



بھارت میں ایشیوں کے ساتھ ناروا سلوک

ایک نئی خبر کے مطابق بھارتی حکومت کو خود اپنی حکومت کے خلاف کے لیے...

اصل تاشہ

اس وقت کی دنیا میں ہر چیز تبدیل ہو رہی ہے۔ اس وقت کی دنیا میں ہر چیز تبدیل ہو رہی ہے...

چاند چوری

چاند چوری کی کہانی سن کر ہر شخص کی دلچسپی ہوتی ہے۔ اس کی کہانی سن کر ہر شخص کی دلچسپی ہوتی ہے...

تازیب الشافعی (تیسرا اور آخری حصہ)

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انارڈی شل کاسر

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کراچی کی ہفت روزہ

کراچی کی ہفت روزہ کی کہانی سن کر ہر شخص کی دلچسپی ہوتی ہے۔ اس کی کہانی سن کر ہر شخص کی دلچسپی ہوتی ہے...

تعلیم اور صنعتی جہاز

تعلیم اور صنعتی جہاز کی کہانی سن کر ہر شخص کی دلچسپی ہوتی ہے۔ اس کی کہانی سن کر ہر شخص کی دلچسپی ہوتی ہے...

مولانا انارڈی شل آپ سے ہیں

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وہشت خانان

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نیاسا اور ہاری تو ملی تہجیات

نیاسا اور ہاری تو ملی تہجیات کی کہانی سن کر ہر شخص کی دلچسپی ہوتی ہے۔ اس کی کہانی سن کر ہر شخص کی دلچسپی ہوتی ہے...

آکر مہجیل

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Students across Canada are returning to class following the holiday break, with some provinces opting to delay bringing kids back into classrooms amid COVID-19 concerns, while others are resuming in-person instruction right away.

In British Columbia, Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry has said there was no need to delay school after the holidays and that a task force was working to ensure a safe return.

But some B.C. parents remain concerned about sending their kids back to school without more precautions in place to protect against the spread of COVID-19. By noon on Monday, more than 60,000 people had signed a petition calling on the province to pause in-class learning for two weeks.

"If schools were to reopen the same way that they did prior to the holiday, I am concerned," said Dr. Amy Tan, a physician and organizer with Masks for Canada. Tan said she wasn't sure if she would be sending her 11-year-old son back to school in Victoria.

She wants the province to release more information about recent spread of COVID-19 locally as well as within the province so that parents can make an informed decision. She also wants to see asymptomatic and more general, widespread testing in schools.

In Ontario, where thousands of elementary and secondary school students are returning to remote learning on Monday, the Official Opposition is similarly calling for widespread testing in schools.

Maez Siddiq, the NDP's education critic, said in an interview with CBC Toronto that the Ontario government

Coronavirus: What's happening in Canada and around the world on Monday

In Atlantic Canada, New Brunswick reported 17 new cases on Monday, while Newfoundland and Labrador reported one new case, breaking a five-day streak without any new infections.

Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia did not report any new cases on Sunday.

Some Halifax-area restaurants were scrambling over the weekend to prepare for reopening after the province announced on New Year's Eve that restaurants and bars would be allowed to offer dine-in service again starting on Monday.

Quebec reported 2,546 new cases of COVID-19 and 32 more deaths on Monday. There were 1,294 people in hospital with the illness, including 188 in intensive care.

More than 30,000 people in the province had received the first dose of the two-dose COVID-19 vaccine as of Sunday.

Ontario reported 3,270 new COVID-19 cases and 29 new deaths on Monday. With the new cases, the province's seven-day average of daily cases is approaching 3,000 for the first time.

The number of patients hospitalized with COVID-19 jumped considerably, up 192 to 1,190. Of those, 333 are being treated in intensive care, while 194 require the use of a ventilator.

Just before noon, the first person to receive the COVID-19 vaccine in the province - personal support worker Anis Quidagen - received her



second dose at Toronto's University Health Network, 21 days after the first.

Premier Doug Ford was on hand to witness the event and said that Ontario is going "full steam forward" with its vaccination efforts. More than 42,000 vaccine doses had been administered in Ontario as of Sunday, according to provincial data.

Manitoba announced 118 new infections and five new deaths on Monday.

Saskatchewan announced 238 new cases but no new deaths on Sunday. Meanwhile, there are now 369 active cases in an outbreak at the Saskatchewan Penitentiary.

In Alberta, the province's chief medical officer of health on Sunday reported an estimated 400 new cases of COVID-19. Dr. Deena Haseeb added that Alberta's hospitalization and ICU totals remained stable, and the province's death toll stayed at 1,046.

In British Columbia, which doesn't provide COVID-19 data on weekends, the government has given the green light for the Vancouver Canucks to play home games in the province during the upcoming 2021 NHL season.

In the North, Nunavut reported no new cases on Monday, leaving it with zero active cases. The territorial government announced Sunday that 265 of its 266 total cases have now recovered, while one case resulted in a death.

Yukon also did not report any new cases on Sunday, while N.W.T. did not provide updated figures over the weekend.

What's happening around the world
 As of Monday afternoon, more than 85.3 million cases of COVID-19 had been reported worldwide with more

than 47.9 million cases considered recovered or resolved, according to Johns Hopkins University's tracking tool. The global death toll stood at more than 1.3 million.

Brazil confirmed its first cases of the coronavirus variant first discovered in the United Kingdom on Monday. Two cases were reported in Sao Paulo state.

In Europe, Britain began vaccinating its population with the COVID-19 shot developed by Oxford University and AstraZeneca on Monday, as it looks to curb a sharp rise in cases in recent weeks fuelled by a new and more transmissible variant of the virus.

Britain is the first country to roll out the Oxford-AstraZeneca shot, which can be kept in refrigerators rather than the cold storage, making it easier to distribute than the Pfizer-BioNTech shot.

Meanwhile, France's cautious approach to its vaccine rollout appears to have backfired, leaving just a few hundred people vaccinated after the first week and rekindling anger over the government's handling of the coronavirus pandemic.

President Emmanuel Macron was scheduled to hold a special meeting with top government officials Monday afternoon to address the vaccine strategy and other virus development.

In France, a country of 67 million people, just 516 people were vaccinated in the first six days while Germany's first-week total surpassed

200,000 and Italy's was over 100,000.

In Asia-Pacific, Sri Lankan authorities on Monday announced that the schools will partially reopen starting next week, after being closed for nearly three months due to a COVID-19 surge. The education ministry has decided to keep schools closed in the capital Colombo and surrounding suburbs.

Mask wearing has become mandatory in some circumstances in Australia's largest city due to the pandemic risk. People risk a 200 Australian dollar (\$196 Cdn) fine in Sydney if they don't wear masks in shopping malls, on public transport and in various indoor areas.

Thailand has registered 745 new coronavirus cases, with a new death reported in Bangkok, where a semi-lockdown was ordered after the government has ordered all schools closed from Monday but has not yet closed down shopping malls or stores, while restaurants are still allowed to operate but cannot serve alcoholic beverages.

In the Americas, the U.S. health and human services secretary is shooting down the idea of expanding the number of Americans getting a COVID-19 vaccine by giving them only one dose instead of the two being administered now.

Alex Azar told ABC's Good Morning America on Monday that the U.S. is "holding in reserve that second dose" because that's what the science says to do. The two vaccines approved in the U.S. so far, one by Pfizer and the German firm BioNTech and the other by Moderna, each require two doses.

Some health experts have suggested that, with vaccine supplies short,

people might get partial protection from a single dose and that should be considered as a way to reach for more people faster. But Azar said "the data just isn't there to support that and we're not going to do that."

Azar said the U.S. has reported 1.5 million vaccinations in the last 72 hours, a "very rapid uptick" that he predicts will continue.

Columbia's capital, Bogota, will implement strict two-week quarantines in three neighborhoods beginning on Tuesday to try to control a second wave of coronavirus.

In the Middle East, Jordan has struck a deal with Pfizer and partner BioNTech to buy one million doses of their COVID-19 vaccine and another two million doses from the World Health Organization's COVAX program.

In Africa, 16 million Kenyan students were expected to return to their classrooms on Monday, most for the first time since schools closed in March due to the pandemic.

Students in some years returned to school in October to prepare for exams. But school officials say they don't have enough rooms to accommodate the January influx, with some classes having over 80 students, making physical distancing virtually impossible.

South Africa is aiming to get COVID-19 vaccines by next month but is still in talks with pharmaceutical companies and no deals have been signed yet.

The country remains the hardest hit on the continent, with more than 1.1 million cases and more than 29,000 deaths reported since the start of the pandemic.

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Canada 2021 Housing Forecasts Call For A Boom ... Or The Worst Crash in 40 Years

Amid an unpredictable pandemic, forecasts for the housing market are pretty much all over the map.

This could be the toughest year in living memory to make predictions about the economy, especially the housing market.

Amid the worst economic slowdown in decades, home sales and prices soared in many Canadian cities in 2020, along with housing markets in many other countries. The average house price in Canada has shot up by 13.8 per cent over the past year, and by 14.6 per cent in the U.S.

No wonder this year's batch of year-end forecasts for Canada's housing market are all over the map. From predictions of rapid price growth and housing shortages to warnings of a market crash, there's a forecast out there for every taste. Which, admittedly, isn't very helpful.

Broadly speaking, there are two camps: "Those who see this year's hot housing conditions continuing into next year, thanks to low mortgage rates and a lack of housing supply, and those who see trouble coming over mortgage deferrals and government income supports stop."

Not surprisingly, real-estate groups are aboard the boom train. The Canadian Real Estate Association, an umbrella group of local real estate boards, is forecasting a 9.1 per cent jump in house prices in 2021, with Ontario leading the way with a 16.3 per cent jump in prices, followed by Quebec at 13.6 per cent.

"Current trends and the outlook for housing market fundamentals suggest activity will remain relatively healthy through 2021, with prices either continuing to climb or remaining steady in all regions," CREA said in a forecast published mid-December.

Mortgage rates have fallen, including the rate on the Bank of Canada's stress test for borrowers, CREA noted. On top of that, record levels of migration into Canada in



recent years have pushed up demand for housing, and CREA expects that to continue over the pandemic era.

"Supply shocks" could hit market But right now, with border shutdowns in effect, immigration into Canada is at historic lows, and several provinces (including Ontario and British Columbia) saw their populations decline in 2020, the first time that has happened in records going back to 1946.

That's one reason why some forecasts are calling for a decline in housing prices in 2021.

In a forecast this month, investment research group Veritas said there are two possible "supply shocks" headed for Canada's housing market, which could flood the new market with new listings and push prices down.

The first is from the banking sector market, which has seen double-digit declines in the largest cities this year. Renters in lower-income jobs were the most affected by business shutdowns amid the COVID-19 pandemic, and the result has been rental markets in free fall in many major cities. In a survey of its investor clients, Veritas found signs a growing number of investors are planning to sell.

The other "supply shock" could come from the wrap-up of mortgage deferrals programs. According to Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp., as many as 16 per cent of

Canada's mortgage borrowers got a six-month payment holiday in 2020, the result of a program set up by the major lenders to prevent a wave of defaults in the pandemic's first wave.

Veritas looked at two scenarios in which 5 per cent, 10 per cent or 15 per cent of houses with a mortgage in deferral were put on the market after the deferrals ended. Excluding other factors, this would bring real estate prices down by 4 per cent to 11 per cent across Canada, including a 10 to 17 per cent decline in Vancouver and a 15 to 26 per cent decline in Toronto, Veritas predicted.

Downside triggered by a return to normal? In fact, some analysts fear that a "return to normal" could be the trigger for a housing correction.

With emergency government aid and lender supports in place, the market has fared well. But what happens when the pandemic passes, and the support ends? Financial reality could make a sudden comeback.

Royal Bank of Canada's chief risk officer told listeners on the bank's quarterly earnings call this fall that its baseline scenario is for an 8-per-cent drop in house prices over the next year, with prices remaining depressed "until late 2023."

In regulatory filings, the bank's best-case scenario calls for a 6.1-per-cent increase in house prices, while its worst-case scenario

calls for a whopping 29.6-per-cent drop.

"Canada hasn't seen such a significant decline at the national level since the early 80s," noted Better Dwelling, which first reported on RBC's forecast.

Detached homes best condos, small cities best large RBC isn't the only one saying Canada faces a potentially historic housing correction. Ratings agency Moody's put out a report this fall where it warned of falling house prices in 2021, though with big regional differences.

"We expect greater resilience in lower-density markets outside Canada's large urban cores," Moody's economist Abhilasha Singh wrote. "The pandemic has boosted demand for properties offering more space for working from home and fewer shared areas with neighbours. Smaller markets where such properties are more affordable will particularly benefit from this trend."

Within large cities, condos will fare worse than single-family homes because of the problems in the rental market, the Moody's economist predicted.

All of this means "the pandemic will lead to even further widening in economic inequality, including housing," Singh added. But one thing the forecasts seem to agree on, all in all, is that whatever happens in the next few years, the long-term outlook for Canada's housing markets is bright. And Canadian homeowners are unlikely to see the sort of financial hardships Americans saw during their housing market bust a decade ago.

"Although we expect delinquencies to increase in 2021, we do not expect the level of delinquencies, distressed sales or foreclosures to increase to the levels seen in the U.S. during the financial crisis," wrote Susan Hostenman, a senior director at Fitch Ratings.

"This is due to (enormous) having strong relationships with their borrowers and their close monitoring of their borrowers' financial situations after putting them on payment plans."

Historically, the (lenders) have been proactive in offering modifications or working with borrowers to make payments affordable. We forecast delinquencies to return to the pre-pandemic levels in 2022 as the economy improves."

Vaccine rollout picks up speed in First Nations across Canada

The Moderna COVID-19 vaccine has begun to arrive in First Nations across the country as the pandemic's second wave continues to batter many remote Indigenous communities.

In British Columbia, the Moderna vaccine arrived in 10 First Nations on Tuesday, communities that were chosen based on remoteness, need, and the availability of health care staff, said Shannon McDonald, the deputy chief medical officer for the province's First Nations Health Authority (FNHA).

McDonald declined to say which communities are getting the vaccine and how many doses are being offered.

"There's certainly not enough vaccine available to satisfy all the requirements," she said in an interview. "And then, just like everybody else, we wait for the next rollout."

Tsilhqan Nation in northwestern B.C., however, announced on its Facebook page last week that it had received 600 Moderna doses from the FNHA.

The Gigat Health Centre in Hartley Bay posted photos of its first vaccination clinic, held Wednesday, that included 95-year-old elder Helen Clifton, the first community member to be vaccinated.

Provinces and territories have prioritized health care workers and long-term care facilities in the first phase of their vaccine programs, but Indigenous populations are also considered high-risk for COVID-19, particularly remote communities, because of challenges such as long travel distances and access to health care.

While almost 500,000 doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine have been delivered across the country since it was approved by Health Canada on Dec. 9, it cannot be easily transported to remote communities or stored because of its extreme refrigeration requirements.

The Moderna vaccine is not as fragile and can be stored at 20-C, making it more suitable for locations with limited resources.

On Wednesday, Manitoba announced it would be sending 5,300 of 7,300 Moderna doses expected to arrive this week to remote First Nations.

The province has been hit hard and has seen disproportionate rates of COVID-19 cases and deaths among Indigenous populations in September.

In a New Year's Eve news release, Manitoba said that because of its higher proportion of Indigenous people, it will receive an additional 9,000 doses of the Moderna vaccine by the end of March and will fly them to priority locations. (The province said it also plans to get the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine to remote communities as quickly as possible from Thompson.)

It will be up to an appointed group of four First Nations health experts to determine which communities get the doses and who will be vaccinated first.

Bruce Lavallee, the appointed lead for Manitoba Kewatinowiki Okimakanak, which represents a group of First Nations in northern Manitoba, said having a partnership with the

year-over-year, our performance demonstrated the strength, stability and operational resilience of our franchise," he said.

Fellow banks - TD Bank Group, Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, Bank of Nova Scotia and Bank of Montreal - also said they will be paying bonuses.

Meanwhile, engineering firm Siemens announced it will split \$3.4 million between all employees that aren't senior managers.

Each staff member will wind up getting \$1,550, said Siemens President Pascal Kaul said in a release announcing the bonus.

Claudine Mages, a Concordia University professor who has researched corporate disclosures, wasn't surprised to hear that companies are rewarding staff despite economic uncertainty.

Many businesses, especially those in delivery or e-commerce like Amazon, have done well during the pandemic, so it wouldn't make sense for them to withhold a bonus if their future is looking bright, she said.

E-commerce company Shopify Inc. declined RBC to become the most valuable company on the TSX during the pandemic and reported massive profits as it helped small businesses switch to online sales.

As an online survey of 600 senior managers from companies with 20 or more employees in Canada revealed 48 per cent plan to offer year-end bonuses this year.

The survey conducted by consulting firm Robert Half and research company Dynata between Nov. 20 and Dec. 7 also showed that 27 per cent plan to increase bonuses this year, 59 per cent will keep them the same as previous years and 14 per cent will reduce them.

David King, Robert Half's

Canadian senior director president, said so many companies are paying a bonus and even upping them because the pandemic is making continuity and high performance important.

"Companies still need to prioritize the retention of top-performing employees, particularly at a time when many are taking on heavier workloads, working remotely and balancing home or family commitments," he said in an email.

Royal Bank of Canada, the country's second most valuable company on the TSX, said it will

offer bonuses to recognize everything its staff have done to support each other, their clients and their communities in a tough year.

The Toronto-based bank decided to give bonuses after "considering the external environment and the long-term interests of shareholders and employees," said spokesperson Andrea Ribbens.

"This year, RBC's overall performance was impacted by the unprecedented challenges brought on by the global pandemic and while year-end results were down

Canadian companies paying bonuses - and even increasing them amid COVID-19

TORONTO — Canadian companies may have spent the past year laying off staff and dealing with temporary closures stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic, but that isn't stopping many from rewarding workers this holiday season.

Several, including the country's top bank, say they are planning to boost their staff for a year of hard work with year-end bonuses — and some are even topping up the amount.

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"This year, RBC's overall performance was impacted by the unprecedented challenges brought on by the global pandemic and while year-end results were down

province and a voice at the table for the vaccine rollout will benefit everyone in this "very historic week."

Ontario received its first batch of the Moderna vaccine, about 53,000 doses, on Wednesday, and by Thursday afternoon more than half had already been administered.

John Gaulty, the public-health physician for the Sixteen Lakes First Nations Health Authority, which is overseeing COVID-19 case management in 31 remote communities in Northwestern Ontario, said it will be early February before his area receives Moderna doses and that the James and Ithason Bay regions will get the vaccine first.

While no specific date or timeline has been given, the Winnipeg-based Health Authority in Moose Factory announced Dec. 23 that it would be getting the vaccine soon and that the elderly and vulnerable and long-term care patients would be vaccinated first.

Dr. Gaulty said the plan is to vaccinate all adults, but achieving herd immunity will be difficult because as much as 40 per cent of the population in those communities is under 18 and the vaccine has not been approved for people under that age or pregnant women.

year-over-year, our performance demonstrated the strength, stability and operational resilience of our franchise," he said.

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As an online survey of 600 senior managers from companies with 20 or more employees in Canada revealed 48 per cent plan to offer year-end bonuses this year.

The survey conducted by consulting firm Robert Half and research company Dynata between Nov. 20 and Dec. 7 also showed that 27 per cent plan to increase bonuses this year, 59 per cent will keep them the same as previous years and 14 per cent will reduce them.

David King, Robert Half's

Canadian senior director president, said so many companies are paying a bonus and even upping them because the pandemic is making continuity and high performance important.

"Companies still need to prioritize the retention of top-performing employees, particularly at a time when many are taking on heavier workloads, working remotely and balancing home or family commitments," he said in an email.

Royal Bank of Canada, the country's second most valuable company on the TSX, said it will

offer bonuses to recognize everything its staff have done to support each other, their clients and their communities in a tough year.

The Toronto-based bank decided to give bonuses after "considering the external environment and the long-term interests of shareholders and employees," said spokesperson Andrea Ribbens.

"This year, RBC's overall performance was impacted by the unprecedented challenges brought on by the global pandemic and while year-end results were down



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How Canadians will know when it's their turn to get vaccinated

With the recent announcement that Health Canada has approved Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine, the second being made available to the public, Canadians are likely wondering when it will be their turn to get vaccinated.

But with the country currently in the first phase of vaccine rollout, that's still unclear, with much depending on what they do and where they live.

It's up to each individual province and territory to decide how the vaccine will be administered. But generally, they are following the recommendations put forward by the federal government's National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI). The advisory committee made these recommendations using experts in the fields of pediatrics, infectious diseases, immunology, pharmacy, nursing, epidemiology, pharmacoeconomics, social science and public health.

Who is getting vaccinated first? For the first phase of the vaccine rollout plan, NACI advised that initial doses should go to these four groups:

- Residents and staff of long-term care homes.
- Adults 70 and older, beginning with people 80 and older, then decreasing by five-year increments to 70 as supply becomes available.
- Health-care workers, including all those who work in clinical settings, and personal support workers who come in direct contact with patients.
- Adults in Indigenous communities, where infection can have disproportionate consequences.
- For Phase 2 of the vaccination rollout, NACI recommended that recipients include:
 - Health-care workers who are not part of the initial rollout.
 - Residents and staff of all other congregate settings (e.g., living quarters for migrant workers, correctional facilities, homeless shelters).
 - Essential workers, including police, firefighters and those in food production.



Provincial and territorial governments may make modifications to that list. For example, Alberta's plan separates the first phase into Phase 1A and Phase 1B - with First Nations, Métis and people 65 and over living in a First Nations community or Métis settlement not getting the vaccine until the second half of the first stage.

In Quebec, it was recently decided that caregivers over the age of 70 who visit residential and long-term care homes at least three times a week will be added to the high-priority group.

As for Phase 2, many regions have not yet prioritized who will be eligible or defined who will be considered essential workers.

The first phase is expected to wrap up for many provinces by the end of March, while the second phase could last into summer.

When is the general public going to receive a vaccine?

Much of that depends on the province or territory. In Ontario, retired general Risk Hillier, the head of the province's vaccination distribution task force, said he believes "we can get into a lot of mainstream Ontario by later July."

But other provinces, such as Alberta, have pegged the fall of 2021 as the beginning of the third phase, when the general population will receive the vaccine.

The Public Health Agency of Canada says the entire country should have enough doses on hand next year to vaccinate every Canadian who wants a shot by the end of September. But those timelines may differ depending on the province and territory.

fin. However, reports of people getting restricted with COVID-19 as seen as four months after recovering from their previous infection, suggest that most people who have recovered from COVID-19 will be eligible for vaccination.

How do I find out when it's my turn to get vaccinated?

During the first phase, health officials are urging the general public not to show up at vaccine clinics set up across the country. Many regional health officials are contacting those who are eligible, or those who are eligible are being notified through their employer. In Manitoba, appointments are being made by phone, with a new online system to be launched in early 2021.

As for the general public, who don't fit into the priority groups, British Columbia, for example, is currently putting together a system that will allow the public to register for access to the vaccine and to be formally notified when it's their turn.

Mostly, however, provinces are still developing those plans.

For more information about each province and territories' vaccine rollout plans, click on their government website.

Who doesn't get a vaccine yet?

The national advisory committee has recommended that certain populations not be vaccinated until more evidence is gathered about potential risks. They include those who:

- Are immunosuppressed due to disease or treatment.
- Have an autoimmune condition.
- Are pregnant or breastfeeding.
- However, a COVID-19 vaccine may be offered to individuals if a risk assessment deems that the benefits outweigh the potential risks.
- Will Canadian snowbirds have to fly home for a shot? According to the Canadian Snowbirds Association, for those snowbirds currently in Florida, the state's vaccination plan states that residency will not determine access to the COVID-19 vaccine. This means that non-residents, including Canadians who live in Florida part of the year, will be able to receive the vaccine in the state when it is more readily available in the coming months.
- The same applies for Canadian snowbirds in Arizona.

10 former Pentagon chiefs issue extraordinary warning to Trump

In an extraordinary rebuke of U.S. President Donald Trump, all 10 living former secretaries of defense have issued an extraordinary warning to Trump.

"Efforts to involve the U.S. armed forces in resolving election disputes would take us into dangerous, unlawful and unconstitutional territory," they wrote. "Civilian and military officials who direct or carry out such measures would be accountable, including potentially facing criminal penalties, for the grave consequences of their actions on our republic."

A number of senior military officers, including Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, have said publicly in recent weeks that the military has no role in determining the outcome of U.S. elections and that their loyalty is to the constitution, not to an individual leader or political party.

The 10 former Pentagon chiefs also warned in their Post article of the dangers of impeding a full and smooth transition at Defence Department prior to inauguration Day as part of a transfer of power to president-elect Joe Biden. Biden has complained of efforts by Trump-appointed Pentagon officials to obstruct the transition.

Without mentioning a specific example, the former defence secretaries wrote that transfers of power "often occur at times of international uncertainty about U.S. national security policy and posture," adding, "They can be a moment when the nation is vulnerable to actions by adversaries seeking to take advantage of the situation."

High-level tensions within the Pentagon have been rising since last summer, when Biden was elected. Biden's victory was a surprise to many, and it was seen as a potential Iranian attack on U.S. forces in the Middle East.

In another sign of U.S.-Iranian tension, the acting secretary of

defence, Christopher Miller, announced Sunday evening that he has changed his mind about sending the navy aircraft carrier, the USS Nimitz, home from the Middle East and instead will keep the vessel on duty. Just last week, Miller announced that he was sending the Nimitz home, a decision that had been opposed by senior military officials.

In reversing himself, Miller cited "recent threats issued by Iranian leaders against President Trump and other U.S. government officials." He did not elaborate, and the Pentagon did not respond to questions.

The opinion article in the Post was signed by Dick Cheney, William Perry, Donald Rumsfeld, William Cohen, Robert Gates, Leon Panetta, Chuck Hagel, Ash Carter, James Mattis and Mark Esper. Mattis was Trump's first defence secretary, he resigned in 2018 and was succeeded by Esper, who was fired just days after the Nov. 3 election.

The Post reported that Biden is writing the opinion piece with a conversation between Cheney and Hillier, retired ambassador and former senior Pentagon official, about how Trump might obstruct the transition.

however, enables the Canadian government to explore potential changes to its travel restrictions. For example, Canada can explore lifting travel restrictions on newcomers who have received a COVID-19 vaccine and who also provide a negative COVID-19 test before entering the country. The lifting of such restrictions would help newcomer flows recover, which would give the country's economy a much needed boost. The rationale behind the 2021-2023 Immigration Levels Plan is that a significant increase in Canada's newcomer intake is needed to support Canada's post-COVID economic recovery.

We should get a clearer picture of the direction of Canada's immigration system sometime in January. Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is due to provide his cabinet members with new mandate letters. This has been delayed by the pandemic, but it is believed the letters will finally be unveiled this month. If so, a new mandate letter to Immigration Minister Marco Mendicino will outline what priorities the department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) will pursue over the years to come.

Canadian immigration in 2021: What can we expect?

ANALYSIS: Here is a preview of what we can expect from Canada's immigration system following a turbulent year.

2020 was the year of the coronavirus pandemic, which continues to have a significant impact on Canada's immigration system.

After welcoming 341,000 new immigrants in 2019, Canada continued to accept high levels of new immigrants at the start of last year but the immigration system was completely upended when COVID-19 emerged as a global crisis in March 2020.

Canada's COVID-19 travel restrictions have been in effect since March 18th, limiting the numbers of foreign nationals who can currently enter the country. However, the Express Entry system, Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) and other forms of immigration processing continue to function.

The full nature of the coronavirus crisis means much remains uncertain as to what we can expect from Canada's immigration system in 2021. But, there are certainties in place which will benefit both Canada and future newcomers in 2021 and beyond.

Canada's immigration system will not return to normal until the pandemic is over. Fortunately, the end of the pandemic is in sight due to the emergence and approval of several vaccines. Canada began the largest vaccination campaign in its history in December and aims to vaccinate all those who want COVID-19 inoculation by September 2021.

Vaccinating Canada's residents will be one component to returning the country and its immigration system to normal. The other component is ensuring the global population and foreign nationals travelling into Canada are free from the virus.

Travel restrictions implemented by Canada throughout 2020 provide some sense of what COVID-19 policies it could continue to enforce even as the spread of the coronavirus begins to subside. For example, Canada could continue to keep its 14-day quarantine law as well as the requirement to obtain a negative COVID-19 test before travelling

into Canada in place to help limit the spread of the virus within its borders.

It is important to stress that the crisis has not impacted Canada's longstanding commitment to welcoming immigrants, temporary foreign workers, and international students. In fact, Canada has declined down on this commitment due to the crisis. Under its new 2021-2023 Immigration Levels Plan, Canada aims to welcome over 400,000 new immigrants per year, which is the highest levels in its history.

While it is difficult to imagine Canada will be able to achieve this target in 2021 while the pandemic continues, the higher targets enable Canada's federal and provincial governments to continue to hold immigration draws and process applications. The reason for this is, even if Canada is unable to physically welcome as many new immigrants as it wants in 2021, it can provide them with the necessary approvals so they can move to Canada at a later date.

The emergence of vaccines, however, enables the Canadian government to explore potential changes to its travel restrictions. For example, Canada can explore lifting travel restrictions on newcomers who have received a COVID-19 vaccine and who also provide a negative COVID-19 test before entering the country.

The lifting of such restrictions would help newcomer flows recover, which would give the country's economy a much needed boost. The rationale behind the 2021-2023 Immigration Levels Plan is that a significant increase in Canada's newcomer intake is needed to support Canada's post-COVID economic recovery.

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