if there are good reasons to cull the number of photo radar sites in some cases, using a meat trope makes it all seem like a gimmick – one not meant to ensnare speeders, but voters.

# What research says about sleep supplements

The latest you need to know about melatonin, magnesium, valerian, glycine and L-theanine

LESLIE BECK



OPINION

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Sleep is considered a core pillar of health, right up there with healthy eating and regular physical activity.

Not getting enough sleep and/or having poor quality sleep on regular basis is tied to a greater risk of weight gain, Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, anxiety and depression.

Yet many of us struggle to get the recommended seven to nine hours of quality sleep each night.

Busy schedules, stress, caffeine, alcohol, screens before bed and sleep disorders can all get in the way.

In the quest for a good night's sleep, many Canadians are turning to sleep supplements.

A study published earlier this year in the journal *Sleep Medicine* reported that 29 per cent of Canadians used natural health products or over-the-counter sleep aids in the previous 12 months.

Do natural health products live up to their sleep-promoting claims? What to know about five popular sleep supplements.

**MELATONIN**

Melatonin, a hormone produced by the brain, helps regulate the body's circadian rhythms, including our sleep-wake cycle.

Melatonin increases when it's dark and decreases when it's light. Having high levels of melatonin can help you sleep better.

Being exposed to light at night suppresses melatonin production. Older age and chronic illness can also decrease the brain's melatonin production.

There's good evidence that me-



ISTOCK

latonin supplements help adults and children with delayed sleep phase syndrome, a sleep disorder that causes sleep and wake times to be delayed by two or more hours. Most clinical studies show that taking 0.3 to 5 mg of melatonin reduces the time needed to fall asleep.

The evidence is less clear, though, that melatonin benefits people with insomnia (i.e., have trouble falling asleep and/or staying asleep).

In healthy adults, research has shown that taking melatonin shortens the time it takes to fall asleep by only seven to 12 minutes and doesn't improve sleep quality. Melatonin may increase sleep duration by eight minutes.

Melatonin doesn't seem to help sleep problems unrelated to circadian rhythm issues.

**MAGNESIUM**

Since magnesium influences the activity of certain brain chemicals that calm the central nervous system and relax muscles, it's claimed

to improve sleep. Yet there's little evidence to support this.

An analysis of two small clinical studies in healthy older adults with or without insomnia suggests that taking 500 to 729 mg of magnesium oxide a day for up to eight weeks reduces the time to fall asleep by 17 minutes. Magnesium did not increase the time spent asleep.

Another small study in people with poor sleep quality and low magnesium levels found that taking 320 mg of magnesium citrate daily for seven weeks had no effect on sleep quality.

A very small study involving 16 young adults without a sleep disorder showed that taking a supplement containing 300 mg magnesium along with L-tryptophan, glycine, tart cherry and L-theanine reduced time to fall asleep by 24 minutes and increased time asleep by 22 minutes. But it's unclear if these effects were due to magnesium, another ingredient, or the combination.

Taking more than 350 mg of supplemental magnesium a day

can cause diarrhea, abdominal cramping and nausea.

**VALERIAN**

Valerian, a plant native to Europe and Asia, has been widely studied for insomnia.

Most research shows that taking 300 to 600 mg of valerian whole root extract before bedtime improves sleep quality when compared to a placebo. It can take up to four weeks to notice an effect.

The herbal supplement appears to have no effect on time to fall asleep or sleep duration.

When taken for up to six weeks, valerian is considered safe. People who are pregnant or breastfeeding should not use the supplement.

Valerian is generally well tolerated. Side effects may include headache, digestive upset and drowsiness.

**GLYCINE**

Glycine is an amino acid found primarily in meat, fish, dairy, soy and pulses.

In rats, glycine seems to lower core body temperature and increase serotonin levels in the brain, both of which may help promote sleep.

In people, however, there's little evidence to back up the claim that glycine can promote restful sleep.

Data from two very small studies suggest that taking 3 g of glycine an hour before bed can improve sleep quality in people with insomnia.

Another study conducted in 10 healthy males with short sleep found that taking 3 g of glycine 30 minutes before bed modestly reduced fatigue after the first night, but not the third night.

Not much to go on.

Glycine is considered safe when taken at doses up to 6 g for four weeks or 9 g for three days.

**L-THEANINE**

This amino acid is found naturally in green tea leaves. Sleep studies suggest it helps improve sleep quality by increasing brain chemicals that reduce anxiety and promote relaxation.

A 2019 randomized controlled trial conducted in 30 healthy adults found that taking 200 mg of L-theanine for four weeks reduced stress-related symptoms, including time to fall asleep and sleep disturbance, compared to a placebo. Consuming 200 mg of L-theanine appears safe for most people. Its safety has not been established during pregnancy and breastfeeding.

**BOTTOM LINE**

Sleep supplements aren't a magic bullet to a sound sleep. If you are experiencing poor sleep, consult your doctor before taking a supplement. Many underlying health problems can disrupt sleep.

To set yourself up for a better sleep, assess your sleep hygiene habits and make improvements where needed.

Leslie Beck, a Toronto-based private practice dietitian, is director of food and nutrition at Medcan. Follow her on X @LeslieBeckRD

# How VO2 max can provide insight into your health

REBECCA GAO

There are many ways to measure fitness, from exercise tests to monitoring heart rate and blood pressure. But there's one metric that stands apart: VO2 max, which provides insight into your aerobic fitness by capturing how well your heart, lungs, circulatory system and muscles work together.

VO2 max measures how effectively your body uses oxygen, in millilitres of oxygen consumed per minute per kilogram of body weight. If your body is able to use more oxygen, that means it's able to create more energy to power your muscles, explains Stephen Cheung, a professor and senior research fellow in the department of kinesiology at Brock University, who studies exercise and physiology. "For the general population, VO2 max is a very good overall indicator of health."

VO2 max is "like your engine," or the amount of work you are able to do, according to Alexandra Coates, an assistant professor and director of the Exercise Physiology and Performance Lab at Simon Fraser University. "It's highly linked to any sport performance that is aerobic," she says. But VO2 max isn't just an important metric for athletes: We all use our muscles for everyday functions, and Coates says the higher your VO2 max is, the easier it is to perform the tasks of daily living such as walking, lifting and moving around.

Plus, the higher your VO2 max, the more oxygen your heart has to power itself. Cheung says a high VO2 max means you're "generally not going to have things like high blood pressure or plaque build up in your heart." A 2019 study showed that a high VO2 max, combined with a low resting heart rate, is associated with a reduction in cardiovascular events, such as heart attacks and strokes.

**WHAT CAN AFFECT MY VO2 MAX?**

Factors such as genetics, age, sex and fitness level can affect how high your VO2 max is. The measure tends to decline with age and women tend to have lower VO2 maxes than men. Cheung says your VO2 max peaks by your early 30s: "It's why you see elite endurance athletes, and elite athletes in general, start to slow down as they pass age 30."

Unfortunately, no matter how hard you



GETTY IMAGES

train, your VO2 max will drop the older you get. "It's one of the natural processes of aging," Cheung explains. "But you can certainly slow down the rate of VO2 max decrease by making sure you are fit and making sure you continue to exercise."

Exercising more frequently, especially cardio that gets your heart pumping, pushes you to the upper limits of your aerobic limit and over time, your body adapts and your VO2 increases.

**HOW DO I KNOW MY VO2 MAX IS IMPROVING?**

The best way to measure Vo2 max is through testing in an exercise medicine lab. But there are a few easier ways to track improvement.

Most wearables, like Apple Watches or Garmin, track VO2 max. While Cheung says the number these devices provide are only estimates, you can see whether or not the number increases or decreases over time to get a sense of improvement.

Another simple way is to measure how long it takes for you to recover after intense movement.

For example, Cheung says to check what your heart rate is before running up a flight of stairs and then measure it again at the top. Then, watch to see how long it takes for your heart to return to its resting rate. As you train, the recovery time should decrease – a sign of improving fit-

ness and increased VO2 max.

**WHAT EXERCISES CAN I DO TO IMPROVE MY VO2 MAX?**

Anything that gets your heart pumping and challenges your cardio is a good start. Coates says that if you're new to exercising, even adding a bit of extra intensity to your walk by going faster or uphill, or opting for stairs over the elevator, can help. For those who are ultra-fit, you'll need to challenge yourself more – sprint interval training or very high intensity exercises, for example. High intensity interval training, or HIIT, is a popular way to improve your VO2 max since it gets you going extremely hard for a short amount of time, pushing your heart rate and breathing way up.

"Essentially, doing any sort of endurance-type exercise will help improve VO2 max," she says. Just make sure you're constantly changing it up: Doing the same stagnant routine won't lead to better results.

Cheung says that while aerobic exercise is important, it's integral not to let strength training fall by the wayside. As we age, and our muscles deteriorate. "That's going to drop your VO2 max because you have less muscles to use the oxygen."

Special to The Globe and Mail

**MOANA 2 CRUISES TO ANOTHER RECORD WEEKEND**

The Walt Disney Co.'s animated film *Moana 2* remained at the top of the box office in its second weekend in theatres as it brought in another record haul.

The film added US\$52-million, according to studio estimates Sunday. That brings its domestic total to US\$300-million, surpassing the original, and its global tally to a staggering US\$600-million.

The amount set a record gross for a movie on the weekend following U.S. Thanksgiving weekend, unseating *Frozen II*, which earned US\$35.2-million in the same time frame in 2019. The numbers are not adjusted for inflation.

Originally conceived as a Disney+ series, *Moana 2* has already broken into the Top 5 highest grossing releases of the year. Its performance means Disney has three films in this year's Top 5, including *Inside Out 2* and *Deadpool & Wolverine*. The studio also has another big movie on the way before the year ends: Barry Jenkins's *Mufasa*, out Dec. 20.

The weekend also showcased several new releases, including A24's horror comedy *Y2K* and the Jude Law crime thriller *The Order*. But nothing was ever going to present significant competition to the enticing Thanksgiving leftovers, *Moana 2*, *Wicked* and *Gladiator II*.

Second place at the box office was occupied by *Wicked*, which added US\$34.9-million, bringing its domestic total to US\$320.5-million in three weeks. Globally, the musical adaptation released by Universal is at US\$455.6-million. *Gladiator II* followed in third place with US\$12.5-million, while *Red One* came in fourth with US\$7-million.

"These holdovers are going to create the momentum that's going to put an US\$8.5-billion-plus box office year on the horizon," said Paul Dergarabedian, the senior media analyst for Comscore.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

# During my stroke, it was like watching a play

FIRST PERSON

There was a confusion of people and procedures as hospital staff whirled around me, **Kate Braid** writes

When did I become aware something was very wrong? In the restaurant, when I put my head down to look at the menu, I could see words, but they were just black marks.

My husband solved the problem by telling the waitress he'd have tacos, and I said, "Me too." I was oddly grateful when John followed up by saying, "Why don't we get it to go?"

What had he seen by then? Had my eyes sagged? My face? Because instead of going to the park to eat, he drove me straight to the nearest hospital.

"You were looking out of it," was all he could say later. "I had to practically carry you in."

The next day when we talked it over, I remembered the ER nurse looking oddly alarmed and suddenly I had a wheelchair. I remember being wheeled past all the people in the emergency waiting room.

We entered a small door with "Trauma Room" written above. "This will be interesting. I've never been in here before," I thought, not afraid, only curious. It was a small room full of people in white coats, nurses, doctors and technicians suddenly coming and going all around me.

We entered a small door with "Trauma Room" written above. "This will be interesting. I've never been in here before," I thought, not afraid, only curious. It was a small room full of people in white coats, nurses, doctors and technicians suddenly coming and going all around me.

A man put his face in front of mine and asked, "What's your name?"

The words were right there over my head in splashes of beautiful, brightly coloured letters embroidered on pure white linen. I could see them clearly. I just couldn't reach them to speak them out loud. I am a writer, a word person with a new book coming out this spring, but I wasn't alarmed. I was more fascinated. The letters were so beautiful up there, so near and yet so far.

"What's your name?" the man asked again. "Where do you live?"

I struggled to reach my letters while he repeated the questions several times. Finally I gave up.

After that, there was a confusion of people and procedures. John was beside me the whole time, quiet, as is his way, holding onto my shoulder as they transferred me to a stretcher and we left that room to go down long halls for an X-ray, then into a small, curtain-ringed cubicle where again, there was a stream of doctors and nurses that eventually settled



ILLUSTRATION BY ALEX DEADMAN-WYLIE

down to one doctor, one nurse.

"What's your name? How many fingers am I holding up?"

I could speak no words. Or rather, there were exquisitely coloured words but they were unreachable.

There were more tests: for blood and heart rhythms, an X-Ray and scan of my head, an MRI, a spinal tap to rule out meningitis and encephalitis and later, an echocardiogram. I heard and saw it all, as if watching a play.

I'd been checked in to emergency at 4:30 p.m. By 7, with a bit of concentration I could tell the doctor my name and where I lived. By 8:30, we were chatting. He summarized the results of the tests, then said quietly, "We were really worried about you."

You were? To me, it had all been a strange way to have travelled for a short time.

They kept me in emergency overnight. "We think it was a transient ischemic attack," the ER doctor said the next morning. "A TIA. It's a mild form of stroke."

Stroke? Weren't strokes dangerous?

How could this be happening to me? I was healthy – wasn't I?

She gave me a referral to the stroke clinic so I could learn more about why this had happened, then we went home and that evening, John and I finally ate those tacos.

The doctors had said that apart from fatigue as the brain healed, there'd be no other side effects. But the stroke has left its mark. I've been able to remember incidents and people as easily as before but there are differences. I have learned to pause, to take a moment each day to just pay attention to what goes on around me. There's an edge to everything. I can almost physically feel the sharp fingers of trees pointing upward on the skyline, the round roll of sheep in the valley, soft lick of waves. There's a freshness to everything, including my interactions with other people.

Perhaps I'd been a bit smug lately, bragging that here I was, 77 years old and nothing really wrong healthwise apart from a few mechanical problems. Now in a single moment I'd learned the humility

of the aged.

About six weeks after the TIA, I became aware I was feeling depressed and angry, not like my usual self at all. When I went for a walk and thought about it, I saw that underneath the depression and anger was fear, and below that, grief.

I have had a TIA and with a bit of luck and some wonderful Canadian health care, I survived. I've learned life can change in the time it takes to glance down at a menu.

In some ways, the stroke has been a gift. For the first time, I'm having to make choices, saying "No" to things I wouldn't have thought twice about saying "Yes" to, before. I am deciding what I want, or rather *need* to do with my remaining precious time. To write, to spend time with family, friends and our dog, to be grateful.

Kate Braid lives in Victoria and Pender Island, B.C.

First Person is a daily personal piece submitted by readers. Have a story to tell? See our guidelines at [tgam.ca/essayguide](https://tgam.ca/essayguide).

## If you want a harmonious holiday season, follow these thoughtful tips

JILLIAN ROBERTS

OPINION

Research professor of educational psychology at the University of Victoria. She is also a practising registered psychologist in B.C., Alberta and NWT. She specializes in child psychology, known for her expertise in navigating the complexities of children's emotional and mental well-being.

The holiday season offers a unique opportunity for families to come together, share meals and celebrate the joys of the season. While these gatherings can be filled with warmth and connection, they can also bring moments of tension, especially when expectations run high.

Taking a few intentional steps can create an environment where everyone feels welcome, peaceful and connected. Here are some practical and thoughtful tips to help make your family holiday gathering harmonious and memorable:

### GO EASY ON THE ALCOHOL

While a festive drink can enhance the atmosphere, too much may amplify emotions or fuel misunderstandings. Decades of research have shown that excessive alcohol use often correlates with divorce and relationship discord. Alcohol impairs judgment and tends to raise irritabil-

ity and impulsivity, leading to misunderstandings and conflicts. For a calmer, more relaxed gathering, consider minimizing alcoholic beverages and offering creative, festive non-alcoholic options.

### EMBRACE IMPERFECTIONS

Not every detail will go as planned, and that's perfectly okay! Flexibility and humour work wonders in easing tension and helping everyone enjoy the day. Embrace the "sometimes things happen" rule. Sometimes dishes break, sometimes food doesn't turn out as expected and sometimes things hilariously go off-script.

These unplanned moments often become cherished stories and memories for family members in the years to come.

In my family, when something goes awry, we engage in a light-hearted tradition: We hold hands, close our eyes, count backward from five and say, "We've pressed the reset button." This simple ritual allows everyone to breathe, release tension and start fresh. Sometimes, it sparks laughter, reminding everyone that the day is about togetherness, not perfection.

By adopting this perspective, you can demonstrate to others that minor mishaps are part of the experience. Phrases such as "sometimes food burns" or "sometimes drinks spill" help normalize mistakes and create a light, forgiving atmosphere

where everyone feels at ease.

### SET GENTLE BOUNDARIES ON CONVERSATION TOPICS

Since Salvador Minuchin's pioneering work in family therapy in the early 1970s, psychologists have recognized the critical role of healthy boundaries in creating robust family systems. Establishing clear expectations and open lines of communication helps families build trust and maintain respectful relationships, allowing each member to feel valued and understood.

Some topics, such as old conflicts, politics or sensitive personal matters, can stir up tension. To keep things positive, set a few friendly ground rules. A quick message to guests beforehand could set a warm tone and let them know you're hoping for a relaxed, enjoyable time together.

You might say: "I can't wait to spend some quality time with all of you. If our conversation starts to drift into tense topics, I'll gently guide us back to a positive place. I hope we can keep things light and uplifting."

This approach ensures everyone is on the same page and ready to contribute to a great experience. Along with the conversation guidelines, you could include details such as the day's schedule, meal times or any traditions you have planned. When guests know what to expect, they are more likely to arrive in a thoughtful, positive frame of

mind, making the gathering more enjoyable for everyone.

### ADD A LITTLE STRUCTURE

Providing a bit of structure can help guide conversations and activities in a positive direction. Small touches such as place cards or family-friendly games can encourage engagement and connection. Consider using conversation cards focused on positive subjects such as gratitude or fun, non-controversial topics. These guides can add a playful touch and ensure that everyone has a chance to share and feel included.

Structured activities also give quieter guests or newcomers an easy way to participate, making the gathering feel balanced and welcoming. Games such as charades can provide shared laughter and create new, happy memories.

### THINK OF OTHERS

Holidays are a perfect time to celebrate gratitude and give back. Many families across the country are facing financial strain, with rising cost of living rates and increasing food insecurity affecting households in every community. To embrace the season's spirit, consider inviting your guests to donate a non-perishable food item to a local food bank.

This simple gesture can make a meaningful difference and reflects the holiday's true message

of generosity and kindness. You might even turn this into a family tradition – each gathering could include a moment to reflect on shared values and compassion for others.

It's a way of celebrating together while extending that warmth and care to those in need, reinforcing a lasting sense of community and purpose during the holiday season.

### TODAY'S SUDOKU SOLUTION

4	7	1	9	2	6	8	3	5
2	6	5	1	3	8	7	4	9
8	3	9	4	5	7	2	6	1
7	8	3	6	9	1	4	5	2
6	9	4	5	8	2	3	1	7
5	1	2	7	4	3	6	9	8
1	4	7	8	6	5	9	2	3
9	2	8	3	1	4	5	7	6
3	5	6	2	7	9	1	8	4

### TODAY'S KENKEN SOLUTION

4	2 <sup>+</sup>	1	11 <sup>+</sup>	6	5	3
5 <sup>-</sup>	60 <sup>x</sup>	3	3 <sup>-</sup>	4	2	6
1	5	3 <sup>x</sup>	1 <sup>-</sup>	3	2	
6	4	5	1	3	2	
6 <sup>+</sup>	5	1	2	3	6	4
5 <sup>+</sup>	13 <sup>+</sup>	6	9 <sup>+</sup>	5	4	1
2	3	6	2 <sup>+</sup>	1	5	
3	6	4				



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WORLD FORECAST

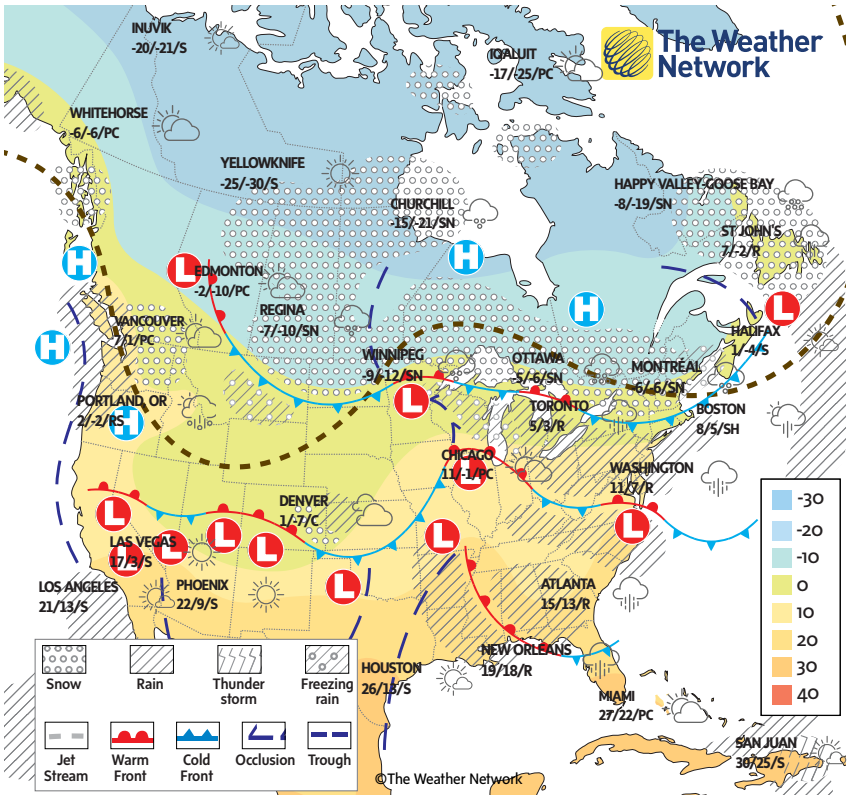
	TODAY	TOMORROW	WEDNESDAY
AMSTERDAM	7/4 SH	6/2 SH	6/3 PC
ATHENS	18/14	SH 18/11	S 17/12 S
BANGKOK	33/25 S	S 34/25 PC	35/27 SH
BEIJING	4/2 S	4/2 PC	3/2 PC
BERLIN	5/3 SH	4/2 C	3/0 C
BRUSSELS	5/5 R	5/3 C	4/3 SH
COPENHAGEN	5/3 PC	3/0 PC	2/2 PC
FRANKFURT	3/1 RS	3/1 RS	2/0 C
HONG KONG	20/17 S	20/19 PC	22/17 PC
JERUSALEM	17/11 S	19/11 PC	19/11 PC
LAS VEGAS	17/3 S	S 13/3 S	S 14/4 S
LONDON	8/7 SH	8/5 SH	7/5 C
LOS ANGELES	21/13 S	S 21/13 S	S 21/15 PC
MADRID	8/3 PC	7/2 SH	6/2 PC
MIAMI	27/22 PC	27/23 PC	28/12 T
MOSCOW	-1/3 SN	-3/6 C	-1/4 SN
NEW DELHI	19/10 S	S 21/10 S	S 21/13 S
NEW YORK	10/6 R	R 10/8 C	14/0 R
NICE	13/7 SH	14/7 PC	14/7 PC
ORLANDO	26/16 S	S 27/19 S	S 25/7 SH
PARIS	6/5 C	C 6/4 C	6/1 C
PHOENIX	22/9 S	S 18/8 S	S 22/9 PC
ROME	12/5 SH	12/4 SH	13/4 SH
SAN FRANCISCO	15/8 S	S 14/8 PC	13/10 C
SEOUL	4/2 S	S 6/1 S	S 4/1 PC
SINGAPORE	30/24 T	T 28/24 T	T 29/25 S
SYDNEY	26/20 SH	SH 28/19 S	S 26/19 SH
TOKYO	11/5 S	S 12/6 S	S 13/7 PC
WASHINGTON	11/7 R	R 16/13 PC	16/1 R

**LEGEND**  
Daytime high, overnight low, and conditions

C CLOUDY	RS RAIN/SNOW
FG FOG	S SUN
FR FREEZING RAIN	SN SNOW
HZ HAZE	SF SNOW FLURRIES
NA NOT AVAILABLE	SH SHOWERS
PC PARTLY CLOUDY	T THUNDERSTORMS
R RAIN	W WINDY

NATIONAL FORECAST

	TODAY	TOMORROW	WEDNESDAY
BANFF	4/-12 S	S 4/-9 PC	-1/-8 PC
BARRIE	1/1 RS	S 4/-3 PC	0/-8 SN
BRANDON	-6/-10 SN	S -8/-25 SN	-22/-30 PC
CALGARY	-2/-9 S	S -4/-6 PC	0/-6 PC
CHARLOTTETOWN	-2/-6 PC	S 1/1 SN	9/-9 R
CHICOUTIMI	-10/-16 S	S -2/-2 SN	2/-3 RS
CHURCHILL	-15/-21 SN	-21/-22 C	-20/-24 SN
CORNER BROOK	2/-5 SN	-3/-4 PC	5/-5 SN
CORNWALL	-5/-5 SN	S -4/2 R	2/-4 R
EDMONTON	-2/-10 PC	S -9/-9 SN	4/-8 SN
HALIFAX	1/4 S	S 4/4 R	11/11 R
HAMILTON	6/2 R	6/-1 PC	1/-7 SN
HUNTSVILLE	-1/-1 SN	S 4/4 C	-3/-10 SN
IOUAUIT	-17/-25 PC	-14/-19 PC	-12/-13 C
JASPER	-3/-10 S	-3/-4 PC	1/-6 PC
KELOWNA	1/-6 S	S 0/-3 PC	4/-1 PC
KINGSTON	2/-1 SN	S 7/2 R	3/-4 R
LONDON	6/0 R	R 4/-3 PC	0/-9 SN
MONTREAL	-6/-6 SN	S 4/2 SH	2/-4 R
NIAGARA FALLS	6/5 R	7/0 SH	2/-6 SN
NORTH BAY	-5/-5 SN	S 2/-6 C	4/-13 PC
OTTAWA	-5/-6 SN	S 3/1 SH	2/-6 RS
PRINCE GEORGE	-5/-10 PC	-3/-3 SN	2/0 PC
PETERBOROUGH	0/0 SN	S 4/1 C	1/-7 SN
QUEBEC	-6/-7 PC	S 0/0 SN	3/-2 R
REGINA	-7/-10 SN	-10/-22 SN	-20/-22 PC
SASKATOON	-9/-15 PC	-15/-23 S	-18/-22 C
SAINT STE MARIE	3/-1 RS	S -1/-9 SN	5/-12 SN
SAINT JOHN	-2/-6 S	S 3/3 RS	11/9 R
SEPTILES	-7/-10 S	-1/-1 SN	3/3 R
ST JOHN'S	7/-2 R	R 0/-1 S	7/7 R
SUDBURY	-3/-3 SN	S 2/-8 PC	-5/-15 PC
THUNDER BAY	-4/-11 SN	-8/-14 PC	-13/-22 PC
THOMPSON	-12/-23 PC	-23/-30 PC	-26/-31 S
TORONTO	5/3 R	R 6/0 PC	2/-4 SN
VAL-D'OR	-8/-8 SN	S 1/-8 SN	-7/-15 SN
VANCOUVER	7/1 PC	S 5/4 PC	8/5 C
VICTORIA	7/4 PC	7/6 PC	7/7 C
WHISTLER	1/-3 S	S 5/1 PC	4/-1 C
WHITEHORSE	-6/-6 PC	-3/-4 PC	2/-5 C
WINNIPEG	-9/-12 SN	-9/-22 SN	-22/-29 S
YELLOWKNIFE	-25/-30 S	-25/-25 S	-22/-22 PC



SUDOKU

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

4				2			3
2		5		3	8	7	
		9		5	7	2	1
	8			9	4	5	
6		4		8	3		7
	1	2		4		9	
1		7	8	6		9	
		8	3	1		5	6
	5			7			4

**INSTRUCTIONS**  
Fill in the grid so that each row of nine squares, each column of nine and each section of nine (three squares by three) contains the numbers 1 through 9 in any order. There is only one solution to each puzzle.

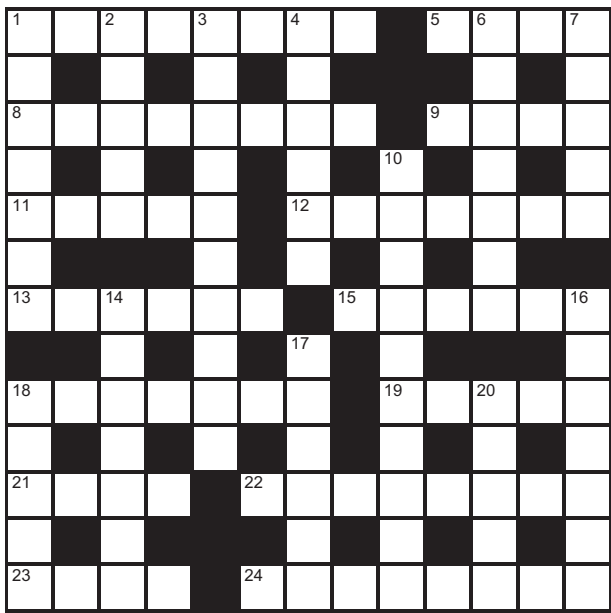
CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 1 Lecture is about 100 great books (8)
- 5 Spots knight entering a church (4)
- 8 Some suggest I'm a terrible judge (8)
- 9 Digital assistant coming back as a woman? (4)
- 11 More trouble with British leaving (5)
- 12 Function as a surgeon does? (7)
- 13 Danger that's encircling Royal Engineers (6)
- 15 Embarrassed-looking head in The Sun perhaps (3,3)
- 18 An idiot that might get up your nose? (7)
- 19 Provide for one's children (5)
- 21 A singer engaged in criminal activity (2,2)
- 22 Confirm breakdown of live data (8)
- 23 Look for last of killers? I'm scared! (4)
- 24 Game allowed to block road (8)

DOWN

- 1 Revolutionary English batsman puffing away on this? (7)
- 2 A longing that Cockney fails to express? (5)
- 3 Almost sure to crack acrobatic feat (10)
- 4 Criminal grabbing too much material (6)
- 6 Dried fruit that's popular, they say (7)
- 7 Follow and make certain Republican is booted out (5)
- 10 Helpful alibi fence cooked up (10)
- 14 Come to understand lies are wrong (7)
- 16 Go before or quietly go back? (7)
- 17 Challenge LA tourist eating Italian ice (6)
- 18 Stupid of His Majesty to go on donkey (5)
- 20 Sting is well turned out (5)



**FRIDAY'S CRYPTIC**  
ACROSS: 1 HOME BIRD 6 BACK 8 RACE 9 IRRITANT 10 TALK SHOW 12 OBOE 13 MEDINA 16 BISTRO 17 MUCH 18 WRAPPING 21 CALLER ID 22 SECT 23 BEVY 24 TROUBLES  
DOWN: 2 OSAKA 3 EXE 4 IRISH 5 DARK WEB 6 BOTTOMS UP 7 CONTOUR 11 KNIGHTLEY 14 EMULATE 15 AT WORST 19 ADD TO 20 NICHE 22 SUB

CONCISE CROSSWORD

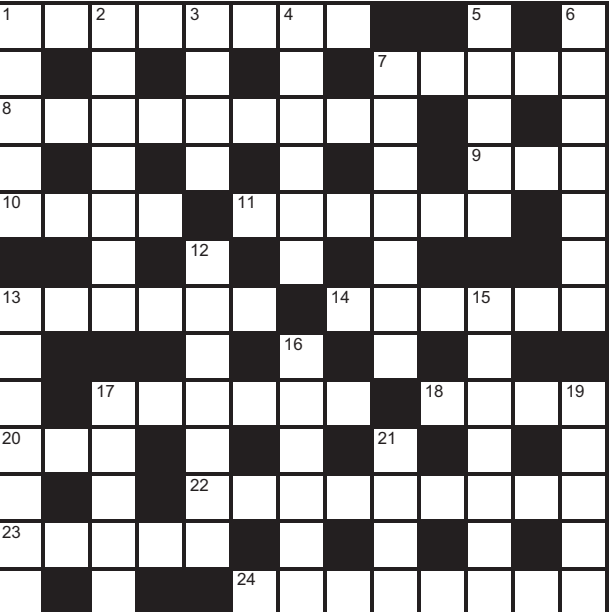
ACROSS

- 1 Intellectual (8)
- 7 High-spirited excursion (5)
- 8 South American nation (9)
- 9 Quantity of money (3)
- 10 Chilly, wintry (4)
- 11 Pouch sewn into a garment (6)
- 13 Brook, burn (6)
- 14 Military engagement (6)
- 17 Prison warders (6)
- 18 Watercraft (4)
- 20 Dense black substance (3)
- 22 Knightly (9)
- 23 In actuality (5)
- 24 Throw overboard (8)

DOWN

- 1 Chaos, pandemonium (5)
- 2 More kind or soft (7)
- 3 News, gossip (4)
- 4 Spotted jungle cat (6)
- 5 Pop, explode (5)
- 6 Trip, falter (7)
- 7 Bird of the crow family (7)
- 12 Job opening (7)
- 13 Written law (7)
- 15 Tops for casual wear (1-6)
- 16 Guidance (6)
- 17 Thin mortar for tiling (5)
- 19 Hickory nut (5)
- 21 Gasp for breath (4)

**FRIDAY'S CONCISE CROSSWORD**  
ACROSS: 1 FRENCH 5 GINGER 8 FARM 9 ABRASION 10 FIGHTER 11 FREED 13 MOBILE HOMES 16 SKINT 18 AILMENT 21 BOOKENDS 22 LEER 23 BASKET 24 WINNER  
DOWN: 2 REALISM 3 NYMPH 4 HEAVENLY 5 GARB 6 NOSTRUM 7 ELOPE 12 CHAINSAW 14 BANGKOK 15 SINCERE 17 KRONA 19 MELON 20 KNOT



KENKEN

4	2÷		11+		11+
5-	60X		3-		
		30X		1-	
6+				2-	
5+	13+		9+		6+
	6		2÷		

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INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Each row and each column must contain the numbers 1 through 6 without repeating.
- 2. The numbers within the heavily outlined boxes, called cages, must combine using the given operation (in any order) to produce the target numbers in the top-left corners.
- 3. Freebies: Fill in single-box cages with the numbers in the top-left corner.

Solutions to today's Sudoku and Kenken can be found in the Life & Arts content area of the A section. Crossword solutions will be with tomorrow's puzzles.

BRIDGE

BY STEVE BECKER  
MONDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2024

East dealer.  
Both sides vulnerable.

The bidding:

East South West North  
Pass 2 NT Pass 3 NT  
Opening Lead – jack of diamonds.

**NORTH**  
♠ K 8 5 4  
♥ Q J 8 4  
♦ 5 4  
♣ J 9

**WEST**  
♠ A 10 7 2  
♥ 9 7 3  
♦ J 10 8 6  
♣ 6 2

**EAST**  
♠ J 6 3  
♥ 5 2  
♦ 9 7 2  
♣ Q 10 7 5 4

**SOUTH**  
♠ Q 9  
♥ K 10 6  
♦ A K Q 3  
♣ A K 8 3

This deal occurred in the 1960 world championship match between Canada and Great Britain. When Terence Reese and Boris Schapiro were North-South for Great Britain, they quickly reached three notrump as shown, and West led the jack of diamonds. Schapiro inspected the dummy very carefully. “Hmmm,” he said. “This will be an interesting hand to play. Such unusual distribution – 4-4-2-2.” The imperturbable Reese examined his hand. “I do seem to have only 12 cards, don't I?” Reese looked down at the floor and there he saw the missing card – the ace of hearts! Of course, had he seen the ace of hearts during the bidding, Reese would have responded much more vigorously to the opening two-notrump bid. Almost surely, he would have landed in six hearts, which could not have been defeated. As it was, though, Schapiro made five notrump for 660 points, and it looked as though Canada would gain 770 points on the deal by bidding and making six hearts. True to expectations, the Canadians did bid a slam at the other table. However, they got to six notrump instead of six hearts, and when declarer finished with the same number of tricks as Schapiro, the British team wound up with a 760-point gain! Both declarers could have made six notrump by finessing through East's Q-10 of clubs, but they each chose a different line of play and wound up with only 11 tricks.

# Notre Dame hosts first mass since 2019 fire

Macron and other dignitaries among 2,500 guests celebrating cathedral's rebirth

THOMAS ADAMSON  
SYLVIE CORBET PARIS

Notre Dame Cathedral, its air thick with the smell of incense, hosted its first mass on Sunday since the catastrophic fire of 2019, a moment that transcended religious significance to become a powerful symbol of Paris' resilience.

Beneath the glow of traditional chandeliers and modern spotlights, which illuminated its intricately carved stonework, the cathedral emerged reborn, its grandeur restored after five years of reconstruction.

For Catholics, it marks the revival of the city's spiritual heart, a place where faith has been nurtured for centuries. For the world, it signals the rebirth of one of global heritage's most famous landmarks.

The event was both solemn and historic. Archbishop Laurent Ulrich presided over the morning mass, including the consecration of a new bronze altar.

The liturgy was attended by 2,500 people, including French President Emmanuel Macron – enjoying a brief respite from France's political tumult and economic troubles – clergy, dignitaries and a few lucky members of the general public who stood in long lines to enter. Nearly 170 bishops from France and around the world took part, along with one priest from each of the 113 parishes in the Paris diocese, accompanied by worshippers from these communities.

Mr. Macron, in line with France's strict division of state and church, did not take communion.

Notre Dame's journey from ruin to resurrection was defined by extraordinary craftsmanship, nearly US\$1-billion in global donations and a collective, unyielding determination to rebuild.

After the mass, faithful attendees, priests, nuns and other

guests lingered in the cathedral, their awe evident. Many took pictures and selfies in front of the altar, the baptistery and vibrant rose windows, their joy mingling with reverence. Others knelt to pray at chapels dedicated to saints, savouring a spiritual intimacy many had not experienced since the fire.

THE PUBLIC WATCHES ON – FROM A DISTANCE

Public viewing areas along the Seine on Sunday morning drew hundreds of people who wished to witness the historic moment from afar, although their numbers were likely subdued by rainy and miserably cold weather conditions.

Retired engineer Claude Lancrenon, watching from a viewing area, expressed both awe and disappointment.

“There is so much security,” he said, gesturing toward the barriers. “Yesterday, that seemed appropriate. But today, I had hoped it would be more open so we could approach the cathedral. I still hope we'll be able to get closer.”

Tight security – akin to that of the Paris Olympic Games – reflected the importance of the occasion, ensuring the safety of dignitaries and the public alike.

Nathalie Martino, a retired event organizer visiting Paris, recalled the anguish of watching the cathedral burn.

“I cried so much that day,” she said. “And now, here I am. I had to come. It was something I needed to do.”

A SACRED SPACE REBORN

Sunday's masses come after Saturday evening's ceremonies in which Ulrich symbolically reopened the cathedral's massive wooden doors by striking them three times with a crosier crafted from charred beams salvaged from the fire. As the doors swung open, choirs filled the air with song and the cathedral's great organ – silent since the fire – resounded with majestic melodies.



Above: The faithful return for a glimpse of Notre Dame Cathedral and the liturgy that followed. LUDAVIC MARIN / AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Right: The mass was attended by 2,500 people, including French President Emmanuel Macron, and brought tight security akin to that of the Paris Olympic Games. MICHAEL EULER/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Below: The solemn and historic event was presided over by Archbishop Laurent Ulrich, who also consecrated a new bronze altar. ALESSANDRA TARANTINO/ REUTERS

Inside, the restoration reveals a cathedral transformed with now-gleaming limestone walls cleaned of centuries of grime. The restored stained-glass windows project dazzling patterns of colour across the nave.

“No one alive has seen the cathedral like this,” said the Rev. Olivier Ribadeau Dumas, Notre Dame's rector.

“It is more than restored – it is reborn.”

ASSOCIATED PRESS



## Vancouver stabbing suspect's identity won't be released, B.C. authorities say

NANCY MACDONALD VANCOUVER

British Columbia authorities will not release any information about the man who was killed in a hail of police bullets earlier this week after stabbing two women in a busy downtown convenience store.

The province's Independent Investigations Office (IIO) – which assumes control of investigations when a person has been killed or injured by police – says its policy is to not release the name of a subject in order to protect their family's privacy.

The Vancouver Police Department (VPD) has deferred all calls about the high-profile incident to the police watchdog.

The BC Coroners Service told The Globe and Mail that it is investigating the death and, as such, is unable to provide any details about the dead man. An unattributed statement from Public Safety Minister Garry Begg's office said the minister was unable to comment while the IIO and VPD are conducting their investigations. The lack of information means the public will not know whether the man was among those who have fallen through the cracks of the justice and mental-health systems at a time when public disorder is a top issue for voters, not only in B.C. but in other parts of Canada.

“When we have events that traumatize the community – which this clearly has – it's important for the public to gain an understanding of the circumstances, to chart a way forward,” said Elenore Sturko, the Conservative critic for public safety and a former Mountie. She noted that one woman was stabbed in the face.

“It is in the best interest of the public here to understand what transpired.”

Too often, government uses the Privacy Act as a shield to “hide behind to buy itself time – particularly in this case, where David Eby and the NDP have a lot to answer for when it comes to their failures to address public safety,” Ms. Sturko added.

The incident at the 7-Eleven began at 11:20 a.m. Wednesday at Original Joe's, a pub across the street. There, the accused, described as homeless, agitated and angry, stole a long filet knife used to chop limes, a paring knife and five bottles of liquor, according to bartender Kylie Noel.

After chugging Jim Beam, the bearded man, dressed in a black hoodie, a winter coat and a grey tuque, waved the knife at Ms. Noel and a chef. “You want to die today?” he yelled before exiting for the 7-Eleven.

Ms. Noel, who was on the line with police, alerted investigators that the man was heading for the convenience store armed with two knives. Police arrived three minutes later, she said.

Witnesses said the man had by then cornered a clerk behind the cash register. After ignoring police shouts to “move away,” he was hit with a taser, then shot. He was declared dead in hospital.

Police later said two people were stabbed; both are expected to fully recover.

High-profile incidents over the past year have repeatedly raised questions about how to manage attackers with a history of mental-health challenges and interactions with police.

Earlier this fall, in an attack just blocks from the 7-Eleven, one man was left dead and another with a severed hand. Police later found the alleged attacker, 34-year-old Brendan Colin McBride, charging him with one count of second-degree murder and one count of aggravated assault. Police Chief Adam Palmer described Mr. McBride as “a very troubled man” with 60 documented contacts with Lower Mainland police agencies.

A year earlier, in September, 2023, Premier David Eby said he was “white hot angry” over the release of a man with a history of violence from a psychiatric institution who later went on to stab and injure three people at a celebration in Chinatown. It is not known whether the man involved in Wednesday's incident faced similar prior problems.

While the history of the accused in the two earlier cases is known, the IIO says the history of the man in the convenience store cannot be released because he is dead. IIO policy states that its director will not release a person's name “unless there is a strong public interest.” In this case, “those reasons do not exist and therefore the name of the individual has been withheld,” spokesperson Simon Druker said.

## Is Doug Ford really getting it done?

MARCUS GEE  
OPINION



Go to the website of Ontario's Progressive Conservative party and the following words pop up: “Doug Ford and the Ontario PCs are the only party that will Get It Done.” Note the capitalization of the last three words.

They are the core of the party's pitch to voters in the next election, expected within a few months. While other governments dither and delay, Mr. Ford and his merry band build roads, dig subway tunnels, cut red tape, rip out bike lanes and – you betcha, folks – get it done. But at what cost?

This week's annual report from the provincial Auditor-General should give pause to anyone who is swayed by Mr. Ford's clever slogan. The Auditor, Shelley Spence, takes a hard look at the Ford government's plans to redevelop Ontario Place, the lakeside recreation spot in Toronto. The province closed it in 2012 after years of falling revenue and attendance. Mr. Ford vowed to make it a going concern again. The province struck a deal with an Austrian company to build a big waterpark and wellness spa there. The redevelopment also includes an expanded concert venue, a new Ontario Science Centre and refreshed landscaping and park space.

The plan was a reasonable one. It made sense to put a crowd-pleasing year-round attraction on the site, which had always been an active family-run venue rather than simply a public park. The execution of the plan has been a disaster.

The Auditor-General says the process that led the province to choose Austria's Therme Group to build the waterpark was not “fair, transparent or accountable to all participants.” Nor did it follow “best practices for large-scale, modern land-use development projects.”

There were inappropriate contacts between government officials and the bidders for the redevelopment project, despite strict regulations banning such contacts. The bidding process itself was “irregular” and “subjective.”

Mr. Ford's government, clearly, was hell bent to Get It Done, and damn the torpedoes. Damn the caution, the rules, the transparency and the due diligence, for that matter.

It was so determined to make progress, and fast, that it appears to have paid next to no attention to the cost.

The government originally argued that, because it was bringing in a private investor to build the waterpark, the subsidy from the public purse would be small. That has turned out to be an utter fantasy.

The original price tag was to be \$335-million to \$424-million, mostly for things like providing water to the site. Now it is \$2.24-billion. That is some kind of inflation.

As this newspaper summarized, “The bill now includes the relocation of the Ontario Science Centre to the site for \$700-million, more than \$500-million in costs for public parkland, \$280-million for a parking facility, and an additional \$346.9-million in site-preparation costs.” For a government that styles itself as a fierce defender of the hard-pressed ordinary taxpayer, this is embarrassing indeed.

Getting it done sometimes takes money, of course. The Ford government is investing heavily in necessary things such as better public transit, including a big new Toronto subway line. Mr. Ford's mistake is to think he can simply plow ahead like a human bulldozer, with no regard for the watchdogs and guardrails that keep governments honest. The same cavalier attitude got him in hot water over the Greenbelt, the big swath of protected land that he wanted to open up, in part, for housing development.

But, then, Mr. Ford does not have much time for watchdogs and guardrails. Since taking office in 2018 he has often used or threatened to use the notwithstanding clause of the Constitution to override court rulings that were slowing him down. As the Auditor-General notes, he has vastly increased the use of special ministerial orders to override the land-use decisions of municipal councils.

This avowed fiscal conservative has even ignored sensible budgetary curbs, continuing to run budget deficits and pile up debt. As the Auditor-General reports, Ontario's debt burden is heading toward half a trillion dollars.

None of this adds up to efficient government. Mussolini did not, in fact, make the trains run on time. The governments that really get things done don't run roughshod over correct practices and processes. They don't play footsie with developers. They don't announce projects when they don't really know what the cost will be. They don't denounce every objection as a barrier to progress.

The governments that get the most done in the end are the ones that listen to their critics and play by the rules.

PART 1

# Exit Roadmap: Managing Exits and Sales



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FREE WEBCAST | WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2024 | 12:30 PM ET – 1:30 PM ET

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PART 2

## Finding Harmony: Navigating the Challenges of Succession Planning

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 22, 2025



POWERED BY



EVENTS

REPORT ON BUSINESS

OTTAWA/QUEBEC EDITION

MONDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2024

GLOBEANDMAIL.COM

BoC likely to deliver big rate cut, despite currency concerns

MARK RENDELL

The Bank of Canada is expected to deliver another oversized interest-rate cut on Wednesday, although policy makers will have to weigh the need for economic stimulus against the risk of a weaker loonie.

Central bank officials have been clear that they intend to keep lowering interest rates now that inflation is largely under control. The question, after four consecutive rate cuts, is how fast to keep moving.

Until recently, financial markets expected the bank to shift back to a normal quarter-point rate cut on Dec. 11, after a half-percentage-point move in October. However, a run of weak economic data – capped by a jump in the unemployment rate in the latest jobs numbers, published Friday – has led most analysts and investors to pencil in another oversized move for this week’s decision.

Interest-rate swap markets, which capture expectations about monetary policy, put the odds of a 50-basis-point cut at around 85 per cent, according to LSEG data (a basis-point is 1/100th of a percentage point). Twenty-one out of 27 analysts polled by Reuters, including economists at Canada’s six big banks, also expect a half-point move.

The case for another big cut, which would bring the policy rate to 3.25 per cent from 3.75 per cent, looks compelling.

Annual Consumer Price Index inflation was bang on the central bank’s 2-per-cent target in October, and has been within the bank’s control range all year.

■ BoC, B8

Alberta rules ban wind, solar projects on prime farm land

EMMA GRANEY

ENERGY REPORTER

More than 18 months after Alberta paused all renewable energy development in the province, the government has released concrete regulations that control where wind and solar projects can be developed, banning them from huge swaths of prime agricultural land.

The new Electric Energy Land Use and Visual Assessment Regulation, released Friday, builds on the government’s pledge to put agriculture at the forefront of rules governing renewables. However, the industry is still waiting to find out how the province will institute new reclamation requirements for renewable energy operations.

Renewable project approvals were put on ice in the province in August, 2023, when the United Conservative Party government abruptly ordered the Alberta Utilities Commission to halt application green-lights and to review issues around reclamation and viewscales, and to determine which agricultural land should be used for wind, solar, geothermal and biomass plants.

The AUC commissioned a series of consultant reports to help overhaul the rules that govern Alberta’s multibillion-dollar industry. But industry and experts had worried that adopting some of the recommendations in those reports would lead to an unfair system where renewable energy projects are subject to rules that don’t apply to oil, gas and other industries.

■ RENEWABLES, B8

[ BOARD GAMES ]



## Are ESG and DEI now DOA? Canadian companies navigate a growing backlash

Firms may have to downplay social initiatives to avoid losing U.S. business

DAVID MILSTEAD

JEFFREY JONES

Canada, meet Robby Starbuck.

The online activist takes credit for pressure campaigns that have prompted multiple U.S. companies to scale back or eliminate their diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) policies and practices. Companies such as Deere & Co., Harley-Davidson Inc., Molson Coors Beverage Co. and Walmart Inc. have all said they’ll change hiring practices, pull out of relationships with equity groups or cut funding for pride parades.

“We’ve now changed policy at companies worth over US\$2-trillion, with many millions of employees who have better workplace environments as a result,” Mr. Starbuck posted Nov. 25 on X, after he said his meeting with Walmart executives prompted a host of changes, including their decision not to extend a five-year, US\$100-million philanthropic commitment to fighting systemic racism the retailer made in 2020.

“Companies can clearly see that America wants normalcy back. The era of wokeness is dying right in front of our eyes. The landscape of corporate America is quickly shifting to sanity and neutrality. We are now the trend, not the anomaly.”

Canadians might be tempted to dismiss Mr. Starbuck as an anomaly, a product of U.S. culture wars. But he’s one of the most visible faces of a full-scale war on environmental, social and governance (ESG) policies and their subset of DEI practices.

■ BOARD GAMES, B5

Radha Curpen, head of ESG and Sustainability at McMillan LLP, says both the political right and left misrepresent the purpose of ESG policies. JENNIFER GAUTHIER/THE GLOBE AND MAIL

## Pilots, air traffic controllers highlight low staffing levels, focus on profits in call for aviation system review

ERIC ATKINS

TRANSPORTATION REPORTER



A new report recommends more investment in training and service to remote locations. CHRISTOPHER KATSAROV/THE GLOBE AND MAIL

15,000 members who work at domestic airlines and Nav Canada, the air navigation service responsible for airspace over Canada and the North Atlantic Ocean.

The unions are issuing the report ahead of the busy holiday travel season, a time when winter storms, full planes and short staffing often combine to create chaos marked by late or cancelled flights and lost luggage. The resurgence in demand for air travel after pandemic restrictions lifted revealed the ill-preparedness of the government, Canada’s airports and private aviation companies.

“The fear of flying is no longer the fear of getting on an airplane,” said Nick von Schoenberg, head of the Unifor division that represents Nav Canada’s air traffic controllers. “It’s the fear of whether your airplane is going to actually depart on time” or whether your suitcase will go missing.

■ AIR TRAVEL, B8

BANKS

Legal claim against subsidiary delayed earnings release last week, CWB says ■ B3

OPINION

Against Trump’s tariff threat, Canada must play more defence than offence ■ B4

PERSONAL FINANCE

How to teach your kids how to buy gifts – without spending over their budget ■ B9

SPORTS

■ B11-B15

SOCCER

Lionel Messi proves that winning isn’t everything, Cathal Kelly writes ■ B11

FOOTBALL

U.S. college playoffs set: Oregon is No. 1, but Alabama is sidelined ■ B15



[ NEW YORK ]

# The talk of the block

People enjoy a car-free walk along Fifth Avenue on Sunday during its 200th anniversary, which included live music, art installations, unique shopping opportunities and interactive experiences

STEPHANIE KEITH/GETTY IMAGES

## Intimidation in N.S. lobster industry now all too common

RCMP over the past two years have laid 51 charges against a ‘criminal organization’ related to illegal fisheries

MICHAEL TUTTON  
METEGHAN, N.S.

Standing by a bullet hole in his dining room wall, lobster buyer Geoffrey Jobert says such attacks have become an all-too-familiar reality in Nova Scotia’s largest fishery.

Overnight on Nov. 23, someone fired a single shot that passed through three rooms in his Mavillette, N.S., home, with the shell ending its journey in a rocking chair where Mr. Jobert occasionally sits during the daylight hours.

“It was pretty intense in the morning when I noticed the shot. My heart was beating, but at the same time it’s commonplace around the community for this to happen,” he said at his residence, as two security guards from his company Lobster Hub Inc. kept watch outside.

The 30-year-old and his younger brother came to the area from Halifax to take over his father’s processing plant five years ago and now employ 100 people. He’s enjoyed making friends in the francophone town and paddling along a stunning beach near his home when he has a few spare hours.

But last year, threats started after he agreed to buy the catch of a licensed, commercial harvester who was no longer willing to provide his catch to facilities allegedly purchasing illegally caught lobster. And Mr. Jobert soon learned he wasn’t the only person in the communities along the Acadian shore who experienced late-night attacks.

Sergeant Jeff LeBlanc, commander of the RCMP detachment in nearby Meteghan, estimates that over the past two years officers have laid 51 charges against what he refers to as a “criminal organization” related to illegal fisheries, including four shots



Fishing boats prepare for the start of the lobster fishery in Saulnierville, N.S., in August, 2021. Lobster fishermen in the province have been receiving threats from illegal fisheries. ANDREW VAUGHAN/CP



Geoffrey Jobert sits next to a bullet hole above a couch in his home in Mavillette, N.S., last week. Mr. Jobert, who owns a lobster processing company, has been threatened regarding his work. MICHAEL TUTTON/CP

fired into homes in the past seven months.

About half an hour’s drive north from Mr. Jobert’s home, there’s an isolated cabin in the woods, dislodged from its foundations by a front-end loader that tried to topple it over. At the time of the damage, the property belonged to Joel Comeau, a former president of the Maritime Fishermen’s Union who had been critical of buyers who purchase lobster caught outside of the regulated seasons.

The Canadian Press spoke to two commercial lobster fishermen who said they’d been targeted and who declined to provide their names for fear of retaliation. “I can’t take another hit right now,” said one veteran fisherman.

man. “I’ve been hit more than once.”

Truck driver Wayne Saulnier of Meteghan said in a telephone interview Thursday it’s possible to be “caught in the middle” of the conflict, even when you’re uninvolved.

His tractor-trailer “was in the wrong place at the wrong time” when it went up in flames the night of Dec. 12, 2023, after he parked on the property adjacent to Mr. Jobert’s processing plant. “Apparently they filled tires with gasoline and shoved them under the truck and it more or less blew up with fumes,” Mr. Saulnier said.

Jean-Claude Comeau, who operates a marine hydraulics business at the Meteghan wharf, said in an interview on Tuesday, “it’s time for people to take a stand” against the lawlessness.

“The [commercial lobster] fishermen are starting to see where illegal activity is happening and they’re shifting from buyers because they’ve had enough of the illegal ones. ... Now these illegal buyers are getting pissed off, and they’re wreaking havoc,” he said.

In a recent lawsuit against sev-

eral processors, the Unified Fisheries Conservation Alliance – an advocacy group for commercial fishers – has said the conflict’s roots lie in Ottawa’s lack of enforcement efforts at the Saulnierville wharf, where a Mi’kmaq lobster fishery was launched in 2020 outside of the regulated federal season.

Mr. Jobert is cautious about directing blame at the Indigenous fishers, noting Mi’kmaq communities “have faced systemic racism through the years.” But he adds that he believes Ottawa must do more to bring peace back to the small community.

“I think they [Indigenous fishers] are being taken advantage of by these criminals because it’s still a grey business and an illegal business,” he said.

Chief Michelle Glasgow, leader of Sipekne’katik First Nation, did not respond to two e-mailed requests for interviews.

The community began fishing in St. Mary’s Bay in 2020, citing the 1999 Supreme Court of Canada Marshall decision. That decision ruled the Mi’kmaq had a treaty-based right to pursue a moderate livelihood fishery, though Ottawa could restrict treaty rights for conservation reasons and other justified grounds.

Ms. Glasgow has told a Senate committee hearing last year that the federal Fisheries Department has never fully honoured the Marshall ruling and improperly restricts the band’s right to sell its catch. She also told the committee in a written brief that the Fisheries Department has “made it impossible for our people to legally sell their catch.”

At the Meteghan wharf, Mr. Comeau said the short-term solution is improved policing in the region, adding that it’s rare to see police patrolling the area in the middle of the night. “They all seem to be turning a blind eye to this,” he said, referring to the RCMP and the municipal government.

The RCMP’s Sgt. LeBlanc said he’s in talks with the local municipality of Clare about adding to the complement of seven officers and ensuring more are available to work the night shift.

THE CANADIAN PRESS



### Weekly Appointment Review

The following appointments have been announced by companies and organizations during the past week

All Globe and Mail appointment notices are archived and available online at [www.globeandmail.com/appointments](http://www.globeandmail.com/appointments)



Anu Nijhawan  
to Chair of the Board of Governors  
Bennett Jones



An Van Gerven  
to President  
Pfizer Canada ULC



Scott Donald,  
CPA, CMA  
to Vice-Chair of the Board  
Western Surety Company



Greg Salmon,  
CPA, CMA  
to President and CEO  
Western Surety Company

### TRUMP SAYS HE DOESN’T PLAN ON REPLACING FED CHAIR

U.S. president-elect Donald Trump said in an interview aired on Sunday he will not try to replace Federal Reserve chair Jerome Powell upon taking office in January.

“No, I don’t think so. I don’t see it,” Mr. Trump said on NBC News’ *Meet the Press* with Kristen Welker when asked if he would seek to remove Mr. Powell, whose term ends in 2026.

Mr. Trump added that he didn’t think Mr. Powell, who he has sparred with in the past over interest-rate levels, would go quietly.

“I think if I told him to, he would. But if I asked him to, he probably wouldn’t,” Mr. Trump told Ms. Welker.

Mr. Trump campaigned on a promise to lower mortgage rates and other borrowing costs for U.S. households, raising the prospect that he could clash with Mr. Powell – as he did in his first term – over interest-rate policy. Mr. Trump’s vow to implement across-the-board tariffs could also complicate the Fed’s efforts to keep inflation in check.

Last month, Mr. Powell said

he would refuse to leave office early if Mr. Trump tried to oust him, arguing that removing him, or any of the other Fed governors, ahead of the end of their terms is “not permitted under the law.”

Mr. Trump named Mr. Powell, a former private-equity executive and a Republican, to the Fed chair position in early 2018 to replace Janet Yellen, who later became U.S. President Joe Biden’s Treasury Secretary. Mr. Biden reappointed Mr. Powell to his current term.

But the relationship between Mr. Trump and Mr. Powell turned sour, with Mr. Trump frequently attacking the Fed and its chief during his first term in office. Mr. Trump privately discussed trying to dismiss Mr. Powell in late 2018, upset over the Fed’s move to raise interest rates, and publicly argued against rate hikes.

Mr. Trump also criticized Mr. Powell in early 2020 at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, saying Mr. Powell had made several bad decisions and arguing he had a right to remove him.

REUTERS

# Legal claim delays release of CWB’s earnings

Claim includes ‘allegations of unethical conduct’ by a sales agent at one of the bank’s subsidiaries

STEFANIE MAROTTA  
BANKING REPORTER

**Canadian Western Bank** says it has postponed the release of its fourth-quarter earnings owing to a recent legal claim against one of its subsidiaries that required “prudent investigation.”

CWB’s shares tumbled 5.4 per cent in Toronto on Friday after the lender abruptly delayed the earnings publication to a later date this month without explanation.

The sudden nature of the change prompted widespread speculation among investors that it was related to National Bank of Canada’s deal to acquire CWB, but the Edmonton-based lender on Saturday refuted that claim.

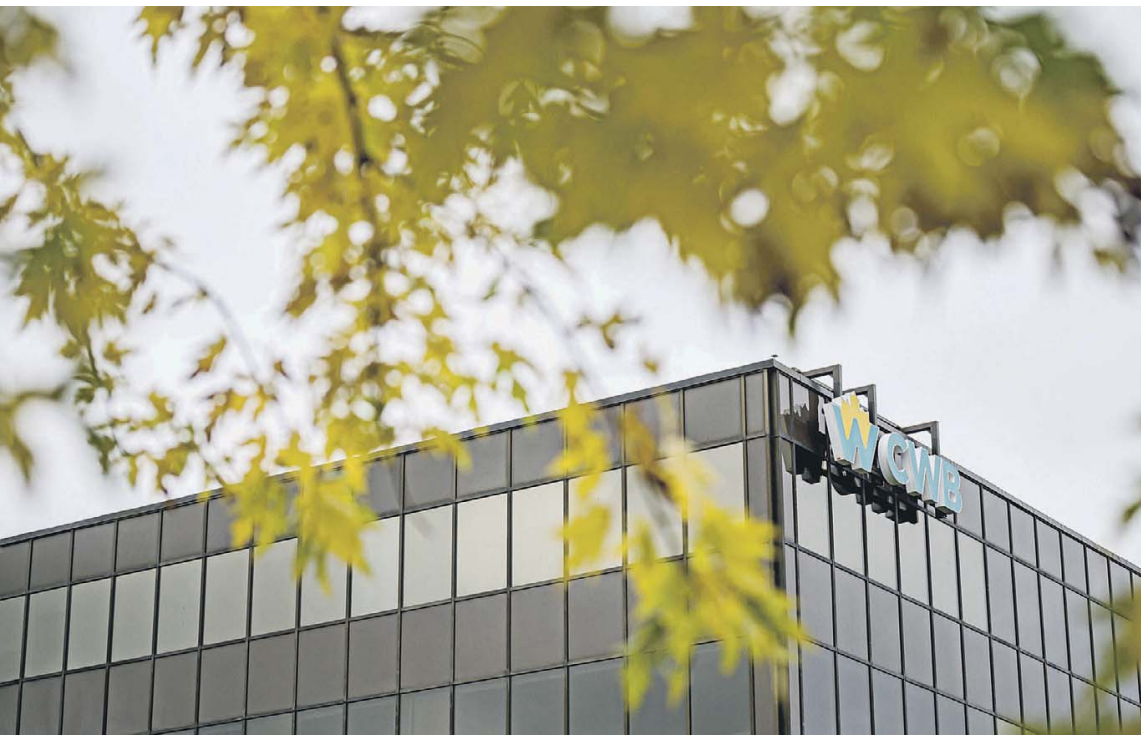
“We continue to expect forward progress of the transaction and expect it to close as planned and within previously announced timelines,” CWB said of National Bank’s acquisition in a press release.

The bank said a legal claim against a subsidiary, CWB Maxium Financial Ltd. (Maxium), was received late into the process of approving and disclosing its annual financial results.

The claimant is seeking \$18-million in damages, as well as general and punitive damages and costs related to the provision of certain loans to corporations affiliated with the claimant, and the resolution of the loans.

The claim includes “allegations of unethical conduct by a named individual.”

CWB said that it has launched



Canadian Western Bank says a legal claim against a subsidiary, CWB Maxium Financial Ltd., was received late into the process of approving and disclosing its annual financial results. CHRISTOPHER KATSAROV/THE GLOBE AND MAIL

a full investigation and has thus far confirmed that the named individual is a sales agent of Maxium with no lending approval authority. The loans were approved through the lender’s credit approval process, which includes a thorough review of each loan by its risk management team, the bank said.

CWB said that it does not expect the outcome of the claim to impact its future financial results.

Montreal-based National Bank is nearing the final stages of approval to take over CWB. During a conference call Wednesday dis-

cussing fourth-quarter earnings, National Bank chief executive officer Laurent Ferreira said Canada’s banking regulator, the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions, is currently reviewing the proposal.

The final step will be for Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland to green-light the deal. Mr. Ferreira added that he expects the deal to close in early 2025.

“Our proposed acquisition of Canadian Western Bank will be a key pillar in our domestic growth in 2025 and for the years to come,” he said during the call.

“We look forward to bringing together two strong teams and highly complementary platforms to accelerate our growth. The approval process is progressing well.”

In recent quarters, CWB has grappled with higher-than-expected provisions for loans that could default. In third-quarter earnings released at the end of August, the bank said that the increase in provisions was driven by two specific client accounts, and that it did not expect further issues.

In June, National Bank an-

nounced its intention to buy CWB and struck a stock-swap deal that values the Edmonton-based lender at \$5-billion.

At the time, National Bank, the country’s sixth-largest lender, said its takeover expands its business by \$37-billion in loans across 65,000 customers and 39 branches in Western Canada and Ontario. The deal would increase the bank’s Canadian lending portfolio outside of Quebec by 37 per cent.

National Bank did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

## Canadians turn to domestic travel with weak loonie discouraging U.S. trips

CHRISTOPHER REYNOLDS

Barry Choi has been noticing fewer filled seats on some of his flights over the past year.

“People are travelling a little bit less,” said Mr. Choi, who runs the Money We Have personal finance and travel website, which has him on a plane every four to six weeks.

The trend is one he wouldn’t have anticipated two years ago, when the urge to get away was nearly palpable after COVID-19 border closings ended and air travel became possible once more.

“Because of that pent-up demand from the pandemic, people kind of took their trips. In 2022, I feel like everyone was travelling. Everyone was like, ‘I’ve got to get it out.’

“Some people waited until 2023, but this year everyone’s kind of calmed down,” he said.

That pattern looks likely to persist in December and January. After turning abroad for holiday vacations last year, more Canadians are keeping their travel plans in-country this Christmas season owing to squeezed budgets, lower domestic fares and a decisive end to the boom in overseas travel since the pandemic – plus a slumping currency.

The number of Canadian flights bound for the United States this December is slated to fall 2.5 per cent year-over-year, according to figures from aviation tracking firm Cirium.

Meanwhile, domestic flight capacity is set to jump nearly 10 per cent this month compared to December, 2023.

The extra flight capacity north of the border has helped push down prices even as demand goes up, with fares on flights within Canada sitting 20 per cent lower

than the year before as of September, the latest month for which Cirium had data.

Spokesperson Mike Arnot said fewer flights to the U.S. – from all Canadian carriers except Porter Airlines, which is rapidly building its fleet and flying south – means “higher airfare generally,” as capacity falls further than demand.

Wallet worries have reined in spending somewhat, with Gen Zs and millennials thinking twice before shelling out big bucks on experiences, travel included.

“We can’t ignore the fact that people are pinched. Interest rates are starting to go down, inflation is a little more in check, but still the cost of housing, cost of living are top of mind,” said Ramzi Rahbani, a vice-president at FlightHub.

A survey from the travel platform found that slightly more than half of Canadians are planning to hold off on trips over the holidays.

Thoughts about steering clear of the U.S. may loom larger after the loonie, which was already hovering near 72 US cents, slipped to its lowest exchange rate in years after president-elect Donald Trump’s proposal for a 25-per-cent tariff on imports from Canada.

“I’m getting a lot of people thinking, ‘Do I still want to go to the U.S.?’” Mr. Choi said.

Canadians who normally decamp for Florida, Arizona and California during the winter are among those who would feel the weaker dollar most strongly.

“For snowbirds, the U.S. has definitely become more expensive,” said Jill Wykes, a travel expert who was speaking from Sarasota, Fla.

“All kinds of people had credit for things that had been cancelled in 2020 and 2021, especially cruise lines,” she said. Those vouchers

and travel credit are now spent.

Millennials – who now outnumber baby boomers in Canada – and Gen Z together comprise more than half of all passengers, according to FlightHub. They cited family visits as the biggest reason for air travel over the holidays, which helps explain the domestic turn.

Overseas, the capitals of the Philippines and India – Manila and New Delhi – saw some of the

highest booking numbers from Canada between Dec. 20 and Jan. 1, according to FlightHub.

“They tend to be returning to see family and friends, too,” Mr. Rahbani said. Meanwhile, leisure-heavy trips to some sun destinations have plateaued.

Despite the shift toward domestic travel, many broad patterns remain in place. For those venturing south, New York City, Florida and California remain the

top destinations across virtually all age groups.

“It’s stabilized,” said Richard Vanderlubbe, founder of travel agency Tripcentral.ca, referring to travel habits generally. But that similarity to 2023 is itself a big change from recent years, which saw wild swings in customer volumes as COVID-19 restrictions came and went.

THE CANADIAN PRESS



The number of Canadian flights bound for the U.S. this December is slated to fall 2.5 per cent year-over-year, according to figures from aviation tracking firm Cirium. COLE BURSTON/THE CANADIAN PRESS

OPINION & ANALYSIS

# Ottawa must play economic defence against tariffs

How to do this in the coming months is an urgent discussion policy makers must have

JOHN TURLEY-EWART

OPINION

Regulatory compliance consultant and Canadian banking historian

Canada went on the offensive after Nov. 25 when president-elect Donald Trump used his social-media platform, Truth Social, to propose a 25-per-cent tariff on Canadian goods shipped to the United States.

This startling declaration prompted a first ministers' meeting, an impromptu visit by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to Mr. Trump's Florida residence, Ontario Premier Doug Ford launching an Ontario-U.S. free-trade marketing campaign and Canadian promises of enhanced border security to appease the incoming president.

According to the Associated Press, Canadian officials also "started thinking about what [U.S.] items to target with tariffs in retaliation." Retaliatory tariffs would be a costly misstep Canadians cannot afford.

How Canada should play economic defence in the coming months is now an urgent discussion policy makers must have with Canadians. The stakes are high.

Andreas Schotter, a professor of international business at Western University's Ivey Business School, estimates that 1.5 million Canadians would lose their jobs under a 25-per-cent U.S. tariff wall. If the tariff was just 10 per cent, Prof. Schotter's analysis suggests, at least 500,000 Canadians would be out of work. Add those numbers to the roughly 1.5 million Canadians already looking for work, and Canada will face unemployment of two million to three million in 2025.

Such an outcome would cause an economic crisis and spark understandable anger at the U.S. However, neither are reasons to use retaliatory tariffs that would amplify the crisis. The economic blowback on Canada would be too costly.

Scotiabank's chief economist, Jean-François Perrault, has published estimates of just how costly it would be. Mr. Perrault's work suggests retaliatory tariffs will further increase unemployment, inflation and the Bank of Canada's policy rate (which affects interest rates paid by consumers and businesses), while decreasing GDP even more and further lowering the value of the Canadian dollar versus the U.S. dollar.

Of particular interest to policy makers and Canadians – especially those with the million-plus mortgages set to renew in 2025 – is the impact U.S. tariffs and Canadian retaliatory tariffs are likely to have on inflation and, by extension,

the Bank of Canada's interest-rate policy.

Mr. Perrault's analysis suggests that Canada matching the U.S. 25-per-cent tariff wall on U.S. goods would add momentum to inflationary pressures, forcing the Bank of Canada to increase interest rates by as much as 2.8 percentage points by the summer of 2025. Under such a scenario Canada's gross domestic product, used as an indicator measuring the size and health of a country's economy, would decline by 5.6 per cent by the start of 2027.

Under a scenario where the president-elect's new administration imposed a 10-per-cent tariff on Canadian imports and Canada responded in kind, the result would still see inflation increase and the Bank of Canada raising interest rates by about one percentage point in late 2025. GDP would fall by almost 2 per cent in such circumstances.

If Canada takes no retaliatory trade action, the outcome for Canadians is not as bad. In this situation, Mr. Perrault says, "the impact on Canada is simply a deflationary demand shock."

With Canadian households, as the Business Council of Alberta points out, "easily the most indebted in the G7 and among the most in the entire OECD," any response in kind to U.S. tariffs that puts upward pressure on inflation and interest rates threatens an even wider economic crisis at a time when U.S. tariffs will cause unemployment to rise and disposable income to fall. The result? More business bankruptcies and families losing their homes.

This cannot be an option.

Like a hockey team, Canada needs an effective offence and defence. It's the offence's job to score points for Canada in Washington to avoid U.S. tariffs. At home, we need to play economic defence. That must include pushing back against any pressure for retaliatory tariffs, pursuing policies that allow the Bank of Canada to continue its path of reducing interest rates, and transformative policies that directly address the predicament Canadian businesses and households face.

A first step to support employment and business, suggested by Ivey's Prof. Schotter, that Ottawa and the provinces would be wise to start on now is a \$5-billion-plus "Strategic Industries Fund, fast-tracking approvals for critical manufacturing projects, and reforming the Competition Act to allow strategic domestic consolidation ... [and providing incentives for] essentially doubling down on non-physical digital and service exports."

If there is a glimmer of hope in these dire circumstances it is that most bank economists and stock markets, which have continued to climb higher after Mr. Trump's election, don't believe a trade war of any length or depth is likely after the new administration takes office.

Hope, however, will not pay the bills if U.S. tariffs come to pass. Neither will retaliatory tariffs.



Opposition lawmakers at the Congress in Mexico City on Nov. 21 protest after the ruling Morena party and its allies approve a measure to abolish various regulatory institutions. LUIS CORTES/REUTERS

## We should pay attention to the populist shakeup in Mexico's business world

ROBIN SHABAN  
SAÚL SANDOVAL PEREA

OPINION

Robin Shaban is associate partner at Deetken Insight, and fellow at the Public Policy Forum and Social Capital Partners.

Saúl Sandoval Perea is professor of politics and economics at CETYS Universidad in Tijuana, Mexico.

This year has been historic for Mexico. The country elected its first female president and undertook a major overhaul of its judicial system. Moreover, the government is on the verge of fundamentally reforming – and in some instances eliminating – several independent regulatory agencies. These populist changes could have a substantial effect on Canadian investors and other business interests in Mexico. They may also foreshadow populist trends within our own Canadian borders that businesses and investors will need to face.

In a radical shift, Mexico's recent judicial reform opens the selection process for some 7,000 judges and other justice positions – including Supreme Court justices – to citizens through popular vote. Domestic and international investors are increasingly wary of these changes, fearing heightened politicization, diminished independence of the judicial system and a less secure investment environment.

On top of these changes, the government is also aiming to drastically reform various regulatory institutions that oversee competition law enforcement, government transparency, energy and telecommunications. Their functions and responsibilities would be transferred to a few federal ministries, ostensibly to save money for social programs and pensions.

To appease investors and critics, and to comply with USMCA provisions, the ruling party and the federal government have pledged to make the competition, energy and telecommunications commissions decentralized agencies with technical independence and their own resources. However, they would still lack the authority to set their own budgets.

These changes have been developing for years and this trajectory is unlikely to change any time soon.

Left-wing former president Andrés Manuel López Obrador began calling for a judicial overhaul last year after frequent clashes with the country's Supreme Court. He described Mexico's regulatory agencies as "wasteful" and in service of business interests rather than the people.

Mr. López Obrador didn't have the votes in Congress to make the judicial and regulatory changes he envisioned. But that situation changed this past summer when his party and its allies secured a supermajority in both legislative chambers. Claudia Sheinbaum, Mexico's

newly inaugurated president and Mr. López Obrador's political protégé, will now lead the charge on dismantling regulatory agencies and realizing Mr. López Obrador's vision.

Not surprisingly, these judicial and regulatory reforms may challenge Mexico's free-trade agreement with Canada and the U.S. Changes to Mexico's regulators, namely its competition authority, also run counter to best practices outlined by the OECD by making agencies open to political influence.

The Mexican government has sent very strong signals that it will not be deterred by Canada or the U.S. from pursuing these profound changes, going so far as to freeze communications with both U.S. and Canadian embassies. Even if officials in Canada were able to somehow curb the reforms Mexico is pursuing, there is little they can do to address the root issue – a deterioration in the population's trust in conventionally accepted economic policy and regulation. However, with the election of Donald Trump and his vow of substantial tariffs, leaders in Canada and Mexico have been stressing the need for more communication and collaboration.

The very fact that the current government believes that courts and regulators are failing to create outcomes that benefit Mexicans is troubling. The drastic reforms being pursued by the government reflect the strength of this conviction.

This crisis of faith in government legitimacy isn't unique to Mexico, as the United States' election of Mr. Trump shows. Even in Canada, populist trends are shaping economic policy, such as the coming two-month GST break on certain items and promised \$250 rebate cheques. Canadian businesses and investors need to adjust to this new populist reality to successfully navigate the inevitable political shifts happening in both Mexico and here in Canada.

Regulators may not outright abandon the highly technical and dispassionate ways they evaluate business investments and strategies. However, they may choose to closely scrutinize businesses they may have previously ignored if they perceive potential harm to the broader public, whether real or imagined. To navigate this new landscape, businesses and investors must consider the optics of their activities more carefully. They will also need to find ways to clearly and credibly articulate how they are creating real value for individuals and their families, not just top-line GDP.

The unfolding populist wave in Mexico serves as a stark reminder for Canadian businesses: The rules of engagement in global markets are shifting. This isn't just about trade agreements or regulatory frameworks; it's about grappling with a deeper, more pervasive challenge – restoring public trust in institutions that underpin economic systems. The question is not whether this populist momentum will influence Canada's economic and regulatory environment, but how prepared we are to respond when it does.

## Building a strong economy requires building strong communities first

LISA GONSALVES  
VICTOR DODIG

OPINION

Lisa Gonsalves is board chair of United Way Greater Toronto.

Victor Dodig is president and chief executive of CIBC and United Way Greater Toronto 2024's community campaign chair.

Our parents were attracted to the promise of this country more than half a century ago. Many others have since immigrated here, with Canada's population growing steadily in recent years.

This is especially true in the Greater Toronto Area, Canada's biggest metropolitan region. With cranes dotting the skyline and construction projects everywhere you look, the GTA is projected to reach close to nine million residents over the next decade.

ade.

Growth creates jobs and can further community prosperity. But as the GTA expands, we also see a sharp increase in those who are struggling. While the problem is not unique to this region, nowhere else in Canada is it as big.

More than 1.4 million people in the GTA live in poverty. More than one in 10 Torontonians are relying on food banks. Meanwhile, 51 per cent of new food bank clients have someone in their household who is employed, highlighting that it takes more than ever before for families to find financial stability. Wait times for subsidized housing across the GTA can be anywhere from seven to 17 years.

These numbers reveal a critical issue: while growth brings opportunity, it also exposes deep gaps in our social infrastructure. If we are to sustain and share the benefits of growth, we need to invest in housing, health care and social services that support our

communities.

And with these investments, not only can growth be more even and sustainable, there can be more of it. Investing in social infrastructure – through corporate social responsibility, philanthropy and volunteerism – yields economic returns far beyond just social benefits. For example, analysis produced by Deloitte for the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association found that increasing community housing stock could boost economic productivity by 5.7 per cent to 9.3 per cent, leading to a potential GDP increase of \$67-billion to \$136-billion by 2030.

United Way research has found that equitable access to housing, employment, food and social services not only prevents displacement but strengthens local economies. For example, affordable housing preservation programs such as community land trusts can significantly reduce displacement, while promoting housing

stability in changing neighbourhoods. And this has a greater economic impact.

For instance, the Parkdale Neighbourhood Land Trust, which bought its first 15-unit rooming house in the Toronto neighbourhood in 2019, is now the steward of 84 properties offering 205 rental units across the city's west end. Such interventions, when paired with work force development programs, lead to better economic outcomes by ensuring local residents can maintain jobs and contribute to the economy. In Regent Park, a Community Benefits Agreement has resulted in about 1,600 jobs for local residents since 2006.

For regions such as the GTA, where rapid population growth and a large newcomer work force are reshaping the economic landscape, investment in equitable housing, health care and social services is not just important – it is essential.

As the population expands, the need for robust social infrastructure becomes even more pressing. When we invest in these services, we ensure that all residents, particularly newcomers and marginalized groups, can fully participate in and contribute to the local economy.

Philanthropy and government investment, when applied strategically, can drive significant economic impact – but it requires collective action. No single effort can address the complex challenges of poverty, mental health, housing and employment. We must bring together corporations, governments and community organizations to tackle these interconnected issues at scale.

A strong economy starts with strong communities. To create a thriving region where everyone can prosper, we must champion community-driven initiatives that bolster the economy, shaping a future where growth benefits everyone.

# Board Games: Canadian companies must now navigate a new American climate

■ FROM B1

Legislators in Republican-led U.S. states have been fighting ESG investment practices through a series of attacks on their own state treasuries and pension funds. A U.S. Supreme Court ruling killing affirmative action admissions in colleges has prompted lawsuits against private-sector employers for their hiring practices. And with the election of Donald Trump as U.S. president, the federal government seems unlikely to stand in the way of any of these assaults.

Canadian companies will find no respite by simply being on the other side of the border. At a minimum, those with U.S. operations must navigate the new American climate.

To avoid losing business to anti-ESG policies, Royal Bank of Canada and Bank of Montreal, for example, have had to assure governments in Texas and West Virginia that they do not eschew lending to fossil fuel companies. In the case of BMO, it reversed a previously stated policy that restricted lending to new clients that operate significant coal mines or coal-fired power generation in favour of what it calls a “comprehensive, risk-based approach.”

Can it happen here? It's easy to say Canada is a far different society, with a far different business culture. But the signs of some tumult are already here, with the population outside Canada's urban centres restive. Alberta's ruling United Conservative Party is openly hostile to DEI and climate initiatives, and federal Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre, Canada's likely prime-minister-in-waiting, repeatedly uses the word “woke” as a pejorative while promising to undo the signature piece of climate policy produced by the current Liberal government.

In short, Canadian companies will likely find they need to obscure their ESG and DEI practices with new names, to avoid what have become damaged brands.

But so far, the results in The Globe and Mail's Board Games corporate ranking, done in partnership with Toronto consulting firm Global Governance Advisors, do not show a pullback in these policies in 2024 disclosures.

Board Games introduced climate disclosure questions in 2023 and expanded them in 2024.

In 2023, when climate criteria were worth four points of a total score of 100, 13 companies – or 6 per cent of 219 measured – received a full score. There were 76 companies that received zero points.

In 2024, with climate criteria worth nine points, there were 21 companies, about 10 per cent of 215 measured, that received a full score. At the other extreme, however, just 15 companies received zero points.

Board Games has also ratcheted up its diversity criteria. After long counting the proportion of women on corporate boards, Board Games added criteria for other types of diversity in 2020.

In 2023 and 2024, Board Games devoted 13 points to diversity. In 2023, 19 companies received a full score, and only one company received zero points. There were 53 companies that failed to get at least seven of the 13 points. In 2024, by comparison, 35 received the full 13 points, while none received zero and just 30 failed to get at least seven of the 13 points.

“In two years we saw probably the most significant change in years in women getting on S&P/TSX Composite Index boards,” said Tony Spizzirri, the partner at Global Governance Advisors who oversees the firm's Board Games work. Women represent at least one-third of board seats at 79 per cent of companies in the 2024 Board Games on the TSX Index. In 2022, it was at least a third at just 53 per cent of companies. “It



Conservative influencer Robby Starbuck is waging war on ‘woke’ policies at a time when many U.S. companies are reversing them after Donald Trump’s presidential election win. ERIC RYAN ANDERSON/THE NEW YORK TIMES

seems many of these companies were also improving diversity in other ways during this time,” he said.

John Valley, a partner at Osler, Hoskin & Harcourt LLP who coordinates the law firm's extensive annual report on diversity at the Canadian corporate board level, said his firm hasn't seen a pullback in disclosures or diversity practices in proxy circulars by Canadian companies. “Whether that will change is an open question.”

In Canada, companies and their investors have so far not faced a high level of opposition to ESG, but their use of the acronym is quickly falling out of favour.

A recent survey of corporate disclosure by Montreal-based consultancy Millani charted steady growth for many years in mentions of ESG by companies in the composite index. Last year, the trend reversed, with just 29 per cent of listed companies referring to ESG, down from 40 per cent the year before. Fifty-three per cent of corporations, meanwhile, used “sustainability” instead.

This stands in stark contrast to the market mania of the early 2020s, when ESG was sold by the investment industry as an asset class unto itself.

Melanie Adams, managing director and global head of responsible investment for RBC Global Asset Management, said “it was almost unfortunate how far the pendulum swung” with attention to ESG because it obscured that the factors underlying it have always been critical for investors. “Because now it has swung back the other way with the ESG backlash.”

The picture has been muddled further by Ottawa's newly enacted anti-greenwashing legislation, which puts companies in legal jeopardy for issuing disclosures that do not live up to scientific scrutiny, said Milla Craig, chief executive officer of Millani.

Yet most companies still consider these factors to be key fiduciary duties for their managers and directors. Torys LLP reports that 95 per cent of the companies in the composite index publish some form of ESG, climate action or transition report, and nearly four-fifths include ESG, climate, environmental or sustainability within their board skills matrix. Further, 59 per cent tie executive pay to climate-related targets or metrics.

“I don't really think companies are changing their approach to how they prudently and responsibly manage and oversee risks,” said lawyer Rima Ramchandani, co-head of Torys' capital markets practice. “Because of the politicization, some companies are choosing to be more cautious about what they say.”

Radha Curpen, the Vancouver-based Group Head of ESG and Sustainability at law firm McMillan LLP, said the political left sees ESG as a vehicle for social outcomes, while the right thinks it fails to maximize shareholder value and means divesting fossil fuels.

“It's none of that,” she argues. “ESG represents the risks and opportunities that we face today. That's what it is. The key is governance. How are we going to govern with the changing world? ... We need everything in our toolbox to deal with it. We don't have to call it ESG. It doesn't matter.”

The next step will come as Canada decides what to require of public companies for disclosure. The Canadian Sustainability Standards Board (CSSB) will soon publish its first set of sustainability and climate-related reporting guidelines. The guidelines will initially be voluntary, but the standards are expected to form the foundation of required disclosure.

When Mr. Trump was first elected in 2016, disparaging language for anything labelled liberal, progressive or ‘woke’ became more acceptable, said Dustyn Lanz, chief executive officer of Toronto governance advisory firm OxProx. He does not think Canada will completely replicate that journey, but he sees similar signs.

The Canadian Securities Administrators, the umbrella group for the country's provincial and territorial securities commissions, has said it will study the CSSB standards before issuing rules on what companies will have to disclose. But the CSA has not committed to adopting those standards as is. When the CSA made an initial run at climate disclosure rules, prior to the CSSB's work, its proposed standards were not as comprehensive or rigorous.

Public comment on the CSSB standards showed support from institutional investors, but significant pushback from the energy industry, which generally called for less reporting and longer deadlines. Advocates for the CSSB standards fear the CSA will listen to the latter, not the former.

“It would be unfortunate for the CSA to try to second-guess that process after so many years in the making and say, ‘Okay, now let's try and think that through again and see if we can

come up with some different compromise,’” said Kevin Thomas, chief executive officer of the Shareholder Association for Research & Education, known as SHARE. The group, which works on behalf of investors, is among the most active pushing for stronger ESG policies.

CSA spokesperson Ilana Keleman declined to comment until the CSSB standards are issued.

As regulations and requirements evolve gradually, investors are often taking ESG matters into their own hands. Some, said Dexter John, chief executive officer of Sodali & Co.'s Canadian office, are adopting investment criteria that are more stringent than what proxy advisers such as Institutional Shareholder Services Inc. and Glass, Lewis & Co. recommend.

According to Sodali & Co., ESG was the focus of 74 Canadian shareholder proposals in the most recent proxy season, up from 50 in 2023. There were just a handful of anti-ESG proposals, largely filed by a small activist group called InvestNow, and they did poorly, with roughly 1 per cent of votes in favour.

In contrast to climate pressures, DEI initiatives are in their earliest days as a subject of shareholder proposals.

Investors have pressed companies, including some of Canada's big banks, to conduct what are called racial equity audits – examinations of whether policies and procedures support diversity and equity. Toronto-Dominion Bank became the first to release an audit. Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, National Bank of Canada, RBC and BMO have all agreed to them, but the latter two banks narrowly defeated shareholder proposals in 2023 calling for them.

Future shareholder efforts, however, will occur against a backdrop of increasing hostility to DEI in the United States – and, possibly, Canada.

While Mr. Starbuck's methods garner him attention, much of the anti-DEI work in the U.S. occurred in response to the expansion of the Black Lives Matter that was driven by the killing of George Floyd at the hands of police in Minneapolis, Minn.

Academic think tanks developed campaigns to create ESG and DEI backlash among the public, broadly, and legislators in conservative states, specifically. (One think tank has called BLM funding “a form of reparations made to self-declared enemies of the American nation and way of life.”) After a U.S. Supreme Court ruling against affirmative action at universities, lawsuits against private-sector entities followed.

When Mr. Trump was first elected in 2016, disparaging language for anything labelled liberal, progressive or “woke” became

more acceptable, said Dustyn Lanz, chief executive officer of Toronto governance advisory firm OxProx. He does not think Canada will completely replicate that journey, but he sees similar signs.

Mr. Lanz noted that Mr. Poilievre has been deriding progressive ideas as woke. After a riot occurred during an anti-NATO protest in Montreal on Nov. 22, Mr. Poilievre tweeted a response to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, saying, “This is what happens when a Prime Minister spends 9 years pushing toxic woke identity politics, dividing and subdividing people by race, gender, vaccine status, religion, region, age, wealth, etc.”

At the Alberta United Conservatives' recent annual meeting, Mr. Lanz noted, members booed when someone tried to explain unconscious bias, a core tenet of DEI programs. That showed UCP members “feel totally comfortable deriding someone in public” for supporting DEI – and signals Canada is shifting, as well.

Against this backdrop, Canadian securities regulators are also wrestling with proposals on mandated board-diversity disclosure for public companies. The CSA has put out two competing proposals, which became known as the “Ontario” and “Western” models. The Ontario model, backed by the Ontario Securities Commission, is more prescriptive and lists the diverse groups companies must include in their disclosure. The Western model, backed by Alberta and Saskatchewan, is more narrative and allows companies more freedom to define diversity as they see fit.

The comment period for the two models ended 14 months ago, and there has been no decision since.

OSC spokesperson Debra Chan said the commission “is working with our CSA colleagues to find a harmonized path forward that meets the needs of our markets. This work is complex and remains a priority.” The CSA's Ms. Keleman sent essentially the same statement as the OSC did.

Wes Hall, the founder, chairman and chief executive officer of Kingsdale Advisors and the founder of the BlackNorth Initiative, a group that seeks corporate pledges to improve diversity, said if the OSC waits for a CSA decision, “It will never happen, it just will never. So, in my view, this should be something that's led by the OSC, and everybody else follow them.”

Mr. Hall acknowledges he is concerned about corporate Canada's commitment to BlackNorth going forward, given the influence the U.S. has on Canadian companies. But, he said, no prominent companies have backed out. “Because they're rolling everything back in the States, we should just roll it back here in Canada, too? Why can't we be the leaders and say no, no, no, that's not what we stand for in this country?”

Ian Robertson, partner with the executive consulting firm Jefferson Hawthorne Group, plans to make advising his clients on the rise of the anti-woke movement in Canada a key part of his business.

Many companies put DEI policies in place reactively, not strategically, he said. Now that they're under the opposite kind of political pressure, they cannot justify keeping the policies based on a return on investment, said Mr. Robertson, who was formerly chief executive officer of Kingsdale.

Outside of “the business-hub bubbles of Toronto, Montreal or Vancouver,” Mr. Robertson said, views on a lot of issues in the rest of Canada are very different from the pro-ESG and pro-DEI consensus.

“I would say thinking that we're not American is not a strategy.”

## BOARD GAMES, BY THE NUMBERS

### WOMEN ON BOARDS

Women represent at least one-third of board seats at 79 per cent of companies in the 2024 Board Games on the TSX Index. In 2022, that was true at just 53 per cent of companies.

### BOARD DIVERSITY

Seventy-three per cent of the Board Games companies explicitly disclose they have at least one board member from a diverse group other than women. Of that, 32 per cent have

one board member from a diverse group and 41 per cent have more than one.

### CLIMATE EXPERTISE

In 2024, 52 per cent of companies disclosed that climate expertise is a “required skill” in the board skills matrix and at least one director has that climate expertise. In 2023, that percentage was just 18 per cent.

### PERFORMANCE PAY

Performance share units (PSUs)

make up at least half of the CEO's long-term incentive grant value at 77 per cent of companies, while 12 per cent of companies do not use PSUs in compensation.

### ESG IN PAY

One-third of the Board Games companies disclose and use quantifiable climate-related metrics in awarding or setting either short-term or long-term incentive-pay plans. Another 44 per cent use some sort of environmental, social or

governance metric that isn't climate-related. Only 23 per cent of companies do not use any at all.

### ANNUAL MEETINGS

Only 23 per cent of Board Games companies hold a “hybrid” annual meeting that allows shareholders to attend either online or in person. The remaining 77 per cent hold a virtual meeting, or an in-person meeting, but not both.

### SAY ON PAY

Sixty-three per cent of Board Games companies received at least 90 per cent support from shareholders on their 2023 say on pay non-binding advisory executive compensation resolutions, while 16 per cent fell below that threshold, and 21 per cent did not hold a say on pay vote.

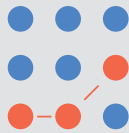
### DAVID MILSTEAD

Source: Global Governance Advisors

# BOARD GAMES: THE 23nd ANNUAL CORPORATE GOVERNANCE RANKINGS

Report on Business has examined the boards of directors of 215 companies and trusts that were members of the S&P/TSX Composite Index through the end of September to assess the quality of their governance practices. The marking scheme examines dozens of factors related to board composition, compensation, shareholder rights and disclosure

RANK NAME		TICKER	2024 SCORE	2023 SCORE	RANK NAME		TICKER	2024 SCORE	2023 SCORE	RANK NAME		TICKER	2024 SCORE	2023 SCORE
			(100)	(100)				(100)	(100)				(100)	(100)
1	Canadian National Railway Co.	CNR-T	99	98	74	Barrick Gold Corp.	ABX-T	84	87	146	Bausch Health Cos. Inc.	BHC-T	70	75
1	Fortis Inc.	FTS-T	99	97	74	Descartes Systems Group Inc.	DSG-T	84	90	146	FirstService Corp.	FSVT	70	62
1	Royal Bank of Canada	RY-T	99	95	74	Hudbay Minerals Inc.	HBM-T	84	81	146	Ivanhoe Mines Ltd.	IVN-T	70	62
1	Sun Life Financial Inc.	SLF-T	99	93	74	SmartCentres REIT	SRU.UN-T	84	81	150	Cargojet Inc.	CJT-T	69	72
5	Bank of Montreal	BMO-T	98	91	78	Kinaxis Inc.	KXS-T	83	77	150	Seabridge Gold Inc.	SEA-T	69	63
5	Bank of Nova Scotia	BNS-T	98	93	78	Magna International Inc.	MGT	83	83	152	Advantage Energy Ltd.	AAVT	68	60
5	Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce	CM-T	98	93	78	OceanaGold Corp.	OGC-T	83	78	152	IGM Financial Inc.	IGM-T	68	69
5	Emera Inc.	EMA-T	98	93	78	Teck Resources Ltd.	TECK.B-T	83	87	152	MAG Silver Corp.	MAG-T	68	66
9	BCE Inc.	BCE-T	97	95	82	AltaGas Ltd.	ALA-T	82	79	152	Primo Water Corp.	PRMW-T	68	66
9	Element Fleet Management Corp.	EFN-T	97	92	82	ARC Resources Ltd.	ARX-T	82	79	152	Sprott Inc.	SIIT	68	67
9	Manulife Financial Corp.	MFC-T	97	92	82	Boardwalk REIT	BEI.UN-T	82	87	152	Topaz Energy Corp.	TPZ-T	68	69
12	Gibson Energy Inc.	GEI-T	96	90	82	Headwater Exploration Inc.	HWX-T	82	75	158	Aritzia Inc.	ATZ-T	67	56
12	Pembina Pipeline Corp.	PPL-T	96	91	82	NFI Group Inc.	NFIT	82	N/S	158	Peyto Exploration & Development Corp.	PEYT	67	67
12	Toronto-Dominion Bank	TD-T	96	93	82	Premium Brands Holdings Corp.	PBH-T	82	83	160	Brookfield Corp. (form. Brookfield Asset Mgt. Inc.)	BN-T	66	62
15	Celestica Inc.	CLS-T	95	81	82	Russel Metals Inc.	RUS-T	82	82	160	Great-West Lifeco Inc.	GWO-T	66	75
15	iA Financial Corp. Inc.	IAG-T	95	94	82	Stella-Jones Inc.	SJT	82	78	160	International Petroleum Corp.	IPCO-T	66	65
15	Veren Inc. (formerly Crescent Point Energy Corp.)	VRN-T	95	88	90	Definity Financial Corp.	DFY-T	81	72	160	InterRent REIT	IIP.UN-T	66	66
18	Chartwell Retirement Residences	CSH.UN-T	94	89	90	Keyera Corp.	KEY-T	81	78	160	Spin Master Corp.	TOYT	66	65
18	Intact Financial Corp.	IFC-T	94	95	90	Parex Resources Inc.	PXT-T	81	78	165	BlackBerry Ltd.	BB-T	64	54
18	National Bank of Canada	NA-T	94	88	90	West Fraser Timber Co Ltd.	WFG-T	81	80	165	Canadian Tire Corp. Ltd.	CTC.A-T	64	62
21	Algonquin Power & Utilities Corp.	AQN-T	93	85	94	Boralex Inc.	BLX-T	80	76	165	First Majestic Silver Corp.	AG-T	64	56
21	Enbridge Inc.	ENB-T	93	91	94	Dundee Precious Metals Inc.	DPM-T	80	79	165	GFL Environmental Inc.	GFL-T	64	51
21	Kinross Gold Corp.	K-T	93	89	94	George Weston Ltd.	WN-T	80	76	165	Imperial Oil Ltd.	IMO-T	64	60
21	Lundin Mining Corp.	LUN-T	93	87	94	K92 Mining Inc.	KNT-T	80	73	165	Sandstorm Gold Ltd.	SSL-T	64	53
21	MEG Energy Corp.	MEG-T	93	86	94	Loblaw Companies Ltd.	L-T	80	80	165	SSR Mining Inc.	SSRM-T	64	69
21	Metro Inc.	MRU-T	93	88	94	NovaGold Resources Inc.	NG-T	80	77	172	Bombardier Inc.	BBD.B-T	63	60
21	TC Energy Corp.	TRP-T	93	93	94	Osisko Gold Royalties Ltd.	ORT	80	77	172	Trisura Group Ltd.	TSU-T	63	62
21	TMX Group Ltd.	X-T	93	88	94	Prairiesky Royalty Ltd.	PSK-T	80	84	174	Athabasca Oil Corp.	ATH-T	62	55
29	First Capital REIT	FCR.UN-T	92	83	94	Sienna Senior Living Inc.	SIA-T	80	84	174	Ero Copper Corp.	ERO-T	62	60
29	Gildan Activewear Inc.	GIL-T	92	89	103	Fortuna Silver Mines Inc.	FVI-T	79	71	174	Power Corp. of Canada	POWT	62	58
29	Suncor Energy Inc.	SU-T	92	93	103	IAMGOLD Corp.	IMG-T	79	78	174	Tourmaline Oil Corp.	TOU-T	62	51
29	Telus Corp.	T-T	92	92	103	Matfr Corp.	MATR-T	79	N/S	178	Altus Group Ltd.	AIF-T	61	61
33	Franco-Nevada Corp.	FNV-T	91	89	103	Northland Power Inc.	NPI-T	79	73	178	Nuvei Corp.	NVEI-T	61	63
33	SNC-Lavalin Group Inc.	ATRL-T	91	86	103	Silvercrest Metals Inc.	SIL-T	79	72	178	Orla Mining Ltd.	OLA-T	61	N/S
33	WSP Global Inc.	WSP-T	91	87	103	Torex Gold Resources Inc.	TXG-T	79	77	178	Pet Valu Holdings Ltd.	PET-T	61	59
36	Capital Power Corp.	CPX-T	90	93	103	Waste Connections Inc.	WCN-T	79	73	178	Sleep Country Canada Holdings Inc.	ZZZ-T	61	71
36	Eldorado Gold Corp.	ELD-T	90	90	110	Crombie REIT	CRR.UN-T	78	83	183	Filo Corp.	FIL-T	60	53
36	Granite REIT	GRT.UN-T	90	93	111	Dollarama Inc.	DOL-T	77	74	183	Linamar Corp.	LNR-T	60	58
36	Hydro One Ltd.	H-T	90	91	111	Superior Plus Corp.	SPB-T	77	75	185	Brookfield Asset Management Ltd.	BAM-T	59	52
36	Lundin Gold Inc.	LUG-T	90	79	113	B2Gold Corp.	BTO-T	76	67	185	Labrador Iron Ore Royalty Corp.	LIF-T	59	50
36	Stantec Inc.	STN-T	90	89	113	Denison Mines Corp.	DML-T	76	73	185	Paramount Resources Ltd.	POU-T	59	43
42	Innergex Renewable Energy Inc.	INE-T	89	84	113	Empire Co. Ltd.	EMP.A-T	76	77	188	BRP Inc.	DOO-T	56	42
42	Saputo Inc.	SAPT	89	82	113	Exchange Inc.ome Corp.	EIF-T	76	64	188	Transcontinental Inc.	TCLA-A	56	62
44	Agnico Eagle Mines Ltd.	AEM-T	88	81	113	North West Co. Inc.	NWC-T	76	73	190	CCL Industries Inc.	CCL.B-T	55	63
44	Air Canada	AC-T	88	93	113	Whitecap Resources Inc.	WCP-T	76	76	190	Onex Corp.	ONEX-T	55	43
44	CAE Inc.	CAE-T	88	85	119	CI Financial Corp.	CIX-T	75	76	190	Richelieu Hardware Ltd.	RCH-T	55	56
44	Cameco Corp.	CCO-T	88	86	119	Cogeco Communications Inc.	CCA-T	75	68	193	CES Energy Solutions Corp.	CEU-T	53	N/S
44	Canadian Pacific Kansas City Ltd.	CP-T	88	88	119	Dream Industrial REIT	DIR.UN-T	75	71	193	Enghouse Systems Ltd.	ENGH-T	53	59
44	Canadian Western Bank	CWB-T	88	91	119	Precision Drilling Corp.	PD-T	75	75	195	Colliers International Group Inc.	CIGI-T	52	48
44	Finning International Inc.	FTT-T	88	94	119	Secure Energy Services Inc.	SES-T	75	72	196	CGI Inc.	GIB.A-T	51	51
44	Laurentian Bank of Canada	LB-T	88	91	124	Badger Infrastructure Solutions Ltd.	BDGI-T	74	73	196	Energy Fuels Inc.	EFR-T	51	55
44	Nutrien Ltd.	NTR-T	88	85	124	Canadian Natural Resources Ltd.	CNQ-T	74	69	196	MDA Ltd.	MDA-T	51	N/S
44	Primaris REIT	PMZ.UN-T	88	78	124	First Quantum Minerals Ltd.	FM-T	74	67	196	Quebecor Inc.	QBR.B-T	51	49
54	Freehold Royalties Ltd.	FRU-T	87	85	124	New Gold Inc.	NGD-T	74	N/S	200	Constellation Software Inc.	CSU-T	50	53
54	H&R REIT	HR.UN-T	87	86	124	NorthWest Healthcare Properties REIT	NWH.UN-T	74	69	201	Kelt Exploration Ltd.	KEL-T	49	N/S
54	Toromont Industries Ltd.	TIH-T	87	90	124	Open Text Corp.	OTEX-T	74	74	202	Birchcliff Energy Ltd.	BIRT	48	37
54	TransAlta Corp.	TA-T	87	86	130	Lightspeed Commerce Inc.	LSPD-T	73	72	202	goeasy Ltd.	GSYT	48	51
58	Alamos Gold Inc.	AGI-T	86	79	130	Pan American Silver Corp.	PAAS-T	73	74	204	Atco Ltd.	ACO.X-T	47	48
58	Allied Properties REIT	AP.UN-T	86	82	130	Pason Systems Inc.	PSI-T	73	67	204	Calibre Mining Corp.	CXB-T	47	N/S
58	Baytex Energy Corp.	BTE-T	86	82	130	TFI International Inc.	TFIT	73	71	204	Canadian Utilities Ltd.	CU-T	47	46
58	Canadian Apartment Properties REIT	CAR.UN-T	86	83	134	Alimentation Couche-Tard Inc.	ATD-T	72	69	204	Fairfax Financial Holdings Ltd.	FFHT	47	46
58	Cenovus Energy Inc.	CVET	86	81	134	Aya Gold & Silver Inc.	AYA-T	72	N/S	204	Mullen Group Ltd.	MTLT	47	45
58	EQB Inc.	EQB-T	86	83	134	CT REIT	CRT.UN-T	72	71	204	Shopify Inc.	SHOP-T	47	39
58	Jamieson Wellness Inc.	JWEL-T	86	85	134	Maple Leaf Foods Inc.	MFI-T	72	72	210	Nexgen Energy Ltd.	NXE-T	45	36
58	Killam Apartment REIT	KMP.UN-T	86	84	138	ATS Corp. (form. ATS Automation Tooling Sys.)	ATS-T	71	72	211	Rogers Communications Inc.	RCL.B-T	43	40
58	Parkland Corp.	PKI-T	86	80	138	Boyd Group Services Inc.	BYD-T	71	73	212	Wipak Ltd.	WPKT	35	40
58	RioCan REIT	REI.UN-T	86	85	138	Capstone Copper Corp.	CS-T	71	61	213	Tilray Brands Inc.	TLRY-T	34	34
58	Wheaton Precious Metals Corp.	WPM-T	86	82	138	Equinox Gold Corp.	EQX-T	71	68	214	MTY Food Group Inc.	MTYT	32	33
69	Centerra Gold Inc.	CG-T	85	80	138	Interfor Corp.	IFP-T	71	71	215	Storagevault Canada Inc.	SVIT	30	27
69	Choice Properties REIT	CHP.UN-T	85	77	138	Nuvista Energy Ltd.	NVA-T	71	68	N/S = Not scored in 2023 The Globe and Mail. Data Source: Global Governance Advisors				
69	Methanex Corp.	MX-T	85	88	138	Restaurant Brands International Inc.	QSR-T	71	70					
69	Thomson Reuters Corp.	TRI-T	85	77	138	Tamarack Valley Energy Ltd.	TVE-T	71	52					
69	Wesdome Gold Mines Ltd.	WDO-T	85	82	146	Algoma Steel Group Inc.	ASTLT	70	55					



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Bank of Canada Governor Tiff Macklem has said he wants to see economic activity pick up to absorb slack in the economy and prevent inflation from settling below 2 per cent. SEAN KILPATRICK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

# BoC: Delivering second half-point interest-rate cut could lead to a weakening loonie, experts warn

■ FROM B1

GDP growth, meanwhile, under-shot the bank's forecast in the third quarter, and the unemployment rate jumped to 6.8 per cent in November from 6.5 per cent the previous month. That's the highest jobless rate outside of the pandemic since January, 2017.

"Essentially it looks like inflation is back under control, the economy is much softer and the trend has been continuing to soften, and yet we still have a restrictive level of interest rates with the overnight rate still historically high," Nathan Janzen, assistant chief economist at Royal Bank of Canada, said in an interview.

Bank of Canada Governor Tiff Macklem has said he wants to see economic activity pick up to absorb slack in the economy and prevent inflation from settling below 2 per cent. That dovish message suggests a preference for getting interest rates down quickly. The threat of U.S. tariffs following Donald Trump's election may strengthen that conviction.

There are, nonetheless, risks to delivering a second half-point rate cut. Chief among these is the Canadian dollar, which is trading at a four-year low of around 70.6 cents against the U.S. dollar.

The weak exchange rate is partly the inverse of a strong U.S. dollar, which has been supercharged by Mr. Trump's election on a pro-growth and pro-

inflation platform.

It is also the result of the divergence between Canadian and American interest rates, with the U.S. Federal Reserve easing monetary policy more slowly than the BoC in response to stronger economic growth and stickier inflation south of the border. A 50-basis-point cut would put more daylight between the BoC and the Fed and send the Canadian dollar lower.

"While the move in the currency over the past number of months has been relatively orderly ... you run a risk of the currency really weakening at a much faster pace that makes policy makers uncomfortable," Benjamin Reitzes, managing director of Canadian rates at Bank of Montreal, said in an interview.

Mr. Reitzes said he expects the Bank of Canada to lean into the latest jobs data and cut by 50 basis points. But that doesn't make it the right move, given the currency risks, he said.

"As the currency weakens, especially in the winter months, it will be detrimental to Canadians in general who have to pay higher prices for food and gasoline and other things that are imported, and that's not a positive for Canadian living standards," Mr. Reitzes said.

Recent economic data is also not as clear-cut as it might seem, said Royce Mendes, head of macro strategy at Desjardins, who has maintained his forecast for a 25-basis-point cut.

Economic growth was weaker

than the Bank of Canada expected in the third quarter, but consumer spending grew at a robust annualized rate of 3.5 per cent. Housing market activity is picking up and measures of core inflation surprised to the upside in October.

Meanwhile, the sharp rise in unemployment last month was the result of a jump in labour force participation, not layoffs. The economy added a healthy 50,500 jobs, but this fell short of the blistering pace of population growth.

Mr. Mendes said the data are more "lukewarm" than bad. "It's hardly convincing evidence that you need to absolutely cut rates by another 50. And just to put that in context, two consecutive 50 basis point cuts, when neither the Canadian nor the U.S. economy is in free fall, would be unprecedented," he said in an interview.

"If central bankers are truly taking a risk-management approach to decision-making, then they need to consider the consequences of making a policy error," he added, pointing to the risk of getting too far apart from the Federal Reserve and cratering the loonie.

If the Bank of Canada does meet market expectations and cut by 50 basis points, that would bring the policy rate to the top end of the bank's estimate of the "neutral" range – an interest-rate level that neither restrains nor stimulates economic growth.

# Air travel: Nav Canada short of staff, union head says

■ FROM B1

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) handed Canada's aviation system a grade of 64 out of 100 last year – a poor ranking in a report one observer described as scathing. (Canada had scored 95 in the previous audit, in 2005.) The UN agency found multiple lapses in Transport Canada's oversight of the industry, including pilot licensing and medical clearances, fatigue management and air traffic controller staffing levels. By some ICAO rankings, Canada scored last among the Group of 7 countries.

"The audit's results are proof that the alarm bells workers have been ringing are in fact warranted, and that we need to take a serious look at our system," the unions' report says.

The shortfalls highlighted by ICAO, along with a lack of investment in employee training, recruitment and airport infrastructure, combine to form a fragile system that easily fails when hit by disruption, Mr. Perry said. "It could be an ice storm. It could be if the flu runs through the air tower or at the base of an airline."

And the consequences are more serious than messed up holiday plans, he warned. Northern communities that rely on air service for food and medical supplies feel the effects of pilot shortages and route cuts every day, Mr. Perry said.

"The country was built by the railway but it's sustained by aviation and the infrastructure to sustain that is really, really important. In a remote community you really do depend on aviation ... in a far more fundamental way."

Mr. von Schoenberg, who represents about 1,500 air traffic controllers, said Nav Canada's operations are chronically short of staff, a hangover from COVID-19 training shutdowns and retirements. The problem is most acute at Canada's two largest airports, Vancouver International Airport and Toronto Pearson International Airport, where takeoffs and landings are often slowed because of staff shortages, he said.

A J.D. Power customer satisfaction survey in September ranked Pearson as the second-worst of the largest North American Airports.

"I'm not flying through Toronto this Christmas," Mr. von Schoenberg said. "I don't want to scare anybody, but I'm the president of the air traffic controllers and I'm going to book something that avoids Toronto. Unfortunately, I live in Vancouver so it's hard to avoid that one. But if I could, I'd avoid that one, too."

The report's recommendations include:

- Accelerate the legislated review of the Canada Transport Act to create a national aviation strategy;
- Invest more in aviation worker training, with a focus on Indigenous and female students as well as those from remote regions;
- Assess staffing needs across the system to ensure it can meet passenger demand;
- Preserve collective bargaining rights.



Unions representing pilots and air traffic controllers will release a report Monday with recommendations to improve Canada's air travel system. CHRISTOPHER KATSAROV/THE GLOBE AND MAIL

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### MEETING NOTICES



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#### NOTICE OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF NAV CANADA TO BE HELD ON WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 8, 2025

**TAKE NOTICE** that the Annual Meeting of the Members of NAV CANADA will be held on Wednesday, January 8, 2025 in Ottawa, Ontario, at 2:00 p.m., at the Rogers Centre Ottawa, 55 Colonel By Drive, Ottawa, Ontario to conduct the following business:

1. receipt of audited financial statements for the financial year ended August 31, 2024 and the report of the chartered professional accountants thereon;
2. appointment of chartered professional accountants for NAV CANADA for the financial year ending August 31, 2025;
3. delivery by the Board of Directors of copies of the Annual Report for the financial year ended August 31, 2024 including matters described in the By-laws of NAV CANADA;
4. election of Directors for vacancies on the Board of Directors;
5. election of members of the Advisory Committee for the ensuing year; and
6. such other business which the Members may transact under applicable law.

Members have the right to vote by proxy.

NAV CANADA reserves the right to take any precautionary measures it deems appropriate in relation to the Meeting in order to protect the health and safety interests of its Employees, Management, Members and Associates, including changing the Meeting date, time, location and/or means of holding the Meeting. Any such changes will be announced by way of news release. Associates and members of the public are advised to monitor NAV CANADA's website at [www.navcanada.ca](http://www.navcanada.ca) where copies of such news releases, if any, will be posted.

DATED at Ottawa, this 9th day of December 2024.

By Order of the Board of Directors

Michelle Savoy, Chair

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** of the special meeting of holders of common shares ("Shareholders") of Doré Copper Mining Corp. (the "Company") to be held December 16, 2024 at 12:00 p.m. (ET) at the offices of Bennett Jones LLP, 100 King Street West, Suite 3400, Toronto, ON, at which Shareholders will consider and vote on a special resolution approving a plan of arrangement under Section 192 of the *Canada Business Corporations Act*. Due to the Canada Post strike, Shareholders can access the meeting materials electronically under the Company's profile on SEDAR+ at [www.sedarplus.ca](http://www.sedarplus.ca) or on the Company's website at [www.dorecopper.com](http://www.dorecopper.com). To obtain your individual control number and to vote: (1) for registered Shareholders, call Computershare Investor Services Inc. at 1-800-564-6253 and vote at [www.investorvote.com](http://www.investorvote.com) or via telephone at 1-866-732-8683 and (2) for beneficial Shareholders, call your broker or intermediary and vote at [www.proxyvote.com](http://www.proxyvote.com) or via telephone at 1-800-474-7493 (English) or 1-800-474-7501 (French).



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## Renewables

■ FROM B1

The AUC had already been assessing project applications according to similar draft rules, but the change Friday formalizes that process.

The regulations ratify so-called buffer zones that ban wind projects within what the government has deemed "pristine viewscape." That includes a specified 70,000-square-kilometre region that surrounds the Rocky Mountains and reaches to the western half of Calgary.

Solar and other power generation projects aren't outright banned in the buffer zones, but developers will have to submit a visual impact assessment as part of their application.

Those assessments must include visual simulations from key vantage points illustrating the potential visual impact of the project and proposed mitigation measures to minimize or offset any adverse visual effects.

Renewable energy developers eyeing privately owned, high-quality agricultural land must also submit an impact assessment as part of their application, including how the site could affect agricultural productivity.

The owner or operator of a renewable energy site on such land must also submit a report to the AUC that confirms the agricultural productivity of the land within 36 months from the start of operations.

The visual assessment regulation follows what the government has called an "agriculture first" approach, which it says will protect Alberta's most productive lands.

Jorden Dye, the director of the Business Renewables Centre Canada, said that if that is the goal, required agricultural assessments should apply to all power generation – not just wind and solar.

However, Mr. Dye said formalizing the rules has removed some of the unknowns for industry.

It also quelled concerns that the province might introduce a new regulation that would require 90 per cent of Alberta agricultural productivity to be left intact, further limiting where projects could be built.

"The government didn't go with that, and I think that means flexibility, which we were excited to see," he said in an interview Sunday.

Mr. Dye also noted that the regulations around buffer zones don't apply to projects that have already been approved, "which was great to see from industry perspective."

Kara Westerlund, the president of Rural Municipalities of Alberta, said in a statement that a strategically planned renewable energy industry has the potential to be an economic driver in rural areas for years to come. "RMA is optimistic that today's announcement will ensure that renewable projects are properly located to minimize impact on agricultural land, and that renewable companies will be held responsible for end-of-life management," she said.

Utilities Minister Nathan Neudorf said the new rules would help balance environment conservation and Alberta's long-term economic prosperity. "Our government will not apologize for putting Albertans ahead of corporate interests," he said.



It’s easy to overspend on gifts, and Christmas is especially problematic. Taking the time to help your children buy gifts that are special for the receiver and affordable for the giver is well worth it. LESLEY MARTIN/REUTERS

# Teach your kids how to buy gifts without breaking their budgets

No matter the age, parents can help make purchasing presents a great experience by doing three things

ANITA BRUINSMA

OPINION

Toronto-based financial coach and a parent of two teenage boys. You can find her at Clarity Personal Finance.

Gift-giving is a life skill and the holidays are the ideal time to teach your kids how to do it in a thoughtful and budget-friendly way.

Giving gifts can be a beautiful experience for both the giver and receiver, and helps to build bonds and enhance relationships. Of course, kids love it. And as they grow older and become adults, buying gifts will be a regular occurrence on birthdays, holidays and special occasions such as weddings. In addition to family and loved ones, they could eventually find themselves shopping for neighbours, colleagues, teachers, housekeepers and dog walkers.

But it’s easy to overspend on gifts, and Christmas is especially problematic. Expectations are high and December can be frenetic. Taking the time to help your kids buy gifts that are special for the receiver and affordable for the giver is well worth it.

Kids can start giving gifts at young ages – somewhere around age five is a good time to begin. Start by providing total guidance,

and as they get older, gradually step back from the process. By the time they are 16, they should be ready to handle the whole process on their own.

As for the money, at young ages it doesn’t matter who pays. Being involved in the choosing and buying is enough to give kids a sense of ownership and excitement. Making a gift is also a great idea for young kids as it gets them even more involved in the process.

When kids get to be around age 10, the value of money becomes more real and at this point having them chip in will cement the feelings of ownership. By age 16, depending on how much money they have and whether they have a part-time job, they can foot the entire bill.

No matter the age, parents can help make gift-giving a great experience by doing three things.

**Make it a process.** An experience isn’t just about the actual moment you do something. Feeling the anticipation of the event – whether that’s going on vacation, celebrating a birthday, or giving a gift – brings a lot of happiness. So make the gift-buying a process, from brainstorming through to the opening of the gift. Generate gift ideas by having your child talk about what the person likes.

Once they have a list, narrow it down to two or three things and then go shopping or assemble whatever supplies you need to make one. When the gift is in hand, have your child do the wrapping and give them the honour of putting it under the tree. These actions make up 95 per cent of the experience, so take the time to savour them.

**Set guidelines.** Gift-buying can feel overwhelming for anyone, so imagine how

hard it can be for a child. Kids are new to the world of shopping and throwing them into it without guidance isn’t a good idea. Start by setting a price limit – it narrows down the options and immediately sends a message about the importance of budgeting.

You might also want to help them by choosing a category of gifts, such as something consumable. There may be things that are off limits, such as gift cards and cash. Avoid strolling the mall or scrolling online without some parameters or overspending is sure to follow.

**Focus on the experience around the actual giving of the gift.** Receiving a gift often isn’t about the actual item or what it costs – it’s about the sentiment and the experience around it. So, make the giving of the gift an event. Wrapping it is a great way to do this.

Make the wrapping funny, creative or extravagant. For example, the big joke in our house growing up was to put the gift in a boring box, such as the one the iron came in, creating a moment of confusion for the gift-opener. Another classic is to put a small gift in a huge box, or disguise it as something it isn’t.

Kids can also make their own wrapping paper using big sheets of white paper that they paint, draw on or decorate with stickers. Consider hiding the gift and giving the receiver a set of clues to follow to find it. Let your kids get creative and watch how the excitement grows.

With some thought and planning, gifts can be given without feeling the financial pinch. Kids who learn the skill of buying a gift can avoid the pitfalls of overspending later in life, and this can be your special present to your kids this year.

## Coming U.S. inflation report to test stocks

LEWIS KRAUSKOPF NEW YORK

An inflation report in the coming week will test the strength of the record-setting U.S. stocks rally and provide a crucial piece of data that could factor into the Federal Reserve’s plans for rate cuts.

The S&P 500 on Friday was on pace for its third-straight weekly gain, pushing its year-to-date advance to more than 27 per cent.

The rosy backdrop for stocks is underscored by expectations of further Fed interest-rate cuts at the same time the economy remains resilient.

That scenario historically has produced strong equity gains, and it was supported by Friday’s employment report that monthly job growth was stronger than expected. Yet the data was not likely to signal a material shift in labour market conditions that would cause the Fed to rethink its rate trajectory at its Dec 17-18 meeting.

However, data on consumer prices due on Wednesday could threaten the upbeat narrative if inflation rates are above expectations, posing a challenge for high-flying stocks.

“If you come in hot, I do think that’s going to be tough for the stock market to digest,” said Matthew Miskin, co-chief investment strategist at John Hancock Investment Management. “It is going to bring in a little bit of uncertainty ahead of the Fed meeting.”

Bets that the Fed would cut rates at its next meeting firmed after the November payrolls report. Data showed an increase of 227,000 jobs, but the unemployment rate ticked up to 4.2 per cent.

Fed fund futures trading as of mid-day Friday indicated a nearly 90-per-cent chance the central bank would cut by 25 basis points, according to CME Fed-Watch.

After the jobs data, there is a “higher bar” for the upcoming consumer price report to pause any planned rate cut at the Fed’s next meeting, said Molly McGown, U.S. rates strategist at TD Securities.

The Consumer Price Index is expected to have climbed 2.7 per cent for the 12 months through November, according to Reuters data.

Rather than pause rate cuts, if CPI comes in hotter than estimates, the central bank could implement a “hawkish cut” by tempering expectations for reductions in 2025, Mr. Miskin said.

The potential for a revival in inflation is also in greater focus because of U.S. president-elect Donald Trump’s plans to raise tariffs on imports. Tariffs are expected to be inflationary.

TD Securities expects the Fed to pause rate cuts at the start of the year, as policy makers assess Mr. Trump’s fiscal policies after he takes office in January, Ms. McGown said.

“We heard from [Fed Chair Jerome] Powell that once they know what the actual policies are, that’s when they’ll start to put that into their framework of figuring out what they’re going to do with monetary policy,” Ms. McGown said.

Meanwhile, stocks continue to charge higher, raising concerns about sentiment becoming worryingly optimistic. The S&P 500 was trading at 22.6 times expected earnings for the next 12 months, its highest P/E ratio in more than three years, according to LSEG Datastream.

Yardeni Research cited concerns with several measures, such as bullish sentiment among investment advisers and foreign private purchases of U.S. stocks.

Yet some investors say the prospects for stocks look solid into year end, which is a seasonally strong period for equities.

### WHAT INVESTORS NEED TO KNOW FOR THE WEEK AHEAD

**MONDAY**

- China CPI, PPI, aggregate yuan financing, new yuan loans, trade surplus and foreign reserves
- Japan real GDP and bank lending
- (10 a.m. ET) U.S. wholesale inventories for October.

**Earnings include:** North West Co. Inc.

**TUESDAY**

- Japan machine tool orders
- Germany CPI
- (6 a.m. ET) U.S. NFIB Small Business Economic Trends Survey for November.
- (8:30 a.m. ET) U.S. productivity and unit labour costs for Q3. The Street is forecasting annualized rate increases of 2.2 per cent and 1.4 per cent, respectively.

**Earnings include:** AutoZone Inc.; Evertz Technologies Ltd.

**WEDNESDAY**

- (8:30 a.m. ET) U.S. CPI for November.

The consensus projection is a rise of 0.3 per cent from October and 2.8 per cent year-over-year.

- (9:45 a.m. ET) Bank of Canada policy announcement with press conference to follow.
- (2 p.m. ET) U.S. budget balance for November.

**Earnings include:** Adobe Systems Inc.; Lennar Corp.; Macy’s Inc.; TerraVest Industries Inc.; Transcontinental Inc.

**THURSDAY**

- ECB monetary policy meeting
- Germany trade surplus
- (8:30 a.m. ET) Canada’s national balance sheet and financial flow accounts for Q3.
- (8:30 a.m. ET) Canadian building permits for October.
- (8:30 a.m. ET) U.S. initial jobless claims for week of Dec. 7. Estimate is 220,000, down 4,000 from the previous week.
- (8:30 a.m. ET) U.S. PPI Final Demand for November. Consensus is a rise of 0.3 per cent from October and up 2.7 per cent year-over-year.

- (10 a.m. ET) U.S. quarterly services survey for Q3.

**Earnings include:** Broadcom Inc.; Costco Wholesale Corp.; Empire Co. Ltd.; Enghouse Systems Ltd.; Oracle Corp.

**FRIDAY**

- Japan large manufacturing outlook and industrial production
- U.K. consumer confidence, GDP, industrial production and trade deficit
- (8:30 a.m. ET) Canada’s capacity utilization for Q3.
- (8:30 a.m. ET) Canada’s manufacturing sales and new orders. Estimates are month-over-month increases of 1.3 per cent and 1.5 per cent, respectively.
- (8:30 a.m. ET) Canadian wholesale trade for October. Estimate is a gain of 0.5 per cent from October.
- (8:30 a.m. ET) Canada’s new motor vehicle sales for October. Estimate is a year-over-year rise of 8.0 per cent.
- (8:30 a.m. ET) U.S. import prices for November. The Street is projecting a decline of 0.2 per cent from October and a rise of 1.0 per cent year-over-year.

**Earnings include:** Wall Financial Corp.

### MEETING DATES

DATA SUPPLIED BY ISSUING COMPANIES THROUGH THE SERVICE OF CDS CLEARING AND DEPOSITORY SERVICES INC.

\* = CHANGE IN PREVIOUSLY REPORTED INFORMATION % = CANCELLED MEETING; @ = ADJOURNED MEETING; A = ANNUAL; S = SPECIAL; G = GENERAL; X = EXTRA; E = EXTRAORDINARY

RECORD MEETING TYPE				RECORD MEETING TYPE				RECORD MEETING TYPE				RECORD MEETING TYPE				RECORD MEETING TYPE			
DATE DATE				DATE DATE				DATE DATE				DATE DATE				DATE DATE			
Baroyeca Gold & Silver Inc	*Nov 18	Jan 17	AG	Guyana Frontier Mining Corp.	%Nov 19	Jan 06	AGS	Metalite Resources Inc.	%Nov 08	Dec 13	AGS	Orla Mining Ltd.	Dec 09	Jan 21	S	Silver Storm Mining Ltd.	Dec 23	Jan 24	AG
Bocana Resources Corp.	Dec 23	Jan 30	AGS	G2 Goldfields Inc.	Dec 17	Jan 28	AS	Midland Exploration Inc.	Dec 24	Feb 13	A	Plank Ventures LTD.	*Nov 15	Jan 13	AGS	Silver Valley Metals Inc.	%Dec 09	Jan 16	AGS
Canadian Silver Hunter Inc.	Dec 23	Feb 06	AG	IVZ Bal'd-Risk Allocation Pool	Dec 10	Jan 28	S	Millennial Potash Corp.	Dec 27	Feb 07	AGS	Radio Fuels Energy Corp.	Dec 17	Jan 30	AGS	Silvercrest Metals Inc.	%Nov 25	Jan 09	S
EDM Resources Inc.	Dec 27	Feb 14	AG	Lexstom Mining Corporation	*Nov 25	Jan 23	AG	Minera IRL Limited	Jan 17	Feb 26	AG	Redishred Capital Corp.	Dec 16	Jan 24	S	Sunshine Agri-Tech Inc	Dec 09	Jan 10	AG
First Majestic Silver Corp	*Nov 25	Jan 14	S	Lithium Americas Corp	Dec 03	Jan 17	S	Mobio Technologies Inc.	*Nov 15	Jan 13	AGS	ReGen III Corp.	*Nov 14	Jan 09	AGS	SPC Nickel Corp.	Dec 23	Feb 11	AS
Global Education Communities	Dec 23	Feb 07	AG	Madison Pacific Properties Inc	Jan 06	Feb 20	AG	Nextleaf Solutions Ltd.	Dec 23	Jan 30	AGS	Seahawk Gold Corp.	Dec 16	Jan 24	AG	SSC Security Services Corp.	Dec 23	Feb 11	AGS
Green Mountain Resources Ltd.	Dec 27	Feb 05	AGS	Mega View Dgtl Entertainment	*Nov 15	Jan 03	AG	Odessa Capital Ltd.	Dec 16	Jan 30	AGS	Searchlight Resources Inc.	Dec 13	Jan 23	AGS	Tana Resources Corp.	Dec 23	Jan 27	AGS

# I finally embraced home EV charging

I'll save at least \$300 a year and the change makes our house appealing to other electric-vehicle owners

DAVID BERMAN

OPINION



EV LIFE

I resisted getting a home charger after I bought my electric vehicle in early 2022. I preferred charging my EV with cheap public options over spending thousands of dollars on my own setup. Nearly three years later, I've done a 180.

Let me explain. My resistance to home charging began because public options sprang up in our neighbourhood. There was always a charger available when I needed it, and one was located just a block from my home in Toronto. The price was reasonable.

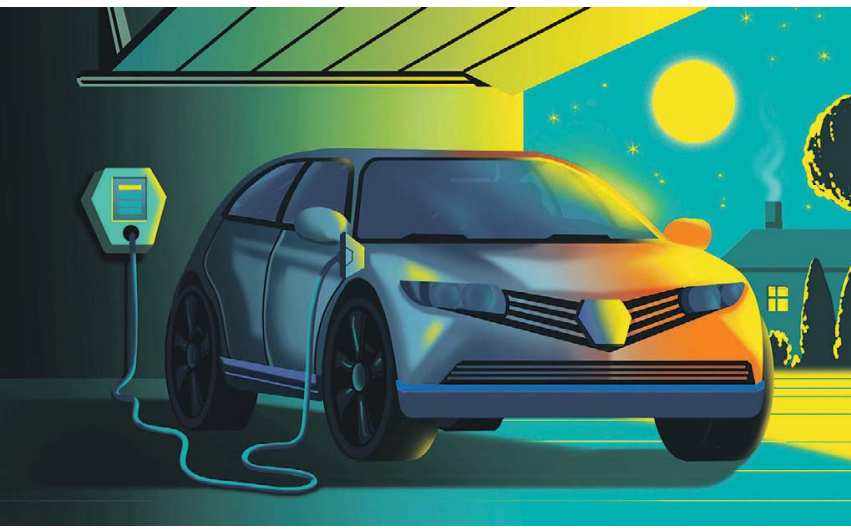
At the same time, I couldn't see a financial payoff from installing a home charger.

Ours isn't an easy layout: We don't have a garage and our parking spot is located off a back alley, far from our electrical panel. That means running a cable in a sturdy conduit along the side of our house and fence for about 30 metres. It boggled my mind for years.

So what changed?

First, my go-to public charger was taken offline recently because of construction in the area. Then I was hit with a couple of expensive parking tickets while using alternative on-street charging (I blame poor signage).

I began to reconsider the downside of public charging infrastructure. It can take several hours, which means that I would have to arrange a time roughly once a week when I knew the ve-



GLENN HARVEY/THE GLOBE AND MAIL

Daytime charging is more expensive, and I was drawing electricity from the grid when demand was high. That's not ideal if we want to accommodate millions of EVs. Leaving my car overnight, though cheaper, meant picking it up at some ungodly hour in the morning to avoid tickets or extra charges.

hicle wouldn't be needed.

I was also limited to charging during the day. Daytime charging is more expensive, and I was drawing electricity from the grid when demand was high. That's not ideal if we want to accommodate millions of EVs.

Leaving my car overnight, though cheaper, meant picking it up at some ungodly hour in the morning to avoid tickets or extra charges.

Now, I'm not suggesting that home charging is essential for EV owners. If you rent an apartment or you don't have a designated parking spot, you can probably do just fine without it. And yeah, the grid will survive.

Apart from on-street charging, malls and parking lots often have charging facilities. Some offices – including my own – offer free charging when you pay for parking, which could make home charging redundant.

Or you might be able to take advantage of fast chargers. These high-voltage beasts, which aren't suitable for home use, can get the job done in as little as 30 minutes.

They are typically located along major highways, but I've found them at Canadian Tire locations and they're just about everywhere in Quebec.

I've also spoken with a few people who do just fine plugging their EVs into regular household outlets, or what is known as Level 1 charging. A full charge can easily take a full day or longer, so this approach is best suited to top-ups or vehicles with small batteries.

In my case, I don't have an accessible outlet for Level 1 charging, nor the patience to charge for days. And I don't drive to work, so I can't take advantage of free charging there.

That's why I bought a Level 2 charger, which uses a 240-volt power source and requires a dedicated circuit, like an electric clothes dryer. It can deliver a full charge overnight or substantial top-ups in a few hours in the evenings, while I'm easing into a pair of slippers.

There are different types of Level 2 chargers. The main division is between smart ones that are WiFi-connected and can offer

features such as scheduling and notifications; and "dumb" ones that just deliver the juice.

I chose dumb – a Canadian-made Grizzl-E "Classic" model (the company also offers smart versions), which promises to withstand tough winter weather. For installation, I went with a company called Connectiv, which I found online. They have experience with EVs, and the electrician completed the work in about four hours.

Charging is now cheap-cheap-cheap.

By plugging in after 7 p.m., when electricity rates drop significantly in Toronto, I can get a full charge for \$4.40 – or \$1.62 if I sign up for the ultralow overnight plan. Either way, that gets me a range of about 400 kilometres in ideal driving conditions.

The cost for using a typical Level 2 public charger in Toronto during the day is about \$16, though as low as \$6 overnight. The equivalent for filling the gas tank of a car with an internal combustion engine is about \$48 when gas costs \$1.50 a litre.

Based on my driving habits, which include frequent trips outside the city when I'll be using public infrastructure, I estimate I'll save at least \$300 a year by charging at home. More if I avoid parking tickets.

I guess there's also the argument that my charger has added some value to our house, since it is now EV-ready and might appeal to other EV owners if we ever decide to move. It's a nice thought, if nothing more.

Still, when I factor in the upfront cost of the charger and installation – a combined \$3,000 – I'm under no illusion that I'll break even on my investment any time soon.

What I'm really gaining here is convenience, along with the satisfaction of knowing that my EV is not a burden on our grid. Can I put a price on that? Right now, home charging feels like a million bucks.

## Why I sold my BCE, and how I'm investing the proceeds

JOHN HEINZL

OPINION



INVESTOR CLINIC

In a recent column, you announced that you "sold" BCE Inc. (BCE) from your model portfolio. Do you still own the stock personally, and do you think the dividend will be cut?

No, I don't own BCE personally, having sold it recently. Yes, I do think it is likely the dividend will be cut, although when, and by how much, are open questions.

Analysts have become increasingly vocal about the need for BCE to reduce its dividend to strengthen its balance sheet and free up capital for growth. In my experience, when analysts start calling for a cut, it's usually only a matter of time before it happens.

When BCE announced on Nov. 4 that it agreed to acquire U.S.-based Ziplify Fiber for about \$5-billion, funded largely by the sale of its stake in Maple Leaf Sports & Entertainment, BCE said it "intends to maintain its annual common share dividend at the current level of \$3.99 per share during the financial year ending December 31, 2025."

Further, BCE said it "intends to pause dividend growth until BCE's dividend payout and net debt leverage ratios are tracking towards our target policy ranges, subject to review annually by the BCE board of directors."

The fact that BCE said nothing about maintaining the current dividend rate beyond the end of 2025 indicates to me that a cut may be on the table. Some analysts say this would be the right move for the company.

"While cutting the dividend could cause some pressure on the stock in the short term, we believe it is the best strategy to position the company to have a more flexible balance sheet to undertake additional [merger and acquisition] transactions in the U.S. if deemed needed," Maher Yaghi, an analyst with Scotia Capital, said in a note.

With wireless competition intensifying in Canada as carriers slash prices, reducing the dividend would also "provide the company with additional capital if competitive intensity in Canada remains elevated," Mr. Yaghi said.

Given BCE's pledge to maintain its dividend through 2025, analysts don't expect a reduction immediately. But longer-term, maintaining the dividend while reaching BCE's payout ratio and debt leverage targets could prove to be challenging.

"We now assume a 25-per-cent dividend cut in 2026, to approximately \$3.00" per share, TD Cowen analyst

Vince Valentini said in a note this week. That would represent a payout ratio of about 93 per cent based on TD Cowen's estimate of BCE's free cash flow in 2026 and a yield of about 7.9 per cent based on the current share price.

BCE's shares closed Friday at \$37.94 and are yielding about 10.5 per cent based on the current dividend rate. Such a high yield indicates that investors are skeptical that the dividend will be maintained at current levels.

What are you doing with the proceeds of your BCE sale?

Dumping the 115 BCE shares in my model portfolio netted \$4,478.10 in cash, on top of the \$2,000 or so that was already there from dividends that have been accumulating. (View the model portfolio online at [tgam.ca/dividend-portfolio](http://tgam.ca/dividend-portfolio))

When I look at the model portfolio's holdings, there's nothing that jumps out at me as a screaming buy right now. That's perhaps not surprising, given that the S&P/TSX Composite Index has surged about 23 per cent this year.

So, rather than put the cash into a single stock, I'm going to spread the money around.

First, I've decided to purchase another 15 shares of Enbridge Inc. (ENB), for a total of 120 shares. This week, the pipeline operator hiked its dividend by 3 per cent, marking the 30th consecutive annual increase for the company, which now yields about 6.1 per cent. And I believe there are more increases to come.

Second, because I consider grocery-anchored Choice Properties Real Estate Investment Trust (CHP.UN) to be one of the most stable REITs in Canada, I've added 100 units, for a total of 600. Choice also sports an attractive yield of about 5.4 per cent.

For my third purchase, I've added 20 shares of Enbridge Inc. (ENB), for a total of 120 shares. This week, the pipeline operator hiked its dividend by 3 per cent, marking the 30th consecutive annual increase for the company, which now yields about 6.1 per cent. And I believe there are more increases to come.

Finally, I've added 55 units of the iShares S&P/TSX Composite Index ETF (XIU), for a total of 370 units. All of these purchases were completed at Thursday's closing prices, and together they consumed \$5,875.90 of cash.

E-mail your questions to [jheinzl@globeandmail.com](mailto:jheinzl@globeandmail.com). I'm not able to respond personally to e-mails but I choose certain questions to answer in my column.

## Crypto gain, Europe pain as markets prepare for U.S. inflation data

Bitcoin smashing the US\$100,000 barrier raises the prospect of the cryptocurrency going mainstream. U.S. inflation data will show how much pressure there is on the Federal Reserve to adjust rates and central banks in Europe, Australia and Brazil meet.

Here's what to look out for in the week ahead:

### FOUR, AND COUNTING

For ECB policy makers, their last meeting in October must seem a lifetime ago.

Since then, Donald Trump's U.S. election win means the euro area faces renewed economic pain with likely tariffs, and governments in heavyweight Germany and France have collapsed, with the latter engulfed in its second political crisis in six months. All that has dealt a blow to sentiment in a bloc where business activity is deteriorating – and the euro has slid.

The ECB, also no stranger to hard times, is expected to deliver its fourth quarter-point rate cut on Thursday, with more cuts anticipated.

A pick-up in inflation means a bigger rate cut is unlikely. And yes, you guessed it, ECB chief Christine Lagarde will likely stress caution and data-dependency.

### A CUT AND A HARD PLACE

Australia's central bank, which meets on Tuesday, is in a tight spot. The economy is sputtering, the currency is at four-month lows and yet inflation is sufficiently persistent to make repeated rate cuts unlikely.

The chances of a quarter-point reduction are below 15 per cent and rates are expected to take until July to fall even 50 bps.

The Bank of Canada, by contrast, looks set to answer investors' wishes for more cuts. It has said inflation is a thing of the past and more cuts could be in the offing, leaving the market split on whether its Dec. 11 meeting will yield a 25- or even a 50-basis-point (bps) cut.

Enter the most dovish of the G10 central banks – the Swiss National Bank. With inflation at 0.7 per cent, it is expected to cut rates by 50 bps on Dec. 12.

### NO HURRY

Markets gaming out the trajectory for Federal Reserve policy in the months ahead get a U.S. inflation reading on Wednesday. The Fed has shaved 75 bps off interest rates since September, after months of cooling inflation – expecta-

tions are toward another 25 bps cut later in December.

But the path ahead is less clear. The economy has proved stronger than expected, and Fed chair Jerome Powell has said there is little reason to hurry the pace of cuts.

A strong number could bolster that view, potentially reigniting a bond sell-off and strengthening the dollar if investors decide to further unwind bets on how much the Fed will cut next year. Economists polled by Reuters expect consumer prices to have risen 0.2 per cent in November – matching the October rise.

### BITCOIN BREAKOUT

There was something inevitable in bitcoin's record surge past \$100,000 after Mr. Trump's election promises to make America "the crypto capital of the planet."

But it did so in resounding fashion, vaulting from below US\$99,000 to as high as US\$103,619 in the space of two hours before catching its breath. The catalyst may have been confirmation of Mr. Trump's choice of crypto veteran Paul Atkins to run the SEC. Of course, US\$100,000 is just a number – but one the faithful and the skeptical regard as a major milestone in bitcoin's 16-year journey toward legitimacy.

Recall though that its history is written in breathless rallies and white-knuckle reversals. While numbers like US\$150,000 are already being mentioned for 2025, the token is flashing overbought on daily, weekly, monthly and quarterly charts.

### FINAL ACT

Brazil's central bank holds its final meeting under governor Roberto Campos Neto on Wednesday, with bets on a sharper 75 bps hike after two raises that brought rates to 11.25 per cent.

Mr. Campos Neto, set to hold a news conference on Dec. 19, said a positive fiscal shock could relieve pressure on the exchange rate and long-term yields in Latin America's largest economy. But the government's widely anticipated fiscal package disappointed markets, driving up risk premiums on major assets.

Brazil's real has weakened some 20 per cent against the dollar year-to-date, and strong economic resilience – on display in the third quarter – is fuelling inflation worries. As policy makers grapple with mounting challenges, Congress debates measures to curb spending and contain debt growth.

REUTERS

{ RUGBY }



Canada's Carissa Norsten, left, rises up to catch the ball at the Cape Town Sevens' fifth-place playoff on Sunday in Cape Town, South Africa. Norsten had a try in Canada's 22-7 victory. RODGER BOSCH/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

# Canadian women rise above Japan to finish fifth at Cape Town Sevens

Hogan-Rochester's four tries help Canada earn redemption against squad it lost to twice in season-opener in Dubai

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

Asia Hogan-Rochester scored her fourth try of the day to help Canada finish fifth at the Cape Town Sevens with a 22-7 win over Japan on Sunday. The Olympic-silver-medalist Canadian women were coming off an eighth-place finish the previous weekend in Dubai, the opening event of the seven-stop 2025 HSBC SVNS season. New Zealand, runner-up to Australia in Dubai, rallied from an early 12-0 deficit to defeat the United States 26-12 in the women's cup final. Host South Africa, despite finishing a man down with Siviwe Soyizwapi in the sin-bin, scored 12 points in the second half to defeat France 26-14 in the men's title decider for its first cup win on home soil since 2015. France beat the Blitzboks 19-5 in the Olympics semi-final this summer en route to the gold medal with South

Africa claiming bronze. And the French won again in Dubai, downing South Africa 17-15 for fifth place. The U.S. women upset Dubai winner Australia 24-19 in semi-final play while New Zealand blanked France 43-0. In the men's semi-finals, South Africa defeated Dubai runner-up Spain 19-12 and France downed Fiji 19-17 in a rematch of the Olympic final. The Fiji men finished third by defeating Spain 47-10 with seven different players scoring tries. The French women, surviving a late red card for a dangerous high tackle, held on to edge Australia 17-14 in the women's third-place match. The Japan women, who survived a relegation playoff in June to maintain their core status on the circuit, beat Canada twice in Dubai, winning 40-5 in pool play and 24-22 in the seventh-place playoff. But Canada had the upper hand in Cape Town.

Carissa Norsten, captain Piper Logan and Maya Addai also scored tries for Canada, which led 12-0 at the half. Breanne Nicholas kicked a conversion. Norsten, last season's HSBC SVNS Rookie of the Year, opened the scoring with Canada taking advantage of an overlap after several Japanese errors. Hogan-Rochester scored her fifth try of the weekend just before halftime with Japan down a player with Hana Nagata in the sin-bin for a professional foul. Fending off a defender, Logan scored in the corner to up the lead to 17-0 early in the second half as Canada took further advantage of having the extra player. Japan pulled a late converted try back from Mayu Yoshino to cut the lead to 17-7 before Addai powered her way over in the final minute for her first-ever try on the circuit. Canada opened the day in the fifth-place semi-final with a 27-12 win over Britain with Hogan-Rochester scoring

three tries. Carmen Izyk and Logan also scored tries and Nicholas kicked a conversion for Canada, which led 17-5 at the half. The Canadians finished runner-up in Pool A Saturday, after beating Brazil 43-17 and losing 26-10 to Australia. In a format change, the South Africa event had the 12 men's and women's teams divided into four pools of three with the pool winners advancing directly to semi-finals. Normally there are three pools of four with the top two in each group plus the two best third-place finishers moving on to the quarter-finals. World Rugby, citing player welfare, is using the revamped format for the second rounds of back-to-back events. The governing body says the revised format is optimal for a two-day event, which allows teams an extra day of recovery and preparation after the previous weekend's event and subsequent travel. ■ RUGBY, B12

## The Messi model for success proves that winning is far from everything

CATHAL KELLY  
OPINION



When Lionel Messi first arrived in the United States, he didn't bother to introduce himself. Instead, he just started playing. This was July, 2023. The Major League Soccer season was already half over. The team Messi joined – Inter Miami – was the worst in the league. This is sports. You'd figure some encouraging words were required. No need for promises, but lie to people a little. Tell them there's hope. Nope. None of that. Messi finally got around to making public remarks in the middle of August. He said little on the topic of the MLS, and a lot about how much fun it was to be a retiree. "I'm enjoying this new stage of my career," Messi said. "I'm enjoying the experience of living in this country." It has continued in this way for all the time Messi has been in North America. He plays when and where he likes. Some of Messi's dislikes – artificial surfaces, cold and long flights. He has become sports' first remote worker. They built the whole team to his preference, from the manager to the roster. Inter Miami is Messi's personal startup, but it hasn't worked out. On Saturday, the L.A. Galaxy won the MLS Cup. Messi and Miami had already



Lionel Messi's 2024 season with Inter Miami in MLS ended in a first-round playoff loss last month. CHRIS ARJOON/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

been home for a month after losing in the first round of the playoffs. To recap – you hired a guy at massive expense. You renovated the team for him. That team hasn't won anything that matters. Now you have to remake the team again (it has already selected another old pal of Messi's as the new coach), but people are still worried that the headliner might jump ship. By the ancient standards of sports, this is a bust. Except, in this case, it isn't. Messi has taken the old order of the sports business – win first; headlines after – and inverted it. He is a story everywhere he goes, as well as everywhere he doesn't. More so in the latter case, as Vancouver proved earlier this year. He's not an athlete. He's a pop star who can't sing.

As a result, MLS attendance is through the roof. The league is still second-rate in most people's minds, but Messi isn't. You can't go anywhere without spotting a kid in one of those hot-pink Miami No. 10 jerseys. The right guy plus the right look equals a marketing miracle. Wherever Messi goes, the result is immaterial. The purpose of Messi's presence is to create a happening, something that people will pay enormous amounts of money to say they were at. Attention no longer follows success. It follows hype. You still need success to create hype, but the system is adapting. We now know what the best players are doing in high school. Grade school, even. The American sports industrial complex got smart and conned colleges into paying their players. Now that they are a de facto minor league, they do the dirty work of letting people know who's a winner and who isn't. 'Winning' in this case is not a matter of victories versus losses, but monies earned from marketing and image rights. The market now tells us what a champion looks like (championships optional). By the time the student-athlete arrives at the pros, their legend can be fully formed. Caitlin Clark is the most shining recent example. Her teams haven't won anything, but you know who she is. Twelve women did win a WNBA championship this year. Can you name two of them? Okay, one? Or maybe just the team? ■ KELLY, B14

# Canada's Roussel claims 1,000-metre short-track gold at World Tour stop

Competitor out of Sherbrooke navigates chaotic final to earn first individual distance medal of season

BEIJING, CHINA

Félix Roussel won gold in the men's 1,000 metres as Canada picked up three medals Sunday to conclude a short-track speedskating World Tour stop in Beijing.

Roussel from Sherbrooke, Que., finished in 1 minute 25.352 seconds to earn his first individual distance medal of the season and his second career World Tour victory.

Poland's Michal Niewinski (1:25.480) and Britain's Niall Treacy (1:25.598) joined Roussel on the podium.

A crash with four laps to go involving leaders William Dandjinou of Montreal and South Korea's Park Ji opened up the race.

"I am proud of the way I skated," Roussel said. "I showed that I had the legs and reacted well to the things that happened during my races. Crossing the finish line was an incredible moment. I never dreamed of being back on the podium this quickly."

Also Sunday, Florence Brunelle of Trois-Rivières, Que., earned her first career individual distance medal on the tour with a silver in the women's 500 metres, while teammate Rikki Doak of Fredericton took bronze.

Brunelle (42.202 seconds) and Doak (42.696) finished behind Dutch speedster Xandra Velzeboer (42.078), who won her third



**Félix Roussel rounds a corner during his gold-medal performance in the 1,000-metre final at Sunday's short-track speedskating World Tour event in Beijing, China.**

ANDY WONG/  
THE CANADIAN PRESS

500-metre gold in as many weeks. Kim Boutin of Sherbrooke, Que., finished just off the podium in fourth place (42.812).

"Today, I was able to remain concentrated and filter out the things that didn't go superwell yesterday from my mind," Brunelle said. "It's something that I feel I did well and I'm quite proud of that."

The Canadian men's relay team failed to win a medal Sunday after opening the season with back-to-back golds.

Roussel, Dandjinou, Steven Dubois (Lachenaie, Que.) and Jordan Pierre-Gilles (Sherbrooke, Que.) were in the hunt for the podium before Dandjinou fell with nine laps left. China took gold, followed by South Korea and the Netherlands.

On Saturday, Canadian short-track speedskater Danaé Blais

captured her first World Cup gold medal in an individual distance Saturday when she was first in the women's 1,000 metres. The 25-year-old from Châteauguay, Que., raced from the front of the pack at the start and held off a late challenge by runner-up Xandra Velzeboer of the Netherlands.

Blais later joined Moncton's Courtney Sarault, Boutin and Brunelle to take gold in the women's 3,000-metre relay.

On the men's side, Dandjinou and Dubois were silver medalists in the 1,500 and 500 metres respectively.

Canada finished the World Tour stop with seven medals and sits atop the team Crystal Globe standings with 4,640 points, followed by South Korea (3,990) and the Netherlands (3,149).

THE CANADIAN PRESS

## Rugby: Top eight teams will play for title

■ FROM B11

The four pool winners progress to the cup semi-finals.

The second-placed teams enter the fifth- to eighth-place play-offs and the third-placed teams in to the ninth- to 12th-place play-offs.

The revised format will also be used in Singapore, which takes place one week after Hong Kong.

After Cape Town, the circuit moves to Perth, Australia (Jan. 24-26), Vancouver (Feb. 21-23), Hong Kong (March 28-30) and Singapore (April 5-6) to decide the HSBC SVNS league winners, before the May 3-4 HSBC SVNS World Championship at Dignity Health Sports Park in Carson, Calif.

The top eight men's and women's teams will then compete in the winner-take-all championship in California while the bottom four teams join the top four from the second-tier Challenger Series in a promotion-relegation playoff.

The Canadian women finished fifth overall in last season's league standings and lost 26-14 to New Zealand in the bronze-medal game in the HSBC SVNS championship round in Madrid in June.

Relegated in June, the Canadian men had been a core team on the top sevens circuit since 2012-13 and lifted the trophy in Singapore in 2017. They finished eighth in Tokyo's Olympic Games.

The Canadian men won their way on to the Challenger Series last month when they won the Rugby Americas North (RAN) Sevens in Trinidad.

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### NHL

#### EASTERN CONFERENCE

##### ATLANTIC DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OTL	GF	GA	Pt
Florida	28	17	9	2	106	91	36
Toronto	27	16	9	2	80	71	34
Boston	29	15	11	3	75	87	33
Tampa Bay	25	14	9	2	98	76	30
Ottawa	27	12	13	2	82	86	26
Buffalo	27	11	13	3	80	86	25
Detroit	27	10	13	4	67	83	24
Montreal	27	10	14	3	75	98	23

##### METROPOLITAN DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OTL	GF	GA	Pt
Washington	27	19	6	2	109	74	40
New Jersey	29	18	9	2	102	78	38
Carolina	27	17	9	1	101	81	35
N.Y. Rangers	26	14	11	1	85	79	29
N.Y. Islanders	29	11	11	7	77	87	29
Philadelphia	27	12	11	4	81	94	28
Pittsburgh	29	12	13	4	84	110	28
Columbus	27	12	12	3	93	96	27

#### WESTERN CONFERENCE

##### CENTRAL DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OTL	GF	GA	Pt
Minnesota	27	18	5	4	86	65	40
Winnipeg	29	20	9	0	103	75	40
Dallas	26	16	10	0	86	67	32
Colorado	28	15	13	0	91	103	30
St. Louis	28	13	13	2	73	87	28
Utah	26	11	11	4	75	77	26
Nashville	28	7	15	6	61	88	20
Chicago	27	8	17	2	66	86	18

##### PACIFIC DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OTL	GF	GA	Pt
Vegas	28	18	7	3	99	82	39
Los Angeles	27	16	8	3	83	71	35
Vancouver	26	14	8	4	85	83	32
Edmonton	27	15	10	2	82	79	32
Calgary	27	13	9	5	72	78	31
Seattle	29	14	14	1	89	88	29
San Jose	30	10	15	5	82	108	25
Anaheim	27	8	17	2	62	76	23

**Sunday**  
Seattle 7, N.Y. Rangers 5  
Tampa Bay 4, Vancouver 2  
N.Y. Islanders 4, Ottawa 2  
Columbus 4, Winnipeg 1  
Colorado at New Jersey  
Utah at Philadelphia  
Calgary at Dallas

**Saturday**  
Utah 5, Buffalo 2  
Boston 4, Philadelphia 3, OT  
Winnipeg 4, Chicago 2  
N.Y. Islanders 4, Carolina 3  
Florida 3, San Jose 1  
Colorado 2, Detroit 1  
Pittsburgh 5, Toronto 2  
Washington 4, Montreal 2  
Ottawa 3, Nashville 1  
Los Angeles 4, Minnesota 1  
Edmonton 4, St. Louis 2

**Monday — All Times Eastern**  
Chicago at N.Y. Rangers, 7 p.m.  
Detroit at Buffalo, 7 p.m.  
Anaheim at Montreal, 7:30 p.m.

#### NHL SCORING LEADERS

	GP	G	A	Pts
Martin Necas, Car	27	14	28	42
Kirill Kaprizov, Minn	26	17	25	42
Nathan MacKinnon, Col	29	9	32	41

Not including Sunday's games

### NBA

#### EASTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
Cleveland	21	4	.840	—
Boston	19	5	.792	1 1/2
Orlando	17	9	.654	4 1/2
New York	14	9	.609	6
Miami	12	10	.545	7 1/2
Milwaukee	12	11	.522	8
Atlanta	13	12	.520	8
Brooklyn	10	14	.417	10 1/2
Indiana	10	15	.400	11
Chicago	10	15	.400	11
Detroit	10	15	.400	11
Philadelphia	7	15	.318	12 1/2
Charlotte	7	17	.292	13 1/2
Toronto	7	17	.292	13 1/2
Washington	3	19	.136	17

#### WESTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
Oklahoma City	18	5	.783	—
Memphis	17	8	.680	2
Dallas	16	8	.667	2 1/2
Houston	15	8	.652	3
Golden State	13	9	.591	4 1/2
L.A. Clippers	14	10	.583	4 1/2
Minnesota	12	10	.545	5 1/2
Denver	12	10	.545	5 1/2
Phoenix	12	11	.522	6
L.A. Lakers	12	11	.522	6
San Antonio	12	12	.500	6 1/2
Sacramento	11	13	.458	7 1/2
Portland	8	15	.348	10
Utah	5	17	.227	12 1/2
New Orleans	5	20	.200	14

**Sunday**  
Philadelphia 108, Chicago 100  
Milwaukee 118, Brooklyn 113  
Charlotte 113, Indiana 109  
Denver 141, Atlanta 111  
Miami 122, Cleveland 113  
Orlando 115, Phoenix 110  
Memphis 140, Washington 112  
San Antonio 121, New Orleans 116  
Minnesota at Golden State  
Houston at L.A. Clippers  
Utah at Sacramento  
Portland at L.A. Lakers

**Saturday**  
Cleveland 116, Charlotte 102  
Oklahoma City 119, New Orleans 109  
Washington 122, Denver 113  
Dallas 125, Toronto 118  
Detroit 120, New York 111  
Miami 121, Phoenix 111  
Memphis 127, Boston 121

**Monday**  
**All Times Eastern**  
New York at Toronto, 7:30 p.m.

**Tuesday**  
Orlando at Milwaukee, 7 p.m. (Quarterfinal Game 1)  
Dallas at Oklahoma City, 9:30 p.m. (Quarterfinal Game 2)

**Wednesday**  
Atlanta at New York, 7 p.m. (Quarterfinal Game 3)  
Golden State at Houston, 9:30 p.m. (Quarterfinal Game 4)

### NFL

#### AMERICAN CONFERENCE

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
<b>EAST</b>						
y-Buffalo	10	3	0	.769	397	268
Miami	6	7	0	.462	264	292
e-N.Y. Jets	3	10	0	.231	251	300
e-New England	3	10	0	.231	221	307
<b>SOUTH</b>						
Houston	8	5	0	.615	308	288
Indianapolis	6	7	0	.462	267	298
e-Jacksonville	3	10	0	.231	238	345
e-Tennessee	3	10	0	.231	227	342
<b>NORTH</b>						
x-Pittsburgh	10	3	0	.769	323	238
Baltimore	8	5	0	.615	383	318
Cincinnati	4	8	0	.333	335	340
e-Cleveland	3	10	0	.231	232	335

**WEST**  
x-Kansas City 11 1 0 .917 289 235  
L.A. Chargers 8 4 0 .667 260 188  
Denver 8 5 0 .615 305 234  
e-Las Vegas 2 11 0 .154 236 361

#### NATIONAL CONFERENCE

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
<b>EAST</b>						
x-Philadelphia	11	2	0	.846	342	234
Washington	8	5	0	.615	376	296
Dallas	5	7	0	.417	248	339
e-N.Y. Giants	2	11	0	.154	194	293
<b>SOUTH</b>						
Tampa Bay	7	6	0	.538	363	309
Atlanta	6	7	0	.462	278	333
New Orleans	5	8	0	.385	290	292
Carolina	3	10	0	.231	233	388
<b>NORTH</b>						
x-Detroit	12	1	0	.923	417	234
Minnesota	11	2	0	.846	339	240
Green Bay	9	4	0	.692	349	274
Chicago	4	9	0	.308	254	278

**WEST**  
Seattle 8 5 0 .615 302 283  
L.A. Rams 7 6 0 .538 298 332  
Arizona 6 7 0 .462 284 289  
San Francisco 6 7 0 .462 308 308  
x — Clinched a playoff spot  
y — Clinched division.

**WEEK 14**  
**Byes:** Baltimore, Denver, Houston, Indianapolis, New England, Washington

**Sunday**  
Jacksonville 10, Tennessee 6  
Miami 32, N.Y. Jets 26, OT  
Minnesota 42, Atlanta 21  
New Orleans 14, N.Y. Giants 11  
Philadelphia 22, Carolina 16  
Pittsburgh 27, Cleveland 14  
Tampa Bay 28, Las Vegas 13  
Seattle 30, Arizona 18  
L.A. Rams 44, Buffalo 42  
San Francisco 38, Chicago 13  
L.A. Chargers at Kansas City

**Monday**  
**All Times Eastern**  
Cincinnati at Dallas, 8:15 p.m.

**Thursday**  
Detroit 34, Green Bay 31

**WEEK 15**  
**Thursday, Dec. 12**  
L.A. Rams at San Francisco, 8:15 p.m.

### AHL

**Sunday**  
Providence 5 W-B/Scranton 0  
Iowa 4 Milwaukee 1  
Chicago 2 Grand Rapids 1  
Hershey 5 Lehigh Valley 4  
San Jose 2 Coachella Valley 1  
Ontario 5 Bakersfield 3  
Colorado at Abbotsford  
Texas at Henderson

**Saturday**  
Laval 5 Toronto 4  
W-B/Scranton 6 Hartford 2  
Rochester 3 Charlotte 0  
Belleville 4 Manitoba 3 (SO)  
Iowa 5 Milwaukee 2  
Syracuse 4 Cleveland 3 (SO)  
Springfield 2 Rockford 1 (OT)  
Providence 6 Bridgeport 3  
Hershey 3 Lehigh Valley 2 (OT)  
Grand Rapids 5 Chicago 4 (OT)  
Calgary 6 Tucson 3  
San Jose 1 Coachella Valley 0  
Ontario 2 San Diego 1 (SO)  
Henderson 6 Texas 2  
Abbotsford 6 Colorado 1

### OHL

**Sunday**  
Kingston 6 Sarnia 2  
Erie at Brampton  
Barrie at Ottawa  
North Bay 4 Flint 1  
Niagara 4 Brantford 3  
Peterborough 5 Guelph 3  
Windsor 7 Saginaw 4

**Saturday**  
Owen Sound 3 Sault Ste. Marie 1  
Saginaw 6 Oshawa 1  
Kitchener 3 Windsor 2 (SO)  
Sudbury 5 Flint 4 (OT)

### QMJHL

**Sunday**  
Charlottetown 4 Rouyn-Noranda 3 (SO)  
Moncton 3 Saint John 2  
Acadie-Bathurst 2 Halifax 1 (OT)  
Capre Breton 5 Val-d'Or 3  
Drummondville at Blainville-Boisbriand  
Shawinigan 3 Gatineau 1

**Saturday**  
Rouyn-Noranda 4 Moncton 1  
Québec 5 Baie-Comeau 4  
Chicoutimi 5 Rimouski 2  
Sherbrooke 4 Victoriaville 3

### WHL

**Sunday**  
Edmonton 3 Regina 2 (OT)  
Kelowna 4 Victoria 1  
Everett 3 Wenatchee 0  
Vancouver at Portland  
Spokane at Seattle

**Saturday**  
Swift Current 3 Red Deer 0  
Calgary 5 Saskatoon 4 (OT)  
Brandon 7 Prince Albert 3  
Prince George 6 Kamloops 3  
Portland 7 Vancouver 2  
Edmonton 7 Medicine Hat 4  
Spokane 3 Wenatchee 2  
Kelowna 4 Victoria 2  
Everett 4 Seattle 1

### PWHL

**Sunday**  
Boston 4 New York 2

**Saturday**  
Minnesota 6 Toronto 3

**Friday**  
Montreal 2 Ottawa 1

### NLL

#### WEEK TWO

**Saturday**  
Albany 15 Toronto 4  
Buffalo 15 Rochester 7  
Calgary 18 Halifax 17  
Georgia 13 San Diego 12 (OT)

### CURLING

#### 2024 CANADIAN SENIOR CURLING CHAMPIONSHIPS

**Saturday**  
**SEMIFINALS**  
**MEN**  
Alberta (Pahl) 8 New Brunswick (Kennedy) 5  
Saskatchewan (Ra.Bryden) 7 Manitoba (Neufeld) 6 (extra end)  
**WOMEN**  
Ontario (Rizzo) 6 Quebec (Waddell) 4  
Alberta (Ford Johnston) 6 Nova Scotia (Breen) 3

**THIRD PLACE**  
**MEN**  
New Brunswick (Kennedy) 8 Manitoba (Neufeld) 5  
**WOMEN**  
Nova Scotia (Breen) 7 Quebec (Waddell) 5

### PGA TOUR

#### HERO WORLD CHALLENGE

**Sunday**  
**At Nassau, Bahamas**  
**Purse:** \$5 million  
**Yardage:** 7,449; **Pars:** 72  
**FINAL ROUND**  
Scottie Scheffler, \$1,000,000 67-64-69-63—263  
Tom Kim, \$450,000 74-65-62-68—269  
Justin Thomas, \$300,000 66-67-66-71—270  
Akshay Bhatia, \$250,000 67-66-71-69—273  
Keegan Bradley, \$225,000 68-67-68-71—274  
Ludvig Aberg, \$220,000 67-70-72-67—276  
Robert MacIntyre, \$215,000 68-71-68-70—277  
Sahithi Theegala, \$210,000 67-71-66-74—278  
Sungjae Im, \$202,500 69-68-72-71—280  
Sepp Straka, \$202,500 69-68-72-71—280  
Patrick Cantlay, \$195,000 67-71-71-72—281  
Brian Harman, \$190,000 70-72-72-68—282  
Cameron Young, \$185,000 64-75-72-72—283  
Sam Burns, \$177,500 68-72-74-70—284

### CORNERED



### OFF THE MARK

# Rams deny Bills win on Allen’s historic day

Buffalo’s seven-game winning streak halted despite quarterback’s six-touchdown effort

GREG BEACHAM  
INGLEWOOD, CALIF.

Matthew Stafford passed for 320 yards and hit Puka Nacua for a 19-yard touchdown with 1:54 to play, and the Los Angeles Rams overcame Josh Allen’s record six-touchdown performance to snap the Buffalo Bills’ seven-game winning streak with a 44-42 victory Sunday.

Allen passed for 342 yards and three touchdowns and rushed for 82 yards and three more scores for the Bills (10-3), who hadn’t lost since Oct. 6 in Houston. He became the first player in NFL history with three passing TDs and three rushing TDs in a game.

Allen capped his third long touchdown drive of the fourth quarter by scoring on a one-yard dive with one minute left.

But Ronnie Rivers recovered the onside kick and Los Angeles (7-6) ran out the clock on its first win over Buffalo since 2012 and its first at home since 1983.

The Rams and Bills combined for 902 yards of offence without a turnover, while Buffalo’s 42 points were the most scored in a loss in franchise history. A team scored at least 42 points and lost for just the 22nd time in NFL history.



**Bills quarterback Josh Allen crosses into the end zone for a touchdown during Sunday’s game against the Los Angeles Rams at SoFi Stadium. Allen became the first player in NFL history with three passing TDs and three rushing TDs in a game in Buffalo’s 44-42 loss.** GARY A. VASQUEZ/USA TODAY SPORTS

Hunter Long returned a blocked punt 22 yards for a touchdown for the Rams, who have won six of eight after this improbable outing to stay in the NFC West race.

Nacua had 12 catches for 162 yards and also ran for a score, while Kyren Williams rushed for two TDs as the Rams never trailed while moving above .500 for the first time this season.

Los Angeles led 38-21 entering

the fourth quarter before Allen stirred Buffalo from its postdivision-title-clinching hangover. But after Mack Hollins’s 21-yard TD catch with 8:49 to play, Stafford led Los Angeles on a clock-consuming drive that included a gritty 11-yard pass to Tutu Atwell on fourth-and-five near midfield with less than four minutes left.

After Nacua’s catch-and-run TD on a pick play, Buffalo drew a 34-yard pass interference penalty

against Quentin Lake on fourth-and-15 from midfield on a drive ending in Allen’s third TD rush – but the Bills ran out of time.

One week after Buffalo clinched the AFC East title by trouncing San Francisco in the snow, the Bills started dismally at SoFi Stadium, giving up 24 points in the first half and falling behind by 17 on Cooper Kupp’s 17-yard TD catch with 18 seconds left in the third quarter.

Until the frantic fourth quarter, the up-and-down Rams dominated the powerhouse Bills.

Los Angeles had its highest-scoring game since Christmas 2022, and those 44 points were the most allowed by Buffalo all season. The Rams went at least 65 yards on all five of their full drives in the first three quarters while converting on 10 of 11 third downs.

Los Angeles went up 17-7 early in the second quarter when Jacob Hummel blocked Sam Martin’s punt. Long scooped and scored the first NFL touchdown for the tight end acquired from Miami last year in the Rams’ cost-cutting trade of All-Pro cornerback Jalen Ramsey.

The Rams hadn’t blocked a punt since 2018, while the Bills hadn’t given up a blocked punt TD since the 2021 season opener against Pittsburgh.

Allen had his second TD run 33 seconds into the fourth.

The Bills play in Detroit against the Lions on Sunday.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

## Around the NFL

**Vikings 42, Falcons 21:** In Minneapolis, Sam Darnold threw for 347 yards and five touchdowns, both career highs, and the Minnesota Vikings pulled away from Kirk Cousins and the Atlanta Falcons 42-21 in NFL action on Sunday for their sixth successive victory. Darnold added another highlight to his brilliant first season in Minnesota after the departure of Cousins in free agency to Atlanta with a 22-for-28 performance and no turnover-worthy plays despite heavy first-half pressure. Darnold passed for 250 yards after halftime to help the Vikings (11-2) break a 21-21 tie early in the fourth quarter and stay one game behind NFC North-leading Detroit with a final-week matchup looming with the Lions.

**Steelers 27, Browns 14:** In Pittsburgh, Russell Wilson threw for 158 yards and two touchdowns as Pittsburgh pulled away from mistake-prone Cleveland. The Steelers (10-3) beat Cleveland at home during the regular season for the 21st straight time, even with leading receiver George Pickens watching from the sideline while missing the first game of his career because of a groin injury. The Steelers moved two games ahead of rival Baltimore for the AFC North lead with four weeks to go.

**Buccaneers 28, Raiders 13:** In Tampa, Baker Mayfield threw for 295 yards and three touchdowns, helping Tampa Bay beat Las Vegas and take over sole possession of first place in the NFC South. Mayfield tossed scoring passes of 15 yards and 29 yards to rookie Jalen McMillan. Rachaad White scored on a five-yard reception and a three-yard run as the Bucs (7-6) won for the third straight week against a last-place opponent to revive their hopes for a fourth consecutive division title. The Raiders fell to 2-11.

**Dolphins 32, Jets 26 (OT):** In Miami Gardens, Fla., Tua Tagovailoa threw a 10-yard touchdown pass to Jonnu Smith in overtime and Miami overcame Aaron Rodgers’s first 300-yard passing game in nearly three years to beat New York. After Jason Sanders tied it with seven seconds left in regulation with a 42-yard field goal, Tagovailoa quickly moved the Dolphins (6-7) down the field and they beat the Jets for the ninth straight time in Miami. The Jets (3-10) were eliminated from postseason contention for the 14th straight year – the NFL’s longest active streak.

**Jaguars 10, Titans 6:** In Nashville, Tank Bigsby ran for an eight-yard touchdown with 6:46 left as Jacksonville snapped a five-game skid and ended Tennessee’s slim playoff hopes. Jacksonville (3-10) came in already eliminated with Trevor Lawrence out for the rest of this season.

The Jaguars leave with only their second victory in the past 11 trips to Music City and second in the past three. The Titans (3-10) came in needing to win out to even have a chance of their first playoff berth since the 2021 season ended with a divisional loss on their home field. Tennessee has fired both a general manager and coach since then.

**Seahawks 30, Cardinals 18:** In Glendale, Ariz., Zach Charbonnet ran for a career-high 134 yards and two touchdowns, Geno Smith threw for 233 yards and a score, and Seattle topped Arizona to remain atop the NFC West. The Seahawks (8-5) won their fourth consecutive games and swept the season series from the Cardinals (6-7). They have won seven in a row against their division rival. The 23-year-old Charbonnet also caught seven passes for 59 yards.

**49ers 38, Bears 13:** In Santa Clara, Calif., Brock Purdy threw for 325 yards and two touchdowns and San Francisco bounced back from two blowout losses to beat Chicago and spoil interim coach Thomas Brown’s debut for the Bears. The 49ers (6-7) had been outscored by 53 points the past two weeks in losses. The Bears were looking for an emotional boost from the first in-season firing of a head coach in franchise history after letting Matt Eberflus go in the wake of a late-game clock mismanagement on Thanksgiving at Detroit. Instead they came up on the short end of one of the most lopsided first halves in recent memory. Chicago was outgained 319-4 in the first half for the ninth-largest discrepancy since 1991, managed only one first down and trailed 24-0 at the break.

**Saints 14, Giants 11:** In East Rutherford, N.J., Brian Bresee leaped over the Giants’ line to block a potential tying field goal with 11 seconds left, and New Orleans held on for a victory over New York after losing quarterback Derek Carr to an injury late in the fourth quarter. Carr, who finished 20 of 31 for 219 yards, was hurt with just less than four minutes to play when he dived for a first down near the Saints 40 and landed hard. He left the field shortly after the play and it almost cost the Saints (5-8). New York got the ball back at its 27 with 1:21 to play and drove to the Saints 12, with Drew Lock scrambling for 25 yards on fourth down and then finding Malik Nabers for 23 yards. The Giants tried twice to throw to the end zone for a winning touchdown before sending out Graham Gano to try to force overtime. Gano’s kick was a little low and the Giants couldn’t defend the jumping Brees, who got a hand on the ball. The Saints fear Carr fractured the hand and may have to enter concussion protocol.

**The plane truth:** A small plane circled MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford roughly 90 minutes before New York was to play host to New Orleans, asking Giants co-owner John Mara to overhaul the team that has made the playoffs twice since winning the Super Bowl in February, 2012. “Mr. Mara, enough. Please fix this dumpster fire!” the message read as it was towed behind the rear of a small plane. The message didn’t work. The Giants lost their eighth in a row – one short of the team record – and fell to 2-11.

**MVP!** Eagles running back Saquon Barkley was serenaded with “MVP!” by Philadelphia fans late in the fourth quarter on Sunday after another strong performance. Barkley is averaging 124.8 yards a game. At that pace and with one more game to play than Eric Dickerson, he would become the top single-season rusher in NFL history. He needs 483 yards over the final four games to top Dickerson’s 40-year-old record. Barkley left the New York Giants in the off-season and signed a three-year free-agent deal worth US\$26-million guaranteed to join the Eagles, who made him the highest-paid running back in franchise history. Barkley, 27, has 3-to-1 odds to win AP NFL most-valuable-player honours, per BetMGM Sportsbook.

**That explains everything:** Tennessee dropped to 1-5 at home this season under first-year coach Brian Callahan, who put his latest loss on the inability to score on two red-zone trips. “That’s the difference in a tight ball game in a divisional game,” Callahan said. “You got to score touchdowns down there and we didn’t.”

**347:** Passing yards for Minnesota quarterback Sam Darnold on 22 completions of 28 attempts and five touchdowns in the Vikings’ win over the Falcons.

**162:** Receiving yards for LA Rams wide receiver Puka Nacua on 12 catches and one touchdown in the Rams’ win over the Bills.

**134:** Rushing yards for Seattle running back Zach Charbonnet on 22 carries and two touchdowns in the Seahawks’ win over the Cardinals.

**11:** Tre Hawkins ended the Giants’ NFL-record run of 11 straight games without an interception when he picked off Derek Carr in the third quarter. It was New York’s second pick of the season.

**1:** A fumble recovery by the Raiders’ Tre’von Moehrig was the first by the Las Vegas defence this season. The Raiders have lost nine games in a row.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

## Barkley sets franchise rushing record as Eagles’ earn ninth straight win

DAN GELSTON PHILADELPHIA

Saquon Barkley rushed for 124 yards to break the Eagles season record, Jalen Hurts threw two touchdown passes and ran for a score, and Philadelphia won its ninth consecutive game, 22-16 over the Carolina Panthers on Sunday.

The Eagles (11-2) maintained their position as the No. 2 team in the NFC, behind Detroit (12-1), after a mostly lethargic effort against the Panthers (3-10).

Barkley added another milestone in his MVP push when he used a nine-yard run in the fourth quarter to surpass LeSean McCoy’s Eagles record of 1,607 yards, set in 2013. Barkley now has 1,623 yards with four games left.

Barkley also maintained his pace to break Eric Dickerson’s NFL single-season rushing mark of 2,105 yards, set in 1984 with the Los Angeles Rams.

Hurts’s passing numbers were a pedestrian 14 of 21 for 108 yards. He hit Grant Calcaterra with a four-yard TD pass and Barkley ran in the two-point conversion for a 22-16 lead early in the fourth.

Bryce Young gamely moved the Panthers into Eagles territory on the final drive. He completed a 13-yard pass on fourth down that moved the ball to the 38, and a second-down pass to Xavier Legette gave the Eagles a brief scare when the receiver seemed to have the ball in the end zone.

He didn’t. Young eluded a pass rush on fourth down but his final attempt was incomplete. He finished 19 of 34 for 191 yards.

A 12½-point underdog according to BetMGM Sportsbook, the Panthers played more like a team with playoff seeding at stake.

Chuba Hubbard, who topped 1,000 yards rushing on the season, made it 16-14 on a one-yard run in the third quarter. Eddy Pineiro, who kicked a 38-yard field goal in the first quarter, missed the extra point.

Eagles safety C.J. Gardner-Johnson, who was examined earlier for a concussion, changed the game late in the second quarter when he picked off Young’s deep pass at Philadelphia’s 41. Hurts scrambled 15 yards on the next drive and finished it with a four-yard TD pass to DeVonta Smith for a 14-10 lead.

Gardner-Johnson’s pick bailed out an uneven effort by the Eagles.

They failed to score on their opening drive for the 13th time this season, but the offensive bursts that usually follow never came. Hurts scored on a tush push early in the second quarter, his 13th rushing score of the season, for a 7-3 lead.

With nothing to lose, the Panthers went for it on fourth-and-three, and Young hit Tommy Tremble for a three-yard TD and a 10-7 advantage.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



**Eagles running back Saquon Barkley runs the ball during Philadelphia’s 22-16 win over the Carolina Panthers on Sunday at Lincoln Financial Field.** MITCHELL LEFF/GETTY IMAGES

# Johnson’s two goals push Jackets past Jets

Kyle Connor scores team-leading 15th goal as Winnipeg’s two-game win streak ends

JUDY OWEN WINNIPEG

Kent Johnson scored a pair of third-period goals to help the Columbus Blue Jackets snap a three-game losing skid with a 4-1 victory over the Winnipeg Jets on Sunday.

Dmitri Voronkov and Sean Kuraly, into an empty net, also scored for Columbus (12-12-3). James van Riemsdyk had a pair of assists.

Elvis Merzlikins made 24 saves for the Blue Jackets, which ended a five-game road trip going 2-3-0.

Kyle Connor scored for the Jets (20-9-0), who had a two-game win streak halted in front of 13,887 fans at Canada Life Centre.

Eric Comrie stopped 24 shots for Winnipeg.

The Jets didn’t get their first shot on goal until a power play five minutes into the game, and were outshot 12-6 by the visitors.

Connor scored his team-leading 15th goal on Winnipeg’s fourth power play of the game when his shot from the right circle went over Merzlikins’s left pad at 11:51 of second period.

Connor has two goals and two assists in his past three games. Mark Scheifele picked up an assist, extending his point streak to four games with a pair of goals and three helpers.

Columbus had its second power play shortly after Connor’s goal and didn’t waste it.

Voronkov made it 1-1 went he banged in the puck that had bounced off the post at 13:53.

Johnson gave the Blue Jackets the lead off a rebound at 7:15 of the third and added his eighth goal of the season at 9:42.

Kuraly sent the puck into the empty net with 1:22 left.

On Saturday, Scheifele snapped a third-period tie and Kyle Connor had two assists, helping Winnipeg beat Chicago 4-2 in the first game for interim Blackhawks coach Anders Sorensen. Mason Appleton had a goal and an assist as the Jets picked up



Blue Jackets goaltender Elvis Merzlikins makes a save on Jets forward Nino Niederreiter, left, during the second period in Winnipeg on Sunday. Merzlikins made 24 saves for the Blue Jackets, who ended a five-game trip going 2-3-0. FRED GREENSLADE/THE CANADIAN PRESS

their second straight win after a four-game losing streak. Nino Niederreiter and Gabriel Vilardi also scored, and Connor Hellebuyck made 12 saves.

The Jets play the second game of a four-game homestand on Tuesday against the Boston Bruins.

**LIGHTNING 4, CANUCKS 2**

VANCOUVER Brayden Point scored twice and added two assists, and the Tampa Bay Lightning edged the Vancouver Canucks 3-2 on Sunday. Nikita Kucherov had a goal and two helpers for the Lightning (14-9-3), while Jake Guentzel put away the game winner on a power play late in the third period. Captain Quinn Hughes and Kiefer Sherwood found the back of the net for the Canucks (14-8-4), who fell to 4-6-3 at home. Tampa Bay’s Andrei Vasilevskiy stopped 22 of the 24 shots he faced and Kevin

Lankinen made 28 saves for Vancouver.

**ISLANDERS 4, SENATORS 2**

OTTAWA For the second straight night Ilya Sorokin was a difference maker for the New York Islanders. Sorokin made 29 saves in a 4-2 winning effort against the Ottawa Senators on Sunday night after making 28 saves the previous night in a 4-3 win over the Carolina Hurricanes. In comparison, Ottawa’s Anton Forsberg faced 12 shots. Both teams were playing the back half of back-to-backs. In Ottawa on Saturday, Claude Giroux, Jacob Bernard-Docker and Nick Cousins scored, and Ottawa beat Nashville 3-1 on Saturday. Tim Stütze had two assists for Ottawa. Linus Ullmark made 37 saves.

**CAPITALS 4, CANADIENS 2**

MONTREAL Tom Wilson scored

twice in the third period and Washington rallied to beat the Habs on Saturday. Pierre-Luc Dubois and Dylan Strome also scored to help the Capitals come back from a 2-0 deficit. Aliaksei Protas had two assists and Logan Thompson finished with 22 saves to help Metropolitan Division-leading Washington get its ninth straight road win. Alex Newhook and Cole Caufield scored five minutes apart to in the first period for Montreal.

**PENGUINS 5, MAPLE LEAFS 2**

PITTSBURGH Michael Bunting scored a third-period power-play goal that gave Pittsburgh the lead for good in a win over Toronto on Saturday. Rickard Rakell also scored a power-play goal while Bryan Rust had a goal and an assist for Pittsburgh. Blake Lizotte and Kris Letang added short-handed empty-net goals in the final minute. Letang now has the

23rd-most points among defencemen in NHL history. Sidney Crosby finished with an assist and tied Gordie Howe for fifth-most assists with one franchise in league history.

**OILERS 4, BLUES 2**

EDMONTON Connor McDavid had a goal and an assist and the Edmonton Oilers beat the St. Louis Blues for their second straight win on Saturday. Corey Perry, Zach Hyman and Troy Stecher also scored, and Leon Draisaitl had two assists for the Oilers, who have won five of their last six. Stuart Skinner stopped 29 shots.

**Flames vs. Stars**

On Sunday night, the Calgary Flames were in Dallas to face the Stars. Game story on [GLOBESPORTS.COM](#)

THE CANADIAN PRESS

## Chelsea rallies for a wild win at Tottenham but Arsenal stumbles in Premier League title race

STEVE DOUGLAS

Don’t listen to Enzo Maresca. Chelsea really is a Premier League challenger this season.

In a wild London derby, Chelsea conceded twice in the opening 11 minutes before recovering brilliantly for a 4-3 win at Tottenham to move four points behind Liverpool on Sunday. Cole Palmer sealed the comeback with an impudent “Panenka” penalty – one of his two converted spot kicks in the match.

Liverpool, the league leader, was inactive this round after a storm forced the postponement of the Merseyside derby against Everton on Saturday. It gave Chelsea and Arsenal, Liverpool’s closest challengers, an opportunity to apply some pressure.

Chelsea did so. Arsenal couldn’t, however, after only drawing 1-1 with Fulham, despite adding to its lengthy list of goals from corners.

Maresca has been insisting Chelsea’s youthful squad shouldn’t be considered a contender to win the league this season. His players are too young and inexperienced, he maintains.

Few will accept that now.

After an unprecedented spending spree on players of more than US\$1.3-billion over the past five transfer windows, Chelsea finally has a consistent team – led by Palmer on the field and with impressive direction from Maresca off it.

The Blues’ only losses in the league have been to Manchester City – in the opening round, way before the champion’s recent meltdown – and Liverpool. They’ve won their past four league games, scoring 14 goals in the process.

Still, Chelsea’s players were towing Maresca’s line.

“We still have so much to improve on,” Chelsea defender Levi Colwill said. “Like the gaffer [boss] said, when we are ready to push for a title we won’t be 2-0 down in the first 10 [minutes]. That’s the levels and that’s what

we’re going to keep working on.”

Arsenal, meanwhile, is getting most of its goals from set pieces.

William Saliba – one of two scorers from corners in the 2-0 win over Manchester United on Wednesday – repeated the trick in the 52nd minute against Fulham to earn his team a point at Craven Cottage. Raúl Jiménez put Fulham ahead in the 11th.

Arsenal trimmed the gap to Liverpool to six points but this will go down as a wasted opportunity.

Bukayo Saka had what looked like being a winning goal for Arsenal ruled out for offside against fellow winger Gabriel Martinelli in the buildup in the 88th.

### PENALTY RECORD

Palmer has set a record by scoring each of the first 12 penalties he has taken in the Premier League. According to the league’s statistics supplier Opta, it’s the best 100-per-cent record in the competition – overtaking former Man City midfielder Yaya Touré. Since joining Chelsea in the summer of 2023, Palmer has 33 goals and 17 assists in 48 games. Only Erling Haaland for City (39 games), Andy Cole for Newcastle (43 games), and Mo Salah for Liverpool (46 games) have reached 50 goal involvements quicker.

### LATE GOALS

Bournemouth and Leicester left it very late to pick up points from losing positions. Jamie Vardy scored in the 86th and set up another goal for Bobby De Cordova-Reid in the first minute of stoppage time as Leicester staged a late recovery to draw 2-2 at home to Brighton in Ruud van Nistelrooy’s second match in charge. He won his first, against West Ham, 3-1 on Tuesday. Tariq Lamp-tey and Yankuba Minteh had given Brighton its two-goal cushion. Bournemouth scored in the 87th, and again in the fifth minute of added-on time through Dango Ouattara, to win 2-1 at Ipswich, which stayed in the relegation

zone with just one victory this season. Conor Chaplin put Ipswich ahead in the 21st.

**CHELSEA PERFECT IN WSL**

LONDON Chelsea extended its winning run to nine victories from nine Women’s Super League games but it was pushed all the way by a Brighton & Hove Albion side who lost 4-2 after a battling performance in terrible weather at Kingsmeadow on Sunday. Chelsea remained top on 27 points with Manchester City, who hammered Leicester City 4-0, second on 22 points and Arsenal, who cruised to a 4-0 win over Aston Villa, third on 18. With a blustery wind and pouring rain making conditions difficult, the insistence of both teams on playing the ball out from the back led to a number of hair-raising situations and a few goals that neither side will enjoy watching back. Chelsea was 3-1 up and cruising after a goal credited to Johanna Rytting Kaneryd in the 51st minute that the winger knew little about, but a mistake by Chelsea keeper Hannah Hampton gifted Kiko Seike a goal for the visiting Seagulls in the 71st minute and sparked a frenetic hunt for an equalizer. Seike went close again late on but her effort was diverted behind for a corner and that miss was punished when Sjoekie Nusken scored her second goal of the game from a stoppage-time corner at the near post to wrap up the three points for Chelsea. Manchester United had a poor run of form before the international break but it came roaring back with a 4-0 thumping of Liverpool at home to move above Brighton and into fourth spot in the table on 18 points, behind Arsenal on goal difference.

In North London, a Beth England brace gave Tottenham Hotspur a 2-1 win over Everton, while in the late kick-off West Ham United bounced back from conceding two goals in the opening 11 minutes to beat Crystal Palace 5-2.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, REUTERS

## Kelly

■ FROM B11

If you’re the WNBA, what’s the lesson here? Do you want winners, or do you want stars? Because the latter no longer need be the former and – this is the important part – being the former is no longer a guarantee of the latter.

This is the result of so much sports. Too many winners, making it impossible to convince people they should all matter. What people react to now is a hard-to-predict mix of talent, memeability, back story, personality and aesthetics.

By 2026, Toronto will have seven major-league clubs. That’s too many teams for most people with actual lives to keep track of, never mind follow closely.

This doesn’t begin to take into account all the foreign teams that occupy the average sports fan’s mental real estate, plus a bunch of annual tournaments, plus an Olympics every two years.

In that blizzard of elite performers – and we are beginning to stretch the meaning of ‘elite’ – many winners will not penetrate the public consciousness. But a star – a needs-a-police-escort-to-get-to-the-airport level star – has a shot.

Messi is that sort. His boss, Inter Miami part owner David Beckham, is another. Beckham hasn’t hoofed a ball in anger in more than a decade and people still want to know what he’s up to. They watch his shows and buy the junk he’s shilling. Unlike most pro athletes, he earns back the money people pay him. And this is a guy who was more famous for losing than winning.

The average role player on an average team could be replaced by an inflatable doll and most people wouldn’t notice. His job is to deflect interest and make five-million bucks a year.

Beckham is worth infinity glue guys. Messi is worth a hundred Beckhams. The two of them together change the rules.

The goal of any aspirational sports league is no longer to put a superior product on the field and to ensure that its best performers succeed. It’s to either create a Messi or steal him from someone else. Whether he then goes on to win anything is beside the point.

### GALAXY DEFEAT RED BULLS TO WIN SIXTH MLS CUP

CARSON, CALIF. The Los Angeles Galaxy beat New York Red Bulls 2-1 with goals from Joseph Paintsil and Dejan Joveljic to win a record-extending sixth MLS Cup and snap a 10-year championship drought on Saturday.

The final looked like it would be one-sided when hosts and favourites Galaxy scored twice inside 13 minutes through Paintsil and Joveljic in front of a sun-soaked crowd.

The vaunted Red Bulls defence, who lost Andres Reyes just before the start of the game through illness, initially had no answer to Galaxy’s aggressive offence despite playing without key injured midfielder Riqui Puig.

The Red Bulls clawed one back in the 28th when the ball pinballed around in front of goal after a corner before finding Sean Nealis, who fired high past goalkeeper John McCarthy.

The goal immediately changed the tone of the contest as the home side began to play more tentatively and the Red Bulls began to go on the attack.

Both sides had chances in the second half and the Red Bulls battled to force extra time as the final whistle approached but Galaxy held firm as they sealed their first MLS Cup since 2014.

REUTERS

# Oregon seeded No. 1 in first 12-team College Football Playoff

SMU edges Alabama for final spot in what will be the longest season of college football

## EDDIE PELLIS

The new, 12-team College Football Playoff brings with it a promise to be bigger, more exciting, more lucrative.

Perfect or 100-per-cent fair? Well, nobody ever believed that.

The first expanded playoff bracket unveiled Sunday left a presumably deserving Alabama team on the sideline in favour of an SMU squad with a better record after playing a schedule that was not as difficult.

It ranked undefeated Oregon first but set up a possible rematch against Ohio State, the team that came closest to beating the Ducks this year.

It treated underdog Boise State like a favourite and banged-up Georgia like a world beater at No. 2.

It gave Ohio State home-field advantage against Tennessee for reasons it would take a super-computer to figure out.

It gave the sport the multiweek tournament it has longed for, but also ensured there will be plenty to grouch about between now and when the trophy is handed out on Jan. 20 after what will easily be the longest college-football season in history.

All of it, thankfully, will be sorted out on the field starting with first-round games on campuses Dec. 20 and 21, then over three succeeding rounds that will wind their way through traditional bowl sites.

Maybe Oregon coach Dan Lanning, whose undefeated Ducks are the favourite to win it all, put

it best when he offered: “Winning a national championship is not supposed to be easy.”

Neither, it turns out, is figuring out who should play for it.

## ALABAMA COMES UP SHORT IN THE BRACKET’S BIGGEST DEBATE

The Big Ten will lead the way with four teams in the tournament, followed by the SEC with three and the ACC with two. The lasting memory from the inaugural bracket will involve the decision that handed the ACC that second bid. Alabama of the SEC didn’t play Saturday. SMU of the ACC did. The Mustangs fell behind by three touchdowns to Clemson before coming back to tie. But they ultimately lost 34-31 on a 56-yard field goal as time expired. “We were on pins and needles,” SMU coach Rhett Lashley said. “Until we saw the name ‘SMU’ up there, we were hanging on the edge. We’re really, really happy and thankful to the committee for rewarding our guys for their total body of work.” The Mustangs only had two losses, compared with three for the Crimson Tide. Even though SMU’s schedule wasn’t nearly as tough, the committee was impressed by the way the Mustangs came back against Clemson. “We just felt, in this particular case, SMU had the nod above Alabama,” said Michigan athletic director Warde Manuel, the chairman of the selection committee. “But it’s no disrespect to Alabama’s strength of schedule. We looked at the entire body of work for both teams.”

## GEORGIA, BOISE STATE AND ARIZONA STATE JOIN OREGON WITH FIRST-ROUND BYES

Georgia, the SEC champion, was seeded second; Boise State, the Mountain West champion,

earned the third seed; and Big 12 titlist Arizona State got the fourth seed and the fourth and final first-round bye. All will play in quarter-finals at bowl games on Dec. 31-Jan. 1. Clemson stole a bid and the 12th seed with its crazy win over SMU, the result that ultimately cost Alabama a spot in the field. The Tigers moved to No. 16 in the rankings, but got in as the fifth-best conference winner.

## WHAT THE MATCHUPS LOOK LIKE

No. 12 Clemson at No. 5 Texas, Dec. 21. Clemson is riding high after the SMU upset, while Texas is 0-2 against Georgia and 11-0 vs. everyone else this season. The winner faces ... Arizona State in the Peach Bowl. Huh?

No. 11 SMU at No. 6 Penn State, Dec. 21. The biggest knock against the Mustangs was that they didn’t play any big boys with that 60th-ranked strength of schedule. Well, now they get to. The winner faces ... Boise State in the Fiesta Bowl. Yes, SMU vs. Boise was the quarter-final we all expected.


No. 10 Indiana at No. 7 Notre Dame, Dec. 20. Hoosiers coach Curt Cignetti thought his team deserved a home game. Well, not quite but close. The winner gets ... Georgia in the Sugar Bowl. The Bulldogs got the No. 2 seed despite a throwing-arm injury to QB Carson Beck. But what else was the committee supposed to do?

No. 9 Tennessee at No. 8 Ohio State, Dec. 21. The Buckeyes (losses to Oregon, Michigan) got home field over the Volunteers (losses to Arkansas, Georgia) in a match-up of programs with two of the biggest stadiums in football. The winner faces ... Oregon in the Rose Bowl. Feels like that match-up should come in the semi-finals or later.

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## DEATHS

### JAMES BLEIWEIS

On Friday, December 6, 2024, after a long and healthy life, in his 103rd year. Jim Bleiweis, beloved husband of the late Roslyn Bleiweis. Loving father and father-in-law of Marshall and the late Karen Bleiweis, Linda and Lawrence Malek, and Jay and Alona Bleiweis. Dear brother of the late Jonah, Henry, and Seymour Bleiweis. Devoted grandfather of Ryan and Alanna, Seth and Carly, Josh and Danielle, Jodi and Abe, Kevin and Tal, Jack, and Andi. Dear great-grandfather of Luke, Ivy, and Isabelle. A graveside service will be held on Monday, December 9th at 2:00 p.m. at in the Beth Radom Congregation section of Mt. Sinai Memorial Park, 986 Wilson Avenue (between Dufferin and Keele). Memorial donations may be made to the James and Roslyn Bleiweis Memorial Fund c/o The Baycrest Foundation 416-785-2875 [www.baycrestfoundation.org](http://www.baycrestfoundation.org)



**LEWIS (LEW) THOMPSON LEDERMAN, KC**  
(1949-2024)

Passed away peacefully on December 5, 2024. Devoted spouse of Margot Panet and proud father of Alexander (Sarah), de Lobe (Hannah), and Margot (Max). Loving GP to Isla, Sloane, and Madeleine. Predeceased by his parents, William Ralph Lederman and Edna Thompson Lederman. Survived by his brothers, Peter and William.

Born in Saskatoon, Lew graduated with a BA (gold medallist) and LLB from Queen’s University. His career mirrored his many interests: Lew was a lawyer, businessman, author, illustrator, and adjudicator. A left-handed Presbyterian with an encyclopedic memory and broad range of knowledge, his bow ties were his trademark. But his greatest pride was his family.

All services to be held at Hulse, Playfair & McGarry’s Central Chapel at 315 McLeod Street in Ottawa. Visitation from 4 to 7 p.m. on December 11, 2024. Celebration of life at 10 a.m. on December 12, 2024 followed by reception. In lieu of flowers, donations to Hospice Care Ottawa in Lew’s memory would be appreciated.

**FUNERAL SERVICES**



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**SUNDAY**

CERESNE, Isadore - 10:00 Chapel.  
BIRENBAUM, Sheila - 12:00 Chapel.  
GORDON, Alfred - 1:00 Halifax, Nova Scotia.  
LIVINGSTONE (KURTZ), Hyla - 2:00 Chapel.  
DANIELS, Bailey - 4:00 Chapel.


**MONDAY**

BAUM, Muki - 11:00 Mount Sinai Memorial Park.  
CHUSID, Yvonne - 11:30 Beth Tzedec Memorial Park.  
KRIEGER, Barbara - 12:00 Chapel.  
FISH, Maxine - 2:00 Chapel.  
BLEIWEIS, Jim - 2:00 Mount Sinai Memorial Park.  
FISCH, Sylvia - 3:00 Pardes Shalom Cemetery.

**SHIVA**

GOLDBERG, Dr. Herbert Leonard - 82 Old Forest Hill Road.  
NADLER, Harry - 8 Winterport Court, Richmond Hill.  
KEREN, Dana - 420 Whitmore Avenue.  
CERESNE, Isadore - 520 Fairlawn Avenue.  
BIRENBAUM, Sheila - #508-10 Torresdale Avenue.  
DANIELS, Bailey - 720 Briar Hill Avenue.  
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# Sports in brief

**CANADIAN JUDOKAS WIN BRONZE IN TOKYO**

TOKYO Canadian judokas François Gauthier-Drapeau and Kyle Reyes earned bronze medals Sunday at the Tokyo Grand Slam judo event. Gauthier-Drapeau, form Alma, Que., finished with a bronze in the men’s under-81-kilogram category when opponent David Karapetyan failed to show up for the medal bout. Reyes had a much different path to a medal. The judoka from Brampton, Ont., defeated Japan’s Koki Kumasaka for under-100-kilogram bronze in a match that lasted more than 10 minutes. Kumasaka had earlier defeated Toronto’s Shady ElNahas, who injured his hand in the second-round match. Gauthier-Drapeau returned to the under-81-kilogram class less than a month after he won gold in the under-90-kilogram category at the Continental Cup in Montreal.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Lajoie and Lagha were fourth after the rhythm dance and ranked fifth in the free skate. Charlene Guignard and Marco Fabbri of Italy finished second and Lilah Fear and Lewis Gibson of Britain third. Jazmine Desrochers and Kieran Thrasher were third in junior pairs to repeat as bronze medalists in the event. Desrochers of Mississauga and Thrasher of Amherstburg, Ont., ranked second after the short program. Julia Quattrocchi of Laval, Que., and Simon Desmarais of Carignan, Que., placed sixth in their junior pairs final debut.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

**NORRIS WINS ABU DHABI TO WRAP UP F1 SEASON**

ABU DHABI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES Lando Norris ended McLaren’s 26-year wait for the Formula One constructors’ title as he won the season-ending Abu Dhabi Grand Prix on Sunday. There was drama at the start as champion Max Verstappen collided with Oscar Piastri’s second-place McLaren at the first corner, sending both cars into a spin. With Piastri dropped to the back of the field, McLaren’s title hopes depended on race leader Norris. Norris held on for the win with Ferrari’s Carlos Sainz Jr. in second and Charles Leclerc surging up to third from 19th on the grid. The race was also notable because it was Lewis Hamilton’s last with Mercedes. “We dreamed alone but together, we believed,” Hamilton told race engineer Peter Bonnington and team principal Toto Wolff over the radio. Hamilton is moving to Ferrari for 2025 after 12 years at Mercedes, where he won all but one of his seven career drivers’ championships.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

**SCHEFFLER ENDS BIG YEAR WITH HIS NINTH VICTORY**

NASSAU, BAHAMAS Scottie Scheffler returned from a two-month break and nothing changed. He won the Hero World Challenge on Sunday with a nine-under 63 to tie the tournament record at Albany Golf Club and win by six shots. Scheffler, the first player since Tiger Woods in 2009 to spend an entire calendar year at No. 1 in the world, won for the ninth time in 21 starts, a tally that included a second Masters title, an Olympic gold medal and the FedEx Cup.

In Sun City, South Africa, American golfer Johannes Veeerman claimed his second title on the European tour after winning the Nedbank Golf Challenge in

South Africa by one shot after a bogey on the 72nd hole by home favourite Aldrich Potgieter on Sunday. Tom Kim finished third. Scheffler earned US\$1-million for winning the unofficial tournament.

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**MAVERICKS BEAT RAPTORS**

Luka Doncic had a triple-double to help the Mavericks fend off the Toronto Raptors 125-118 on Saturday as Dallas won its seventh straight game. Doncic had 30 points, 13 rebounds and 11 assists for Dallas. Scottie Barnes had a double-double with 24 points and a career-high 14 assists to lead Toronto (7-17). Toronto hosts the New York Knicks on Monday night.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

**ODERMATT GRABS FIRST WIN OF WORLD CUP SEASON**

BEAVER CREEK, COLO. Swiss racer Thomas Tumler got his long-awaited maiden World Cup win at the age of 35 on Sunday, taming a challenging Beaver Creek course with a pair of pristine runs in a men’s giant slalom. Tumler had a combined time of 2 minutes 27.60 seconds, 0.12 seconds faster than Lucas Pinheiro Braathen, who became the first Brazilian man to get a World Cup podium finish. Slovenian Olympic silver medalist Zan Kranjec (2:28.18) was third. Tumler’s win completed a Swiss sweep this year at the Colorado resort, with Justin Murisier winning the downhill on Friday and Marco Odermatt Saturday’s Super-G. REUTERS

**PARKER, ALLEN ELECTED TO BASEBALL’S HALL OF FAME**

DALLAS Dave Parker and Dick Allen were elected to baseball’s Hall of Fame on Sunday by the classic era committee. Parker received 14 of 16 votes and Allen got 13. A vote of 75 per cent or more was needed for election. They will be inducted into the Hall of Fame on July 27 along with players voted in by the Baseball Writers’ Association of America. Tommy John was third with seven votes. Ken Boyer, John Donaldson, Steve Garvey, Vic Harris and Luis Tiant each received less than five votes. Parker, 73, hit .290 with 339 homers and 1,493 RBIs from 1973-91. He was the 1978 NL MVP, won the 1977 and 1978 NL batting titles and was a seven-time all-star. Allen, who died in 2020 at the age of 78, hit .292 with 351 homers and 1,119 RBIs from 1963-77. He was a seven-time all-star. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

# Precious memories

Memorialize and celebrate a loved one in The Globe and Mail.



DR. DANA DEVINE

RESEARCHER, 68



Dr. Dana Devine, former chief scientist at Canadian Blood Services, held major leadership roles in transfusion medicine internationally as well, being the only Canadian president of the Association for the Advancement of Blood & Biotherapies. CANADIAN BLOOD SERVICES

SCIENTIST HELPED MODERNIZE  
CANADIAN TRANSFUSION PRACTICES

In the years after the tainted blood crisis, she became a leader in her field, using research to help safeguard and improve the national blood and plasma supply system

DIANE PETERS

Two decades ago, Dana Devine knew there was a better way to extract platelets from donated blood. She advocated for Canada to adopt an approach used in Europe called the “buffy coat method,” which employs a centrifuge to separate a buff-coloured layer of white blood cells and platelets from other blood components. The process offers several advantages over the method used previously, making it easier to detect blood-borne pathogens, yielding higher quality platelets and mitigating transfusion-related acute lung injury, a rare but serious complication. At the time, Dr. Devine was director of research and development at Canadian Blood Services (CBS), which operates the national blood and plasma supply system, and she showed how this approach could be put in place. In 2004, the organization made the decision to transition to the buffy coat method. “This change was really driven by Dana’s scientific expertise and her passion,” says Graham Sher, CEO of CBS. “She provided the science and the technical know-how and the leadership.” Dr. Sher says this new approach likely saves lives. “The platelets work better. Patients bleed less and they need fewer doses. They have better clinical outcomes with fewer side effects.” Dr. Devine was a key figure in helping Canada modernize its approach to the collection, storage and use of blood products in the wake of Canada’s tainted blood crisis of the 1980s, when 30,000 transfusion recipients were infected with hepatitis C and another 2,000 contracted HIV. After a national inquiry, Justice Horace Krever issued a damning report in 1997 on Canada’s failures to safeguard the blood supply, the Canadian Red Cross Society subsequently ceased its involvement in the blood system and CBS was created. A master at managing multiple roles at once, Dr. Devine, who had served on committees at the Red Cross, began working at CBS in 1999, while also a professor at the University of British Columbia. At that time there was no place in Canada focused on blood transfusion research, so in 2002 – while still at CBS, where she later became chief scientist – she helped establish the Centre for Blood Research at UBC, later serving as its director. “This was her visionary way of

thinking. It was an important step forward for advancing transfusion medicine research in Canada,” Dr. Sher says. She held major leadership roles in transfusion medicine internationally as well; she’s the only Canadian ever to be president of the Association for the Advancement of Blood & Biotherapies (AABB). “That’s the most senior position in transfusion medicine,” says long-time friend and colleague Cedric Carter, emeritus member of the Centre for Blood Research and associate professor at UBC. “In transfusion medicine, she probably would have been regarded as one of the top world experts.” Dr. Devine died on Nov. 12 at the age of 68 of complications related to frontotemporal dementia. Her career spanned more than 35 years at UBC, mostly in the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, where she was director of graduate studies for many years. She published more than 200 articles in scientific journals. She was editor of the journal Vox Sanguinis, the International Journal of Transfusion Medicine, and president of the Biomedical Excellence for Safer Transfusion (BEST) Collaborative. She served on numerous boards and committees; Dr. Carter says her problem-solving skills were in high demand. Her research focused on, among other things, blood storage and liposomes in blood, which are often used as a vehicle for drug delivery. When Dr. Carter worked with her on liposomes, he says, they noticed certain behaviours and passed along this discovery on to UBC researcher Pieter Cullis. Dr. Cullis used the information to help a team work with Pfizer and BioNTech to develop COVID-19 vaccines, and two of his colleagues won the Nobel Prize in 2023 for this work. “Two COVID vaccines that are available around the world use Pieter’s liposomes. So Dana indirectly made a terrific contribution,” Dr. Carter says. Dr. Devine supervised numerous graduate students and often championed the work of women, especially those experiencing discrimination. “When she discovered women were unhappy with their supervisors, she’d take them on in her lab,” Dr. Carter says. “She was a great believer in diversity, equity and inclusion,” Dr. Sher says. “She made sure people of colour and people from the

LGBT communities were given a voice and given credibility and given space.” For her contributions to science and patient care she earned numerous accolades, including a Women of Distinction Award from the YWCA Metro Vancouver in 2001, the Queen’s Golden Jubilee Medal in 2002, the Canadian Society for Transfusion Medicine ORTHO award in 2015, the International Society of Blood Transfusion Presidential Award in 2020 and the Hemphill-Jordan Leadership Award from the AABB in 2021. Dr. Carter and other colleagues endeavoured to nominate her for the Order of Canada, but she was too ill to give her input for the award, they felt, so they pulled the application. In 2023, the Canadian Society for Transfusion Medicine and CBS introduced an award in her name to assist researchers with training and mentorship. Dana Virginia Devine was born in New Bedford, Mass., on Oct. 5, 1956, to dentist and oral surgeon George Devine and accomplished pianist and music professor June Craig Fritzinger. (The couple divorced in 1971.) Her brother, Geoff, 21 months her junior, recalls her as a bossy big sister, and very precocious in general. “She was extremely bright, extremely switched on. You can see what she did in her adult life. Her childhood was like that as well.” They lived in a seaside town, so young Dana learned to sail skilfully and honed her skiing technique in Vermont, where the family had a place. She skied with the team at Boston University in her freshman year. Meanwhile, in the summer after first year, her father urged her to attend a local debutante ball. When the biology undergrad was interviewed for the local paper, she said such events were not what they used to be, that the attendees were on professional tracks, not seeking husbands, and “it’s just a great party.” “That ruffled the feathers of the women who organized it,” Geoff recalls. “My sister was dubbed the radical debutante.” She was one of the first women to attend prestigious Amherst College, where her father had studied, but decided to go back to Boston U after a year, preferring its approach to scientific research. Graduate school at Boston U and its Woods Hole oceanside facility saw her focus on how lobsters use smell and taste to orient themselves. During this time, she met fellow student Thomas Frommel,

whom she married, and she moved with him to Texas A&M, where she briefly did graduate work in biology. When he transferred to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, she took a job as a lab technician at nearby Duke University under well-respected hematologist Wendell Rosse. “After a month, he said, ‘You shouldn’t be a lab tech. Join our PhD program,’” Dr. Carter says. She focused on immunology and published numerous papers during her studies. A Canadian working in blood transfusion visited Duke and noticed her efficiency and the innovative work she was doing with Dr. Rosse. As she finished her program in 1986, Dr. Carter and others recruited her and crafted a job description only she could fill, skirting the rules around hiring a Canadian first. Dr. Devine began at UBC in 1987, with Dr. Frommel joining her briefly, then the two divorced and he moved back to the U.S. A few years later, Dr. Carter says, “I took her to a party and she didn’t come home.” She had met Donald Brooks, a chemistry professor at UBC, and the two married in 1993. It was with Dr. Brooks and others that she co-founded the Centre for Blood Research. The couple also travelled extensively, loved wine and fine foods, and had an adventuresome spirit. (Dr. Brooks is unwell and was not available for an interview.) Dr. Sher says when the two were travelling together for work in Seoul, Dr. Devine took them to an off-the-beaten path restaurant where no one spoke English and the menu was entirely in Korean. They ate multiple courses of they knew not what, with Dr. Devine revelling in the experience. Dr. Sher says she always entertained everyone at work retreats, and was always relied upon to order the wine. She was also well-versed on car repairs, and could tell what was wrong with a vehicle and direct a mechanic with precise instructions. Her friends, colleagues and family marvel at Dr. Devine’s skills at work, and loyalty, empathy and sense of fun in her personal life. “She was an incredible storyteller, an incredible friend,” Dr. Sher says. “She could put aside her science and put aside her stature, and she could just be the most wonderful, caring, compassionate, kind and interesting human being.” Dr. Devine leaves her husband and her brother.

Special to The Globe and Mail