

Ottawa fast-tracks new pipeline, starting clock on federal review

West Coast conduit, now called Pacific Link, has already raised concern among some First Nations

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Ottawa designated a proposed pipeline to the West Coast from Alberta a project of national interest on Thursday, the starting point for what will likely be intense consultations and negotiations with Indigenous communities along the route, with some First Nations leaders already voicing concerns about the plan.

Prime Minster Mark Carney made the announcement on a frosty morning in Fort McMurray in northern Alberta – the heart

of the oil sands – alongside Premier Danielle Smith and Indigenous leaders from various communities in the region, including Treaty 8 Grand Chief Trevor Mercredi.

It marked the first official designation of a project of national interest under the Building Canada Act, which provides an accelerated pathway through regulatory approvals with the support of the federal government. The legislation is a marquee element of Mr. Carney’s economic agenda, and while the government has begun the process of listing other projects in the national interest, none have yet made the list.

The next step for the pipeline – now

called Pacific Link – is a federal review to finalize the conditions of the project. The review will include consultations with stakeholders about the project’s ownership, Indigenous rights and environmental protections.

The process will be led by Ottawa’s Major Projects Office with support from the Canada Energy Regulator, Mr. Carney said Thursday. The MPO aims to finalize conditions for the pipeline by Sept. 1, 2027, leading to a construction process and the pipeline being operational by 2032. Its expected price tag is between \$35.2-billion and \$43.7-billion.

■ PIPELINE, A6

Canada and EU plan to link new payment systems, easing transactions

STEVEN CHASE
SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY REPORTER

Canada and the European Union plan to link next-generation payment systems to enable faster cross-border transactions, according to a draft joint statement prepared for a summit between Ottawa and Brussels later this month.

This will help remove obstacles to business and investment between the two jurisdictions, according to the statement, an early version of a summit communiqué that was viewed by The Globe and Mail. It adds that the new partnership will be called an “Alliance for the Future.”

The draft statement doesn’t detail what next-generation payment systems include, but this term has been used by others to refer to a major upgrade of a country’s core payment infrastructure, usually built around real-time payments. The core infrastructure is a central set of systems that clear and settle payments between financial institutions.

The Prime Minister’s Office declined to offer any response to the draft joint statement, saying it would not comment on leaked documents.

Canada and the EU are working to modernize the electronic systems that their businesses and people use to move money from place to place.

■ CANADA-EU, A4

In a sea of blue, Quebec’s once-mighty Liberals fight to turn the tide

ERIC ANDREW-GEE

Even the leaves were turning Liberal red in Knowlton, Que., on the final week of the provincial election campaign, as Frédéric Beauchemin went door-knocking in his riding.

Good omens seemed to be stacking up for the Quebec Liberal Party candidate in Brome-Missisquoi. This corner of the Eastern Townships is prosperous, fairly anglophone and historically rouge. Voter after voter told Mr. Beauchemin they were tired of the incumbent Coalition Avenir Québec and totally opposed to the independence referendum promised by the Parti Québécois. He should have been winning by default.

The Quebec Liberals (PLQ) represent change in a change election, federalism in a federalist climate and economic credentials in an economic crisis.

Yet, despite all their advantages on paper, the PLQ are locked in a close three-way race in Brome-Missisquoi. The venerable old party looks poised to form Opposition again after being stuck in neutral during the campaign for the Oct. 5 election.

This week, Mr. Beauchemin was frantically trying to get out the vote with reinforcements from Montreal.

■ QUEBEC, A4

[SCIENCE]

RIDING HIGH

Alberta’s Joshua Kutryk and crewmates reach the ISS in record time after successful morning launch at Cape Canaveral ■ A2



From left: Astronauts Joshua Kutryk, Luke Delaney, Jessica Watkins and Sergey Teteryatnikov wave to the crowd at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida shortly before liftoff Thursday. TERRY RENNA/ASSOCIATED PRESS

How a pair of tragedies put Canada’s experiment in private plasma donation under the microscope

CHRIS HANNAY

For a year and a half, event planner Ethan Gill has regularly donated plasma at a commercial donation centre near his home in Whitby, Ont., that was run by an international pharmaceutical company called Grifols.

Plasma, a golden-coloured, protein-rich fluid found in blood, is used to produce life-saving medicines for patients with conditions such as a compromised immune system.

Mr. Gill often went twice a week as one of the ways he gives back to his community, he said – and getting paid up to \$70 each

time, which he would not be at a Canadian Blood Services centre, was a perk, too.

On a recent afternoon in August, he was hooked up to a plasmapheresis machine as normal, and donated nearly a litre of plasma. It would be the last donation he would make for the foreseeable future. Mr. Gill had no way to know it at the time, but behind the scenes, Grifols’ head office was dealing with an extraordinary situation.

For months, Health Canada inspectors had been finding deficiencies at Grifols sites across the country.

Health Canada’s attempts to get the company to change its practices were repeatedly unsuccessful – but became increasingly urgent after two donors died in Winnipeg and

the company began facing intensifying scrutiny in the media and from the public.

On Wednesday, Aug. 12, Health Canada sent a letter to the company telling it a site in Winnipeg connected to a donor’s death was still not compliant with federal regulations, and with special terms and conditions imposed on the company in March.

The regulator had already threatened that summer that it could take further compliance actions, even up to suspending Grifols’ licence, if the company did not immediately take action.

That same day Grifols did take action: by telling Health Canada it would stop taking collections in the country indefinitely.

■ GRIFOLS, A7



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