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Canada's international graduates: Don't lose hope

There remain plenty of opportunities for international graduates to become Canadian permanent residents. Many were hoping to benefit from the English-speaking International Graduate stream that Canada launched on May 6. This was the most popular of the six streams introduced by Canada to allow some 90,000 additional international graduates and essential workers to apply for permanent residence. The two English-speaking essential worker streams have a quota of 50,000 applications combined while the quota for the English-speaking International Graduate stream was 40,000 applications. Given the sheer volume of international graduates in Canada, the English-speaking graduate stream was the first to fill its quota, a feat which was achieved 25 hours after the streams went live. Undoubtedly, there are candidates who are disappointed they did not have a chance to submit their application in time. Common reasons why they were unable to do so include not yet having an IELTS General Training or CELPIP test result in hand to show they meet the government's English language proficiency requirements. Some may not have been able to submit their payment receipt in time (a technical glitch that some candidates faced on May 6 and the morning of May 7). Others may not have been employed at the time of the streams launching for various reasons (e.g. they were due to start a new job after the streams launched).

Whatever the reason may be, each individual should not lose sight of the following possibilities. IRCC may accept more applications under the English-speaking International Graduate stream. Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) will eventually begin to review the 40,000 applications a process which inevitably entails refusing applications that do not meet IRCC's criteria. IRCC may then surprise us yet again. IRCC is not yet in a position to comment on this, and has not made any indication to this effect, but it may eventually welcome more English-speaking graduate stream applicants to compensate for the refusals. IRCC has done this in the recent past after holding their Parents and Grandparents Program (PGP) lotteries. Some of those invited through the lottery choose not to go ahead and submit applications, resulting in IRCC then inviting new applicants. Another possibility is that some candidates were eligible for both the graduate stream and an essential worker stream, and decided to submit two applications (and also pay double the application fee). To increase the number permanent residents it lands under the graduate stream, IRCC may choose to process such individuals under an essential worker stream. So far, the worker streams have predictably garnered far less interest than the graduate stream (graduates are a much larger population in Canada than foreign workers).

If IRCC falls short of achieving its 50,000 quota under the English-speaking essential worker streams, it may shift those spots over to the graduate stream. This is one option. Another would be to increase the number of eligible occupations under the essential worker streams, which would in turn, help more study permit holders and graduates become eligible under this temporary public policy. It is also worth remembering that IRCC's Immigration Levels Plan is flexible and is never set in stone. The levels plan is a guide, but in reality, the number of immigrants and their entry categories are determined by many variables within, and outside of, IRCC's control. These variables include IRCC's processing capacity, the processing capacity of provinces and territories, demand among immigration candidates, the ability of candidates to obtain and submit their documents in a timely fashion, among other reasons. The biggest variable right now is the coronavirus pandemic. The pandemic will continue to result in changes to the levels plan. For instance, there is potential that IRCC will need to transition even more people in Canada to permanent residence due to border restrictions remaining in place for longer. It is likely that IRCC anticipated the border restrictions would be lifted sometime in 2021 when it finalized its levels plan last October. However, the likelihood of the restrictions being lifted this year is now anyone's guess.

4th wave of COVID-19 likely, seasonal return may be inevitable if Canada reopens too fast

As Canada beats back its third coronavirus wave, experts warn a fourth one could strike at any time if restrictions are lifted too quickly - but there's hope that could be prevented with more vaccinations and careful reopening. The potential for a fourth surge of cases comes as multiple provinces struggle to get case counts back down after the grueling third wave started in March. In recent weeks, B.C. hit record high intensive care admissions, Alberta reported the highest case rate in Canada, and Ontario has been struggling to boost hospital capacity amid an overwhelming level of COVID-19 admissions by transferring patients across the province, halting non-emergency procedures, and bringing in medical teams from the Canadian Armed Forces. But that is starting to turn. Provincial restrictions and rising vaccination rates are bringing new cases down, and warmer weather is on the way, prompting words of caution from medical experts over reopening too fast and too soon. Physician-epidemiologist Dr. Nitin Mohan, a public health consultant and assistant professor at Western University in London, Ont., said lifting the bulk of restrictions before Canada boosts vaccination rates and achieves high levels of protection in hot spots could derail all the recent progress and spark a fourth wave. "This is not to fear-monger," he said. "This is very much factual, and we have evidence from previous waves." "We need to be prudent" Speaking of the current situation in Ontario, Dr. Peter Junji, scientific director of Ontario's COVID-19 Science Advisory Table, said the province could have avoided a second-breaking third wave if officials had implemented a lockdown several weeks earlier. "We'd have a much shorter lockdown right now," he said. "And the important part is just now not to fall into the same trap once more and make the same mistakes." Caroline Colijn, the Canada 150 Research Chair in mathematics for evolution, infection and public health and a professor at Simon Fraser University in B.C., said both the timing and severity of another surge in Canada will depend on "when we reopen, how fast we reopen, and how many people are vaccinated at the time we do it." In late April, federal officials suggested that once Canada hits at least three-quarters of the population getting one vaccine dose, it may be possible to start winding down lockdowns over the summer. Dr. Theresa Tam, Canada's chief public health officer, also noted once 20 per cent of the country has been fully vaccinated, officials can begin easing the most stringent restrictions and, "if you're careful, there won't be a resurgence." With that in mind, Canada is far from out of the woods, according to Junji, who said any mistakes could bring case counts right back up again. "Summer in itself may not be enough to protect us against the fourth wave," he said. "Therefore we need to be prudent." From an epidemiological point of view, the most optimistic scenario would be starting to reopen as the summer winds down, Colijn said, which would still likely spur another surge of cases over the fall and winter into 2022. Reopening too soon, she said, before hitting key vaccination targets, would be like cutting off a water supply while still dousing flames. "We're talking waves, as if they're just coming, as if they're not a choice," she said. "It's not a wave, it's a fire. It's a resurging forest fire." Ashleigh Tuin, an epidemiologist and mathematical modeller with the University of Toronto's Dalla Lana School of Public Health, maintains that future rises in cases are expected, but agrees policy choices and individual actions will play a role in how those play out. "If another wave does happen in the fall, while provinces are likely lifting restrictions, she's hopeful that vaccinations will make a difference - so that a rise in cases wouldn't spur the kind of rise in serious infections and hospitalizations that provinces are currently experiencing. "But that doesn't mean that we won't still see infection circulating," she said. "And it will indeed be the case that COVID-19 is set to become endemic illness." Junji stressed there's a chance hospitalizations could rise sharply yet again if a significant portion of the population remains unvaccinated, including any essential workers, which she said speaks to the need to prioritize high-risk groups. "This may become a seasonal, flu-like thing - but right now the impact of that would mainly land on people who did not accept the vaccine," she said. Junji considers the fall a transition point, when the short-term crisis of this pandemic starts to shift into COVID-19 becoming endemic, meaning a base level of infection remains within Canada's borders and may show up annually like the flu. That situation speaks to the need for booster shots to adapt to any variants emerging from largely unvaccinated regions of the world, he said, with some already in development from major vaccine manufacturers. "Hopefully we can learn from that experience," she said. Much like the U.K.'s high vaccination rates and tiered approach to reopening, Tuin noted Israel also offers lessons - and hope - for Canadians. "This winter, regardless of where our vaccine uptake will be, there will be cases in our ICUs that will emerge periodically," he added. "But hopefully not a full-blown surge." Lessons from U.K., Israel While a return to full normalcy remains months away, a COVID-19 will likely lurk as a lingering, seasonal threat, there are reasons to be hopeful that Canada's vaccination efforts will usher in a new phase of post-pandemic life. In the U.K., where more than two-thirds of all adults 18 and up have now had at least one dose and roughly a third are fully vaccinated - with more than 50 million shots dished out - there's a clear roadmap toward re-education. Already, residents are enjoying outdoor dining, and all social restrictions are expected to be lifted by June 21. Colijn noted in some age groups in the U.K., there has been upwards of 90 per cent uptake for vaccinations. While the U.S. is now reporting state-by-state struggles to fill appointment slots, she's hopeful the situation across the pond is a more natural companion for Canada. "Hopefully we can learn from that experience," she said.

Just got accustomed to the fact that we don't only have flu, and the common cold, but we also have COVID-19 out there," Junji added.

Infectious disease specialist Dr. Srivasa Murthy, an assistant professor of medicine at the University of British Columbia, agreed this illness will linger on as one that's endemic in many areas "for quite some time."

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Lessons from U.K., Israel

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Deadly shooting at Vancouver airport linked to gangs, police say

A 28-year-old man was shot and killed Sunday at Vancouver International Airport in what police believe was gang-related killing. The shooting, which occurred mid-afternoon outside the departures terminal, was the latest in a spate of gang-related violence across B.C.'s Lower Mainland, police said. Sgt. Frank Jang with the Lower Mainland's Integrated Homicide Investigation Team (IHIT), said the victim was known to police. Richmond RCMP responded to reports of a shooting at around 3 p.m. local time. Police intercepted the getaway vehicle - an SUV - and were shot at by the suspects, who are still at large, said Jang. At a media briefing at the airport Sunday night, Jang and Chief Superintendent Will Ng, who is in charge of Richmond RCMP, said they're frustrated the latest violence occurred in a public area with innocent bystanders. "They will stop at nothing to target rivals, even if it's at an international airport in broad daylight on Mother's Day, and putting everyone at risk,"



including shooting at a police officer, which indicates to me these people have no care whatsoever," Ng said. Police called off a chase. Added Jang: "There are just no further words, please don't kill one another, please stop the violence. "Through no fault of their own, bloodshed at a section of the international and Canadian departure areas and police erected white screens in front of an entrance way. Inside the terminal, the gang shooting and make arrests. Ng said police will use "next-level strategies" to target gang members, which include efforts to try and keep people from joining gangs. As of May 6, Canada has recorded over 137,885 cases of COVID-19 identified as a variant of concern - with over 96 per cent of those variants being that of B.1.1.7. Several studies published last week also suggested that Pfizer's vaccine, which Canada will be receiving several millions of in the coming months, was extremely effective in preventing both infection and death from the U.K. and South African variants. One other topic Bernstein spoke on was Canada's views on waiving intellectual property and patent rights on COVID-19 vaccines. While Canada has not yet taken a direct stance, much like the U.S. has in waiving such rights to allow freer access to vaccine production, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on Friday said that Canada was working on a "consensus-based solution" around it. Bernstein said that while he hasn't discussed that issue with the country's Vaccine Task Force, he believes that the widespread use and need of the COVID-19 vaccine makes such a waiver on vaccines very important but "mostly symbolic."

that the airport was open and safe for airport workers and those who need to travel. It said the safety and security of its employees, community and passengers remain its priority and it is fully co-operating with RCMP to support the investigation. The incident disrupted major traffic routes near the airport and police asked people to stay away from the area. The Alex Fraser and Queensborough bridges, as well as the Massey Tunnel, were temporarily closed but have since reopened, according to DriveBC. RCMP said it appears the airport shooting is connected to a burned-out vehicle that was found in nearby suburban Surrey, in the 9700 block of Princess Drive at 3:30 p.m. Sunday afternoon. Jang said police are looking for dashcam video from those who were in the area Sunday between the airport and the location where the vehicle was found on fire to help with their investigation. Both Jang and Ng called for a coordinated response between law enforcement agencies to solve the gang shooting and make arrests. Ng said police will use "next-level strategies" to target gang members, which include efforts to try and keep people from joining gangs.

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

Manitoba is closing classrooms in its two largest cities as the province's top doctor says more needs to be done to slow community spread of COVID-19 and "break these transmission chains." Manitoba on Monday reported 502 new cases of COVID-19 and four additional deaths. Dr. Brent Roussin, chief provincial public health officer, says some people are taking risks by going to work or hanging out with others when they or someone in their household is asymptomatic. Stunned from kindergarten through to Grade 12 in Winnipeg and Brandon will move to remote learning as of Wednesday - and will stay out of class until May 30. Schools in the rest of the province remain open, but face tight protocols aimed at clamping down on COVID-19. The measures were taken to try to "shorten the period that we're going to have to endure this third wave," Premier Brian Pallister said Monday as he faced questions about the province's latest decisions, including the timing of the announcement of school closures and support measures for businesses. "We're not powerless in this," said the premier, who urged people to follow the rules and get vaccinated as soon as possible. Alberta, which has implemented a range of new limits, including a shift to online learning, restrictions on retail and most recently closing restaurant patios and personal wellness services, on Sunday reported 1,633 new cases of COVID-19 and two additional deaths. Health Minister Patty Hajdu told CBC's Rosemary Barton this week that Ottawa is in "regular conversations with all of the provinces and territories about how we can best help them." Hajdu said that she is set to speak to her counterpart in Manitoba in the coming week, and noted that she recently spoke to Alberta Health Minister Tyler Shandro to reiterate the services Ottawa can offer.



What's happening across Canada: As of 1:59 p.m. ET on Monday, Canada had reported 1,290,679 confirmed cases of COVID-19, with 80,301 considered active. A CBC News tally of deaths stood at 24,655. Ontario on Monday reported 2,716 new cases of COVID-19 and 19 additional deaths. According to the province, hospitalizations stood at 1,632, with 828 people in ICU as a result of COVID-19. Quebec, meanwhile, reported 662 new cases of COVID-19 on Monday and six additional deaths. Across the North, Nunavut on Monday reported seven new cases of COVID-19. Premier Joe Savikataaq said as of Monday, there were 70 active cases - all in Iqaluit. Health officials in the Northwest Territories and Yukon will provide updates on COVID-19 later Monday. In Atlantic Canada, Nova Scotia reported 121 new cases of COVID-19 on Monday. Dr. Robert Strang, the province's chief medical officer of health, and Premier Iain Rankin are set to hold a briefing later in the day. New Brunswick reported six new cases of COVID-19 on Sunday, while Newfoundland and Labrador reported five new cases. There were no new cases reported in Prince Edward Island on Sunday. Saskatchewan Premier Scott Moe said vaccinations and public co-operation with the COVID-19 health restrictions mean the province can begin to loosen rates at the end of this month. The province is setting May 30 as the target date for the first step of its COVID-19 "Re-opening Roadmap." British Columbia health officials will provide updated figures covering the weekend later Monday. What's happening around the world: As of early Monday morning, more than 158.3 million cases of COVID-19 had been reported worldwide, according to Johns Hopkins University's coronavirus tracking tool. The reported global death toll was approaching 3.3 million. In the Asia-Pacific region, Sri Lanka authorities are converting garment factories and other buildings for facilities to treat COVID-19 patients amid fears existing hospitals may run out of capacity. Armed forces are acquiring buildings in all parts of the country and converting them to hospitals to increase capacity, said army commander Gen. Shavendra Silva, head of the country's COVID-19 operations centre. Sri Lanka is experiencing a sharp surge in infections, reporting 2,000 new cases for the first time on Monday. India will recruit hundreds of former army medics to support its overwhelmed health-care system, the defence ministry said on Sunday, as the country grappled with surging COVID-19 infections and deaths amid calls for a complete nationwide lockdown. In Africa, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa has dedicated his weekly radio address to the nation to the issue of waiving intellectual property rights on COVID-19 vaccines, saying it's "necessary at this time" and "in direct response to an emergency." Ramaphosa's message reflects his country's hope that the waiver, first proposed by South Africa and India, may still happen despite opposition from countries such as Germany. The idea is that waiving IP rights could encourage vaccine production by local manufacturers in the developing world. Ramaphosa writes that the Biden administration's support for a waiver has given negotiations at the World Trade Organization "added momentum." He compares the vaccine IP waiver issue to South Africa's eventually successful fight two decades ago to ease IP on life-saving antiretroviral drugs during the HIV/AIDS crisis. "And once again, South Africa is waging a struggle that puts global solidarity to the test," Ramaphosa wrote. In the Middle East, the United Arab Emirates has announced it will bar airline passengers arriving from Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka starting May 12 until further notice, as concern mounts over a virus variant spreading in India. In Europe, the European Union has not made any new orders for AstraZeneca vaccines beyond June when its contract ends, European Internal Market Commissioner Thierry Breton said, after the EU signed a deal with Pfizer-BioNTech. In the Americas, the U.S. has long way to go to recover from the pandemic and many Americans are still struggling to return to work and last week's lower-than-expected jobs numbers were a reflection of that, Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo said on Sunday.

Canada to face COVID-19 like yearly endemic flu due to variants, expert says

A Canadian health expert on the federal government's COVID-19 Task Force says that Canada and the rest of the world will most likely see the novel coronavirus become a part of the viral ecosystem - akin to the seasonal endemic flu - due to the spread of several variants of concern. Speaking with Abigail Binman on the West Block, Dr. Alan Bernstein said that his advisory council in the task force, which focuses on variants of concern, were looking at ways to deal with the spread of alarming variants across the country. "According to him, one way to deal with such spread would be for vaccine makers to adapt and modify their shots over the coming years - a path he says Canada is already negotiating with suppliers to do. "We've been in this journey before, of course, with [the flu,

we all get the influenza vaccine every year and every year is a different vaccine because the influenza virus changes every year," said Bernstein. "So those are variants, and some years, of course, the flu variants can be very serious and some years are quite mild - the ones that are serious, we don't call them variants of concern, but we could. "And so I think we're going to enter into that world now with the COVID-19 variants of concern and the ones that we know about now." How likely is a universal vaccine to combat all variants? Doctor answers your COVID-19 questions Canada alone has seen the spread of at least four variants of concern - one of which Bernstein and several health experts have pointed to as having taken over as the dominant version of COVID-19 in Canada and several other parts of the world. He pointed to the B.1.1.7 variant, first discovered in the U.K., as now becoming the main COVID-19 variant in the country. That specific variant's danger brought alarm to public health experts and officials as it is up to 65 per cent more transmissible. Bernstein said that they were lucky, however, because the more vaccine-resistant B.1.351 variant, initially found in South Africa, still had very low numbers in Canada. "And so we're going to have to design new vaccines against that variant ... but it means we're all going to have boosters maybe, [though] we don't know that for sure yet," he said, pointing to the advantages of mRNA vaccines like Pfizer and Moderna that can be easily tweaked.

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"Don't think will last here more than a week," says Kangana Ranaut after Instagram pulls down her post calling COVID a small time flu

On Saturday morning, Kangana Ranaut took to her Instagram handle and informed about her COVID diagnosis. In her post she said that she would demolish the virus and called it a small time flu which got too much press. A day later, Instagram has pulled down the post, claims the actress.

On Sunday afternoon, Kangana took to her Instagram stories and said that Instagram pulled down the post as some people were hurt. "Instagram has deleted my post where I threatened to demolish COVID because some were hurt. Malab terrorists and communist sympathizers use the twitter page like COVID fear club awesome. It's been two days here on insta but don't think will last here more than a week," she wrote.

Announcing her COVID diagnosis, Kangana had called the virus a small time flu. This did not go down well



with several as the virus has caused large scale devastation in the country with thousands of people succumbing to the virus. "I was feeling tired and weak with slight burning sensation in my eyes for few days, was hoping to go to Himachal so got my test done yesterday and today the result came I am covid positive. I have quarantined myself, I had no idea this virus is having a party in my body, now that I know I will demolish it, people please don't give anything any power over you, if you are scared it will scare you more, come let's destroy this Covid-19 it is nothing but a small flu which got too much press and now psyching few people. Har Har Mahadev," she had written in the now deleted post.

Meanwhile, the actress' account was suspended from Twitter last week for violating their rules. Ever since she has been active on Instagram where she has over 7 million followers.

Anupam Kher reacts to rumours of wife Kirron Kher's demise

Late on Friday night, veteran actor Anupam Kher took to his social media handles to shut rumours about the demise of his wife Kirron Kher.

The actress who is battling cancer was rumoured to have passed away. Anupam Kher in learning about the rumours doing the rounds immediately took to his social media handles to clear the same. "There is a rumour going around about Kirron's health. It is all false. She is doing absolutely fine. In fact she got her 2nd vaccination dose for COVID this afternoon," he wrote.

"I will request people not to spread such negative news. Thanks. Stay safe. @KirronKherBJP" urging people to not indulge in such fake news.

In April, Anupam Kher revealed that Kirron Kher has been diagnosed with multiple myeloma, a type of blood cancer. After the revelation, Kher had posted a video to thank his fans and well-wishers for the love that he and his family received.

"Thank you everybody for your love, concern, best wishes and blessings for @KirronKherBJP. She conveys her gratitude to all of you. You all have been wonderful in these tough times. We feel humbled! Love and prayers for all of you! #Thanks @Gratitudo," he had written along with the video.

Pakistan on verge of innings triumph over Zimbabwe

Pakistan were on the brink of a second successive innings win against Zimbabwe despite a fighting performance by Regis Chakabva on the third day of the second and final Test at the Sports Club on Sunday. Bad light ended play with Zimbabwe on 220 for nine in their follow-on innings, 158 runs short of making Pakistan bat again.

Chakabva made 80 as Zimbabwe made their highest total of a series in which they have been outclassed. Chakabva followed up his score of 80 on the third day of the second and final Test at the Sports Club on Sunday. Bad light ended play with Zimbabwe on 220 for nine in their follow-on innings, 158 runs short of making Pakistan bat again.

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attempted big hit off Nauman to Pakistan captain Babar Azam at slip. It was the start of a collapse in which six wickets fell for 35 runs. With Zimbabwe's last two batsmen at the wicket, the umpires allowed an extra half hour's play in order to try to achieve a result but called off play for bad light four overs into the extra time.

IPL 2021's New Zealand cricketers arrive home

All New Zealand cricketers and coaches, who were involved in IPL 2021, have arrived home safely by private jets in two groups after the indefinite suspension of the T20 league midway into the season due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The lucrative league was suspended on May 4 after multiple COVID-19 cases were reported inside its bio-bubble. Cricketers Trent Boult, Finn Allen, Jimmy Neesham, Adam Milne and Scott Kuggeleijn, coaches and former players James Pattinson and Shane Bond, and Royal Challengers Bangalore's director of cricketing operations Mike Hesson were the first to land here late on Saturday night. They arrived on board a Bombardier Global Express private jet via Tokyo in the first of two chartered flights representing the Kiwi side to the league was suspended. On Sunday, former Black Caps captain Brendon McCullum, coach and former players James Pattinson and Stephen Fleming were among the second group of cricketers to touch down here. A second private jet of Vistara carrying McCullum, Fleming, fellow IPL coach Kyle Mills, Kiwi fast bowler Lockie Ferguson, commentators Simon Doull and Scott Styris, and umpire Chris Gaffney also safely landed at the Auckland Airport on Sunday evening. All the players and coaches went into managed isolation upon arrival, according to a report in stuff.co.nz. Wicket-keeper batsman Tim Southee, who tested positive for COVID-19, is still in India and was awaiting his transfer to a private hospital in Chennai, the facility in which former Australia player Michael Hussey was being treated after testing positive earlier in the week.

Katrina Kaif to romance Vijay Deverakonda in his next bilingual



Vijay Deverakonda's big Bollywood debut Liger might have been pushed for now, owing to Covid restrictions, but down South, he has signed on two big films - one each with Shiva Nirvana and Koratala Siva. Now, we hear that one of the projects will have Vijay romance a top Bollywood actress.

Hungama, "Katrina has been roped in to romance Vijay in the bilingual that is being planned as a pan India release. The film is being mounted on a huge scale. And with this, Katrina will now star in films with both the Vijays. She also has Sriam Ravichandran's next Merry Christmas with Vijay Setpathi lined up this year." The makers wanted a top face to make it a more universal film. "Although it's a South film, it is being funded for an all India release and Katrina's presence will push the film up North. The details of the film are not known but it's a big one for Katrina." Apart from this, Katrina also has Phone Bihu with Siddhant Chaturvedi and Ishaan Khatter and the next instalment of the Tiger franchise.

Sourav Ganguly: India to tour Sri Lanka in July for limited overs series



BCCI president Sourav Ganguly on Sunday said that the Indian team, sans the top players, will tour Sri Lanka in July for a limited overs bilateral series. Big names such as skipper Virat Kohli and vice-captain Rohit Sharma will not be part of the tour as they will be engaged in a marquee five-match Test series in England. "We have planned a white ball series for the senior men's team during the month of July where they will play T20 Internationals and ODI's in Sri Lanka," Ganguly told PTI in an interaction. Asked how will India segregate the two teams, Ganguly said that it will be a different side, which won't have anyone from the outfit that will be in the United Kingdom at that time.

It is no harm in India's white ball exports getting some match time and selectors also get to fix the missing jigsaw in selection puzzle. "This will give the team a chance to carry out experiments, like whether it will be Chahal, Rahul, Chahal or Rahul Tewatia for the leg break bowler's slot, if Chetum Sakaraya can be tried as left-arm option, whether Devdutt Padikkal or Shreyas Iyer gets fit to play by then. Not to forget that Prithvi Shaw's international career could get a boost with this white ball tournament, with Suryakumar Yadav and Ishan Kishan also getting a chance to stake their claim. "Technically, in the month of July there are no official series India need to play in the month of July, yet to be chalked out, the BCCI would want the likes of Shikhar Dhawan, Hardik Pandya, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Deepak Chahar, Yuvrajendra Chahal to be match ready. "The BCCI president is very keen that all our top players are match ready and since England doesn't have a white ball leg the month of July can be utilized well," a BCCI source told PTI while explaining the logic behind the tour. For the Kohli and Sharma, they need not come from UK, which has in place some hard quarantines. "Technically, in the month of July there are no official series India need to play in the month of July, yet to be chalked out, the BCCI would want the likes of Shikhar Dhawan, Hardik Pandya, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Deepak Chahar, Yuvrajendra Chahal to be match ready. "The BCCI president is very keen that all our top players are match ready and since England doesn't have a white ball leg the month of July can be utilized well," a BCCI source told PTI while explaining the logic behind the tour. For the Kohli and Sharma, they need not come from UK, which has in place some hard quarantines.

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When will the Canada-U.S. border reopen?

Travel across the Canada-U.S. border could resume by late summer or fall, according to the cautious estimates of some experts, but they say the process will be complicated.

The border has been closed to non-essential travel like tourism and recreation since March 2020, and the closure agreement between Ottawa and Washington is expected to be renewed on May 21.

The agreement makes exceptions, for example, on compassionate grounds like attending a funeral, or to apply for refugee status, and enforcement has been less than absolute.

But the question on most people's minds, says foreign policy expert Aaron Ettinger, is probably "When can I do my day trips over the border once again?"

"And my answer to that is, that it's going to be a long, long time," Ettinger, an associate professor at Carleton University who specializes in Canadian and U.S. foreign policy, says he believes the borders will remain largely shut for at least a few more months.



"My gut tells me it's going to be closed at least well into the fall of 2021," he said, "because things are literally ten times worse now than they were this time last year with infection rates, with ICU admissions."

He says once both countries sort out the public health concerns, they will have to work through the politics.

"Politically, the United States and Canada would have to get on the same page ... and that would take an enormous amount of diplomatic cross-border interaction," he said. Given how complicated their relationship is already, Ettinger says he believes the border situation won't be resolved quickly.

He noted that the U.S. has vaccinated a far greater percentage of its residents than Canada.

"The U.S. may not be all that keen on letting Canadian travellers over the border ... but I would imagine that any Canadian government would want the same treatment that Canada offers American travellers."

Complex relationship
Melissa Hausman, a political science professor at Carleton University, says both populations would have to achieve a certain threshold of vaccination, and be satisfied with each other's levels before engaging in discussions.

"I think that's probably a few months off," she said.

Further complicating matters is that Canada can't currently make its own vaccine doses. She said Canada's dependence on the U.S., among others, for vaccine supply adds a layer of economics to the already-complex cross-border interaction.

"I would say my speculative guess is probably [reopening in] late summer, earliest, and I don't even know if that'll happen," she said.

What about quarantines?
The rules requiring travellers to quarantine after crossing the border will also likely change, Ettinger says, as more people are vaccinated and cases decline.

He noted Prime Minister Justin Trudeau hinted at a possible vaccine passport system last week.

"Though he didn't commit to anything, it's a signal that he sees a co-ordinated system in the not-so-distant future," Ettinger says.

"The U.S. and Canada could develop a North American vaccine passport to replace and simplify the ramshackle quarantine rules currently in place."

Intergovernmental Affairs Minister Dominic LeBlanc said last month it was too soon to talk about reopening the border due to the pandemic's uncertain path in the coming months.

"For the moment, there's no active discussion [about] adjusting those measures," he said at the time.

The Public Health Agency of Canada said in an email that the federal government is "continually evaluating the impacts of border measures."

"Decisions and considerations about lifting those measures will be based on reliable scientific evidence," said the agency.

Children 12 and older now cleared to receive Pfizer vaccine: Health Canada

OTTAWA — Health Canada says the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine is now safe for 12-year-old children aged 12 and up.

The federal health agency has announced it has approved administering the vaccine to children ages 12 to 15, after initially authorizing it for use in individuals 16 years of age and older.

"After completing a thorough and independent scientific review of the evidence, the department determined that this vaccine is safe and effective when used in this younger age group," said Health Canada's chief medical adviser Dr. Supriya Sharma.

Health Canada has authorized those 12 years of age and older to be given the same dose regimen as adults. The authorization was based on the results of Pfizer-BioNTech's Phase 3 clinical trial involving 2,260 adolescents aged 12 to 15.

Conducted in the United States, the trial found the vaccine to be 100 per cent effective in children aged 12 to 15, up from the 95 per cent efficacy shown after the second shot in the trials with older groups.

"While younger people are less likely to experience serious cases of COVID-19, having access to a safe and effective vaccine will help control the disease's spread to their family and friends, some of whom may be at higher risk of complications. It will also support the return to a more normal life for our children who have had such a hard time over the past year," Sharma said.

The two-dose Pfizer vaccine was the first COVID-19 vaccine to be authorized by Health Canada. It was given the regulatory green light in December 2020 and was the first COVID-19 vaccine to be administered in this country.

"There are some provinces that have already provided some vaccine to this age group, if they were children that were at high risk. That was done off label, which is absolutely within their purview, so we do have some children in Canada that have already received a vaccine dose," Sharma told reporters on Wednesday.

Although federal officials said Wednesday that Canada is the first country in the world to authorize the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for children aged 12 and older, a Pfizer spokesperson later said that Algeria had done so last month.

"SIGNIFICANT STEP" WITH SCHOOLING IMPLICATIONS
In a statement about the first other vaccine in use in Canada could start being offered to younger people. As has been the case with each new COVID-19 vaccine approval from Health Canada, the agency has published a series of documents detailing its decision and a summary of the evidence reviewed.

Pfizer-BioNTech is required to continue providing Health Canada with ongoing safety and efficacy information as the product becomes used in real-world settings.

The vaccine is an mRNA vaccine, which means it teaches cells how to make a protein that triggers an immune response, without using the live virus that causes COVID-19. Once that immune response is triggered, antibodies are produced, which protect people from being infected should the virus enter their system in the future.

"Everybody who will be willing to get immunized themselves should be willing to have their children vaccinated as well. They're doing the right thing," said pediatrician and infectious disease specialist Dr. Jim Kellner in an interview on CTV News Channel, adding that seeing kids get vaccinated will be key to Canada reaching herd immunity.

Typically, the vaccine submission review process can take much longer, but because of an emergency order, Health Canada has been able to expedite the authorization process.

Other authorized COVID-19 vaccine manufacturers are also conducting trials with their vaccines in children and it's likely over time other vaccines in use in Canada could start being offered to younger people.

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Canada's economy lost 207,000 jobs last month

Canada's economy lost 207,000 jobs in April, as a new round of government-ordered lockdowns forced businesses to lay off workers.

Statistics Canada reported Friday that 129,000 full-time jobs were lost, along with an additional 78,000 part-time positions.

The jobless rate ticked up to 8.1 per cent from 7.5 per cent a month earlier.

While economists were expecting jobs to be lost in the month, the figure came in worse than the 175,000 losses expected.

Almost half of the job losses were young workers, those between 15 and 24 years old. Most of the job losses were in hard-hit sectors that employ a lot of young people: retail, food services and information, culture and recreation.

Many workers have gotten used to the constant seesaw of finding work in the pandemic,

only to lose it again. Tyler Lumb opened his own barbershop in Toronto in 2018, and like many businesses it was hit hard by the pandemic.

He shut his doors in March 2020 and wasn't sure when he'd be able to reopen them. He was eligible for government aid programs like the Canadian emergency response benefit (CERB), but said they weren't enough to cover his rent, so times have been tough.

"For my industry specifically it's been a really big struggle. I mean we haven't worked for almost a year," he said.

High-touch businesses like barber shops have been especially hard hit, but a few weeks ago, Lumb started offering haircuts to customers outside, in High Park, in the west part of the city.

"I feel like that's the safest thing for both myself and my clients, and it's been proven to be very safe," he said of his pop-up business, which he calls

High Park Barber. But the province's stay-at-home order put an end to that, too, as parks were even ordered shut at one point.

Now Lumb says he's not sure he'll ever reopen, even if he's given the OK to do so. "The government's chosen big box companies over small businesses, and let the rich get richer," he said. "It has deterred me from wanting to open another business here in the city."

Ontario and B.C. bore the brunt. That's bad news for the city and the province, because Ontario will need businesses and jobs like Lumb's to come back to offset the disproportionate number of job losses the province saw in April.

Almost all the job losses were concentrated in Ontario and British Columbia, two provinces that implemented strict coronavirus control measures to try to keep a lid on rising

COVID-19 numbers. Ontario lost 153,000 jobs and the jobless rate rose to nine per cent. B.C., meanwhile, lost 43,000, while the jobless rate held steady at 7.1 per cent.

Saskatchewan and New Brunswick added a small number of jobs, and in every other province the job market was basically flat.

Sri Thanabalasingam, an economist with TD Bank, said that April's figures confirm what economists had been suspecting: that the economic recovery from COVID-19 took a step back last month - and may not have turned the corner yet, either.

"With restrictions remaining in place across the country, Canada's labour market recovery will probably not fully course correct in May," Thanabalasingam said.

"The snapback could occur in June, however, as the vaccination rollout ramps up, and case loads gradually decline in large parts of the country. Better days are ahead for the Canadian labour market, but it may take a little longer to get there."

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