

Carney, Trump speak for first time since Aug. 1 trade deadline

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Prime Minister Mark Carney and U.S. President Donald Trump spoke by phone Thursday – the first direct conversation between the two leaders in months and the first high-profile contact between Ottawa and Washington since they failed to reach a trade agreement three weeks ago.

The Canadian side said the talk was productive and wide-ranging, touching on trade, security and Ukraine. The leaders last spoke in late June, after meeting at the G7 conference in Kananaskis, Alta.

There have been few updates on the trade front since the two countries blew past Mr. Trump’s Aug. 1 deadline without reaching any agreement to address tariffs and other trade irritants.

Despite a flurry of visits to Washington by Canadian trade negotiators ahead of the deadline, no deal emerged. Instead, Mr. Trump increased the blanket tariffs on Canadian goods to 35 per cent from 25 per cent, while maintaining a crucial carve-out for products that comply with continental free-trade agreement rules.

“The leaders discussed current trade challenges, opportunities, and shared priorities in a new economic and security relationship between Canada and the U.S.,” said a summary of the call issued by the Prime Minister’s Office.

■ TRADE, A4

Crown will not appeal verdict in Hockey Canada trial

GRANT ROBERTSON

The Crown has decided not to appeal the verdict in the Hockey Canada sexual-assault trial, after the five accused, all players on the 2018 world junior team, were found not guilty last month.

When the verdict was handed down in a London, Ont., courtroom July 24, Crown attorney Meaghan Cunningham said she would review the ruling by Justice Maria Carroccia before determining how to proceed.

Defence lawyer Daniel Brown, who represents Alex Formenton, one of the players, confirmed that the Crown notified him of its intention on Thursday.

A spokesperson for Ontario’s Ministry of the Attorney-General was not available to comment.

The Crown’s decision not to appeal brings to an end a legal saga that hung over the country for the past three years, putting Canada’s national winter sport under scrutiny and raising questions about cultural problems within the game.

When the allegations first came to light in 2022, Hockey Canada, the governing body for the sport, was accused by MPs of trying to cover up the controversy, leading to months of federal hearings.

The organization’s chief executive officer and board of directors ultimately departed, while Hockey Canada introduced a series of sweeping governance changes.

■ HOCKEY, A15



Palestinian women check the destruction after Israeli military strikes hit a tent camp near Deir al-Balah on Thursday, where many displaced people have sought refuge during the war in Gaza. JEHAD ALSHRAFI/AP

Netanyahu set to approve takeover of Gaza City, restart hostage talks

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Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Thursday he will give final approval for the takeover of Gaza City while also restarting negotiations with Hamas aimed at returning all the remaining hostages and ending the war on Israel’s terms.

The wide-scale operation in Gaza City could start within days. Mr. Netanyahu’s approval was expected during a meeting with senior security officials late Thursday, but no decision was announced before midnight in Jerusalem. Hamas said earlier

this week that it had agreed to a ceasefire proposal from Arab mediators, which – if accepted by Israel – could forestall the offensive.

The Israeli military has begun calling medical officials and international organizations in the northern Gaza Strip to encourage them to evacuate to the south ahead of the expanded operation. The military plans to call up 60,000 reservists and extend the service of 20,000 more.

Israeli strikes, meanwhile, killed at least 36 Palestinians Thursday across Gaza, according to local hospitals. A renewed offensive could bring even more casualties and displacement to the territory, where the war has already killed tens of thou-

sands and where experts have warned of imminent famine.

Many Israelis fear the operation could also doom the remaining 20 or so living hostages taken by Hamas-led militants in the Oct. 7, 2023, attack that ignited the war.

During a visit to the military’s Gaza command in southern Israel, Mr. Netanyahu said he would approve the army’s plans to retake Gaza City. He also instructed officials “to begin immediate negotiations” for the release of all hostages “and an end to the war on terms acceptable to Israel.”

“These two things – defeating Hamas and releasing all our hostages – go hand in hand,” he said.

■ GAZA, A6

CSIS tip led to arrest of alleged extremists in Quebec City

TU THANH HA

A tip from Canada’s spy agency in early 2023 triggered the investigation that led to last month’s terrorism charges against three Quebec City men with ties to the Armed Forces, newly released court documents reveal.

Police affidavits unsealed Thursday outline how the RCMP conducted covert surveillance for nine months on a group of current and former soldiers suspected of being right-wing extremists.

The documents also shed light on the

reason the Mounties raided the suspects’ properties a year and a half before filing charges: The probe was disrupted in early 2024 when one suspect’s ex-girlfriend asked municipal police to confiscate his guns because he was suicidal.

The RCMP then quickly moved to seize the other men’s cellphones, firearms and equipment because of concerns that the initial search might spur them to destroy evidence.

When the RCMP announced criminal charges last month, the force alleged that three of the men had conspired to forcibly seize a plot of land.

That allegation doesn’t appear in the affidavits, which were drafted before investigators accessed the men’s cellphones. However, the documents say they held anti-government views.

While the men conducted shooting drills in forested areas, the RCMP watched from the air, sometimes with infrared cameras, the documents say.

The Mounties followed the men, geolocated their cellphones and planted GPS trackers. Investigators relied on undercover agents and informants, and records from banks, phone companies and Canada Post.

■ TIP, A15



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FOLIO

Carney’s cabinet has had 100 days to change Canada. From trade to immigration, here’s what it has done so far ■ A7-9

CRIME

Man arrested in Alberta tweens’ ‘catch-a-predator’ plan ■ A3

LIFE & ARTS

Relay is good fun until it throws logic out the window ■ A12

REPORT ON BUSINESS

Youngest homebuyers make up large share of Ontario purchases ■ B1

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INSIDE

FOLIO	A7-9	REPORT ON BUSINESS	B1
EDITORIAL & LETTERS	A10	OPINION & ANALYSIS	B4
OPINION	A11	GLOBE INVESTOR	B7
WEEKEND WATCHING	A12	SPORTS	B10
FIRST PERSON	A13	COMICS	B12
WEATHER & PUZZLES	A14	OBITUARIES	B15

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