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**Canada extends travel ban from India and Pakistan**

Direct flights from Canada to India and Pakistan will continue to be banned until at least June 21.  
 Canada has extended the travel ban for all direct passenger and business flights from India and Pakistan for another 30 days, until June 21, 2021.  
 The travel ban first went into place on April 22 for 30 days, until May 22.  
 Cargo flights carrying vaccines and protective equipment will continue to be allowed into Canada.  
 Passengers may still be able to come to Canada. They will have to do so via an indirect route, and will need to get a COVID-19 test from their last point of departure.  
 The news was confirmed by Omar Alghabra, Canada's transport minister, at a government pandemic briefing on May 21.  
 "I can say that we've seen a significant reduction in the number of positive cases of COVID-19 arriving from international flights since this restriction was put in place," Alghabra said.  
 Air Canada extended the flight ban to India last week, expecting the government's announcement. The airline does not fly to Pakistan.  
 Canada's deputy chief public health officer Dr. Howard Hanon reinforced the importance of the travel restrictions in place, saying that about 70 per cent of new COVID-19 cases are variants of concern.  
 "It's important to have these measures in place, and we recognize that although importation of vaccines is a small part of what's happening with respect to the situation in Canada, anything we can do in terms



of that added layer is important at this time," Hanon said.  
 The Indian variant is called B.1.6.1.7. Between February 22 and May 6, 229 passengers tested positive for this new variant. There may also be community transmission within Canada. This is according to data from the Public Health Agency Canada (PHAC).  
 Dr. Theresa Tam, Canada's chief public health officer, had said that this variant shows increased transmissibility.  
 On Monday, India surpassed 300,000 deaths related to COVID-19. This is the third highest death toll in the world. The country also announced 222,315 new COVID-19 cases, bringing its total to almost 27 million since the pandemic began. This is the second highest, after the U.S.  
 India has the second largest population in the world, with over 1.3 billion people.  
 In addition, a rare but fatal fungal infection began affecting COVID-19 patients in India, and has worried doctors.

The COVID-19 pandemic is being perpetuated by a "wasteful inequity" in vaccine distribution, the head of the World Health Organization (WHO) said on Monday as he set new targets for protecting people in the poorest countries.  
 WHO director general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus warned that no country should assume that it's "out of the woods," no matter its vaccination rate, as long as the SARS-CoV-2 virus and its variants spread elsewhere.  
 "The world remains in a very dangerous situation," Tedros told the opening of the annual assembly of health ministers from its 194 member states.  
 "As of today, more cases have been reported so far this year than in the whole of 2020. On current trends, the number of deaths will overtake last year's total within the next three weeks. This is very tragic," he said.  
 He said more than 75 per cent of all vaccines had been administered in just 10 countries.  
 "There is no diplomatic way to say it: A small group of countries that make and buy the majority of the world's vaccines control the fate of the rest of the world."  
 Call for vaccine donations to COVAX  
 The COVAX global vaccine-sharing initiative, run by WHO and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, has delivered 72 million vaccine doses to 125 countries and territories since February - barely sufficient for one per cent of their populations, Tedros said.  
 He urged countries to donate vaccine doses to COVAX to enable 10 per cent of the population of all countries to be inoculated by September and 30 per cent by year's end. This means vaccinating 250 million more people in just four months, he said.  
 "This is crucial to stop disease and death, keep our health-care workers safe, reopen our schools and economies," Tedros said.

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

He also called on vaccine manufacturers to give COVAX the first right of refusal on new volumes of vaccines or to commit 50 per cent of their volumes to COVAX.  
 French President Emmanuel Macron called for WHO to be empowered to visit countries regularly in case of outbreaks with potential to spark a pandemic in local areas.  
 Macron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel in separate recorded messages to the assembly, called for the UN agency's funding to be improved and backed the idea of a new international treaty to prevent pandemics.  
 What's happening in Canada  
 As of 6:05 p.m. ET on Monday, Canada had reported 1,361,564 confirmed cases of COVID-19, with 51,818 considered active. A CBC News tally of deaths stood at 25,265. More than 21 million COVID-19 vaccine doses have been administered so far across the country.  
 The federal government is expecting about 600,000 doses of Pfizer-BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine this week as many provinces expand eligibility to anyone over 12 years old.  
 Ontario on Sunday became one of the latest provinces to open vaccine appointments to the age group through its booking system, as well as through pharmacies offering the Pfizer-BioNTech shot.  
 The move came on the same day the province registered 1,691 new COVID-19 cases, along with 15 new deaths. Ontario will not be posting updated numbers on Monday due to



the Victoria Day holiday.  
 Quebec, meanwhile, saw long lines outside walk-in vaccine centres in Montreal that opened its doors to the 12-to-17 age group over the weekend.  
 The province will formally open its booking system to youths 12 and up on Tuesday, but a spokesperson for the local health authority said officials at the clinic visit of downtowners decided not to turn away teens that showed up seeking care.  
 Several other provinces have already expanded vaccine eligibility to those 12 and over, including Newfoundland and Labrador, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Alberta.  
 Quebec on Monday reported 433 new cases and 11 new deaths. It is the lowest number of new cases the province has reported since Sept 19, when it recorded 427.  
 In the North, Nunavut is reporting one new case. Yukon and the Northwest Territories have yet to provide updated figures for Monday.  
 Newfoundland and Labrador expanded public health restrictions in

related deaths.  
 British Columbia health officials on Monday reported 974 new cases and 12 related deaths over the last three days.  
 What's happening around the world  
 As of Monday afternoon, more than 167.2 million cases of COVID-19 had been reported worldwide, a tracking dashboard from U.S.-based Johns Hopkins University said. The reported global death toll stood at more than 3.4 million.  
 In Europe, British scientists say sniffer dogs trained using easily made worn by people infected with the SARS-CoV-2 virus could soon be used at airports or mass gathering venues to pick up the "corenas odor" of people infected with the coronavirus.  
 Working in teams of two, the COVID-trained dogs could screen a line of several hundred people coming off a plane within half an hour, for example, and detect with up to 94.3 per cent sensitivity those infected, the scientists said.  
 Presenting results of an early-stage study - which involved some 3,500 colour swatches donated in the form of unopened socks or T-shirts worn by members of the public and health workers - the researchers said the dogs were even able to sniff out asymptomatic or mild COVID-19 cases, as well as cases caused by a variant that emerged in the U.K. late last year.  
 In the Americas, ride-sharing company Uber and Lyft have started providing free transportation to and from COVID-19 vaccination sites in the United States. Uber said Monday that it will provide four rides valued at up to \$25 each through July 4, while Lyft has said it's offering two rides of up to \$15 each.  
 The federal government said earlier this month that it would partner with the ride-sharing companies to encourage more Americans to get vaccinated as the pace of the shots nationally started to decline.

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# Bank of Canada reminds us of more things to worry about

Whether you are a teacher, a student, a medical professional or just coping with the COVID-19 crisis on your daily life, there are frequent reports about how the pandemic is increasing our levels of anxiety.

Rather than trying to add to our troubles, the Bank of Canada's latest report on Canada's financial vulnerabilities is intended to help us avoid some major ones. And while the bank's governor, Tiff Macklem, outlined at a news conference on Thursday what will certainly go wrong, but what could go wrong if we're careful.

"The biggest domestic vulnerabilities are those linked to imbalances in the housing market and high household indebtedness," Macklem told reporters. "These are not new, but they have intensified."

The Bank of Canada governor has plenty to keep him awake at night. The report was not just about housing.

Macklem also worries Canadian businesses may have become too used to cheap borrowing in the bond market, something that could end

without anything to replace it. He fears that investors have failed to account for what climate change could do to the price of their assets. He is concerned about cyber risks. Also, the rising Canadian dollar and low oil could hurt exports.

Serious damage, and not just to houses

But the big worry this time was not climate. The message was clear, if sometimes couched in central-bank-speak. If people don't stop bidding up the price of houses, Canadians are already so loaded with mortgage debt that an unexpected change in the market could do serious damage not just to "overstretched" homeowners with enormous loans, but to the entire economy.

That's why the first and biggest risk outlined by the bank in its report was "a large decline in household income and house prices" caused by an external trigger event. It is hard to imagine what form such a trigger event could take. Macklem referred to one point to a "sharp repricing of risk." Such an event might lead to, say, a sudden rise in global interest rates,

controlled by Israel but whose ownership is claimed by the Palestinians, was largely spared from attack. But Boucher said air raids stress did go on one occasion, sending the Canadians and others scrambling for cover.

The training mission does not mean in Gaza but rather in the West Bank, which is controlled by the Palestinian Authority under Hamas civil Fatah. Despite being largely confined to their compound, Boucher added, the Canadians have continued to work remotely.

While Boucher described the tensions in the area as palpable, he suggested the relative calm in the West Bank is evidence the training mission is having an impact as security forces loyal to the Palestinian Authority work with Israeli counterparts.

"If you look at Area A, which is the one controlled by the Palestinian Authority security forces, things have been relatively calm and under control," he said.

"The relationship between Palestinian Authority security forces and the co-ordination with the Israeli Defense Force is happening on a 24/7 basis right now. And I would argue that's probably the thing that is keeping violence from erupting in Area A in the West Bank."

# Canadian troops in Jerusalem saw Israeli Palestinian clashes play out on 'nightly basis'

A handful of Canadian Armed Forces members and RCMP officers have had front row seats over the past two weeks as protests and violence have rocked parts of Israel and the Gaza Strip, leaving scores of people dead.

The 23 Canadian troops and three Mounties are part of a U.S.-led mission, first launched in 2005 and based in East Jerusalem, whose aim is to train Palestinian security forces in the West Bank.

Brig.-Gen. Jessext Boucher, the commander of Task Force Jerusalem, says the Canadians represent the largest contingent in the mission, which includes about 20 Americans and smaller numbers of British, Dutch and Turkish troops.

"We work primarily with the Palestinian Authority security forces in trying to build capability," Boucher said in a recent interview. "We spend most of the time trying to facilitate co-ordination between the

only about 200 metres from where the Canadians are based. Hundreds of people gathered there most recently on Saturday to protest the planned evictions.

"There's been protests that the Israeli security forces have countered with a mix of tear gas, rubber bullets, and gas," said Boucher. "So obviously, we're able to see that play on a nightly basis."

Clashes over Sheikh Jarrah this month precipitated fresh fighting between Israeli forces and the Palestinian militant group Hamas, which controls Gaza and is a listed terror group in Canada, with the two sides launching airstrikes and rocket attacks against each other.

Hamas and Israel both claim victory after the conflict.

A ceasefire was declared on Friday after 11 days of fighting that killed more than 200 Palestinians in Gaza and 12 Israelis.

East Jerusalem, which is currently



Palestinian Authority security forces and the Israeli Defense Force.

# Erin O'Toole isn't breaking through - and Jason Kenney and Doug Ford aren't helping



Unable to make any headway in the polls against the Liberals, Conservative Leader Erin O'Toole could use a little help from his friends Alberta Premier Jason Kenney and Ontario Premier Doug Ford.

Basically, he needs Ford and Kenney to avoid doing anything that makes matters worse for him.

Trailing the Liberals by six percentage points nationwide in the CBC's Poll Tracker - an aggregation of all publicly available polling data - the Conservatives are struggling in both Ontario and Alberta, among other places.

But Ontario is a key electoral battleground for the Conservatives, while Alberta is supposed to be their unsinkable fortress. It might be no coincidence that O'Toole is having difficulty in these provinces as Kenney and Ford slide in the polls.

Two polls published this week by Campaign Research and Mainstreet Research suggest Ford's Progressive Conservatives still hold a lead in Ontario. But with the party now averaging 34.5 per cent across the two surveys, Ford's PCs have dropped six points since the 2018 provincial election. Only a divided opposition is keeping his party afloat.

Ford's own personal numbers have gotten significantly worse since reaching a peak in May 2020 during the first wave of the pandemic. According to Abacus Data, just 30

per cent of Ontarians now have a positive impression of Ford, down 16 points from last spring. His negative impression score has increased 22 points to 47 per cent.

Things are arguably going much worse for Kenney in Alberta, where he has faced a caucus revolt over the province's pandemic restrictions.

The polls are not looking good for Kenney's United Conservatives, who have trailed the opposition New Democrats by an average margin of 10 points in polls published since December. That represents a combined 30-point swing between the UCP and NDP since the 2019 provincial election.

The pandemic appears to be what's driving these polling trends.

According to a survey by Léger, just 29 per cent of Albertans and 37 per cent of Ontarians are satisfied with the measures put in place by their provincial governments to fight the pandemic - lower levels than those reported anywhere else in the country.

Ontario and Alberta are also the only two provinces where the federal government is receiving higher marks than provincial governments in Léger's survey.

And that's what could be hurting O'Toole - the voters in Alberta and Ontario who believe the federal Liberal government is doing a better job on the pandemic than their Conservative premiers.

Trouble in the Conservative heartland

According to the Poll Tracker, O'Toole's Conservatives have 47 per cent support in Alberta, putting them well above the Liberals and NDP. But that represents a drop of 22 points since the 2019 federal election and about 10 points since the beginning of the pandemic.

Very few seats are at risk for the Conservatives in Alberta, of course - even with this steep drop in support. Of the 33 seats the Conservatives captured in the province in 2019, only two were won by margins of less than 20 points. The Conservatives can afford a swing of 20 points against them before more than a handful of seats are put at risk.

Nevertheless, the Conservatives can't afford to leave any seats on the table - particularly those it normally would win handily. It doesn't help that a recent Angus Reid Institute poll gave the Maverick Party - which advocates for Western autonomy - seven per cent support in Alberta.

A drop in support in Alberta doesn't help the national picture for the Conservatives either. A loss of 22 points in Alberta might not put them at a seat or two at risk there, but it does translate into a slide of more than two percentage points at the national level - making the Conservatives appear less competitive against the Liberals.

Ford isn't helping in Ontario (again)

That's the kind of thing that can have some spillover in Ontario. Many voters like to back the party that looks like a winner.

The Poll Tracker puts the Conservatives at just 30 per cent in Ontario, down three points since 2019. They trail the Liberals there by about 11 points - three points more than in the last election.

Making gains in Ontario is absolutely essential for the Conservatives if they're going to have any chance of forming a government in the future. Ford's unpopularity was an obstacle for Andrew Scheer when he led the federal party in the 2019 election.

But things might be worse for the party soon. Even polls that otherwise look good for the Conservatives - such as the most recent polls by Abacus Data and Léger, which had the Conservatives trailing nationally by just two or three points - still had the Liberals ahead by 12 or 13 points in Ontario. That's the electoral bell gauge.

Voters could give premiers a shot in the arm

As the third wave recedes and more vaccines are administered to Albertans and Ontarians, it is possible that voters' negative feelings about Ford and Kenney will recede as well. If that happens, the O'Toole Conservatives may be able to regain some lost ground in these two provinces.

It's also possible that the attacks by Kenney, Ford and O'Toole on the federal government's vaccine procurement efforts will backfire when Canadians find themselves getting their second doses ahead of schedule later this summer.

Either way, it suggests that the Liberals may have an incentive to send voters to the polls sooner rather than later. Any polling improvements for Ford and Kenney could start nibbling off O'Toole.

At that point, O'Toole's friends might actually start to help him out. And he needs the help: a recent poll by Abacus Data found that just 18 per cent of Canadians have a positive impression of the federal Conservative leader, while 35 per cent have a negative view.

Those are his worst numbers since he became leader last August. He can't blame Kenney or Ford for all of his troubles - but they aren't making things any easier for him.

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## More than half of Canada's population has received at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine

TORONTO — More than half of Canada's population has been vaccinated with at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, according to CTV News on Saturday.

On Saturday, the percentage of the Canadian population that has received at least one dose of vaccine tipped over 50 per cent after New Brunswick reported that it had administered another 11,383 first doses.

The percentage of those fully vaccinated — meaning they've received two doses — is just over 4 per cent.

In total, the country has administered more than 20 million vaccinations.

Dr. Michael Silverman, chief of infectious diseases at the London Health Sciences Centre and St. Joseph's Health Care London in London, Ont., said Canada is showing 50 per cent first-dose coverage is an important milestone.

"It's exciting," he told CTV News Channel on Saturday. "Everybody can do a little dose at home, but we're not

wanting everybody to go out and dose together just yet. It means we're really on our way to getting back to normal."

On Friday, Canada surpassed the U.S. in the number of first doses administered per capita. However, the U.S. has a higher percentage of the population that has been fully vaccinated with two doses.

As of Saturday afternoon, 47 per cent of Americans had received one dose of COVID-19 vaccine and 37 per cent had received two doses.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the average daily pace of COVID-19 vaccinations is down almost 50 per cent from a peak in April.

Despite the slowdown in vaccinations, the U.S. has given the first dose to fully vaccinated residents to reduce many activities without wearing a mask or physically distancing, Silverman said.

Silverman cautioned against this conference Thursday. "The issue is about extending the dose interval

between the first and second doses, so I think obviously more doses coming to the country very quickly, we're well on track to do that second dose."

On Friday, Njoo said that vaccinations have doubled in the past five weeks and daily COVID-19 cases have dropped by 25 per cent over the past seven days. He added that while hospitalizations, deaths, and critical-care admissions remain high, those numbers are also decreasing.

Although the increase in vaccinations is a cause for celebration, federal and provincial officials have spent much of the last week pleading with Canadians to abide by public health measures to a little longer, particularly with the Victoria Day long weekend still in sight.

"Our advice this long weekend could not be more important," Njoo said. "COVID-19 resurgence has followed social gatherings during past holidays during the week."

"With important work we have left to do, this weekend is not the time to let our guard down."

Globally, the World Health Organization's weekly Bulletin continues to lead the world in vaccinations per capita with 107 per cent of its population fully vaccinated, according to CTV News on Saturday.

Which leaves the Bank of Canada housing price. Bank of Canada Governor Tiff Macklem issuing stern warnings to buyers to be careful.

"Some people may be thinking that the kind of price increases we have seen recently will continue," Mr. Macklem said last Thursday. "That would be a mistake."

"Don't extrapolate from the current rapid increases we have seen in prices. Don't expect that those will continue indefinitely."

It's good that Mr. Macklem is sounding an alarm, even if he isn't the one who can put out the fire. The people with the tools are Canada's elected officials.

Added to the list of worries is the possibility that the current housing-price surge — having been allowed to run unbridled — is permanently changing the complexion of Canada's housing market. In cities such as Toronto and Vancouver, it's been a long time since housing was inexpensive. But it's now becoming so costly that, absent the help of deep-pocketed parents, even young people with high incomes and solid savings find it difficult, if not impossible, to afford to buy.

## Canada is gearing up to reopen. Can it last?

Much of Canada is on the verge of reopening again, with hard-hit provinces lifting lockdowns and mapping out a path to something vaguely resembling normal, while trying desperately to avoid making the mistakes of the past.

The latest advantage we have on our side is COVID-19 vaccines — the Out of Jail Free card that will help parts of the country that have been reluctant to impose strict public health measures mitigate another reopening disaster.



"Vaccines are going to blunt the damage of the rush to reopen, but I'd tend to go cautiously and stepwise," said Dr. David Fisman, an epidemiologist at the University of Toronto's Dalla Lana School of Public Health. "The single most important thing we can do right now is get people vaccinated."

But at what point will we have enough shots in arms to reopen restaurants, bars, gyms and other vital sectors of the economy that we once took for granted but now deem high risk?

"That depends on who you ask — and where you live."

Canada sets sights high on reopening. Canada's Chief Public Health Officer Dr. Theresa Tam says provinces should only begin to lift public health restrictions once 75 per cent of adults have at least one vaccine dose and 20 per cent are fully vaccinated.

Yet that lofty goal hasn't actually been achieved anywhere else in the world.

In the U.S., less than 50 per cent of the population has at least one shot, but that hasn't stopped many states from reopening society and even allowing fully vaccinated Americans to stop wearing masks inside in most places.

In the United Kingdom, more than 70 per cent of adults have received a first dose and people can now not only allowed to meet up indoors for the first time in months, but also dine inside pubs and restaurants and even go to the movies.

And despite only recently achieving 60 per cent vaccinated with one dose, Israel began reopening its economy months ago allowing fully vaccinated

vaccinated Albertans to skip quarantine if they are exposed to COVID-19 and are not showing symptoms.

"This is an uncharted terrain," said Dr. David Naylor, who led the federal inquiry into Canada's national response to the 2003 SARS epidemic and now co-chairs the federal government's COVID-19 immunity task force.

"Expect we are headed for another Canadian multi-jurisdictional experiment with reopening — both as to speed and time."

Canada must remain "on guard" for variants.

The caution with announcing reopening plans may be in part due to the disastrous attempt to lift lockdowns in February that prompted a devastating third wave in parts of Ontario, Alberta and Quebec due to the rapid spread of more contagious coronavirus variants.

But experts say that while the threat of variants of concern is still very present, new variants could also emerge with even more dire ramifications — like the ability to escape immunity from vaccines.

"If we wait reopening as soon as possible, we can do it and we can probably do it without threatening our health care systems by doing it in a measured and careful way," said Colijn. "But if we wait to be really safe we're not going to have a vaccine-escape variant that threatens our healthcare system in the field, then we also need to be thinking about that."

Fisman says variants are a "curveball" that could jeopardize the success of our reopening strategy, adding that provinces should "go slowly" and "change one thing at a time, then measure."

Colijn says as Canada reopens further we need to be "on guard" for new variants and stop them from entering the country if they emerge elsewhere in the world, adding we may need to act proactively before they arrive.

"We've got to get second doses out, because that will really help immunity against those emerging variants and we may have to get boosters out," he said.

"We really do need the population to understand that they may not need second doses immediately before they ever eat at a restaurant again, but they need them ... for getting back to normal life."

## The Bank of Canada says the housing market has gone bonkers — and it can't do anything about it

"Expectations becoming extrapolative."

The Bank of Canada isn't known for poetic flourish but, in its description of the mania at the heart of Canada's housing market, there's a delightful cadence, appealing alliteration and a lot of truth.

In plain terms: Prices are soaring, in part because buyers believe they will keep on soaring. People are assuming a future of higher prices, by extrapolating from a present where prices are rising rapidly.

These assumptions are a very human tendency. But they're also dangerous, because extrapolated expectations eventually hit a wall. The central bank, in its annual financial system review released last week, cited "imbalance in the housing market" as one of six key vulnerabilities. It also worried

about "many households" now shouldering large mortgages. In the event of a job loss or other shock, their debt burdens could quickly become unaffordable.

The Bank is just the latest institution to worry about the direction of Canada's housing market. Yet for all the concern, there isn't much any of this country's policy makers are willing to do about it.

To reiterate the obvious, the market has gone bonkers. More homes were sold in March than any month ever before, and while times slowed slightly in April, it was still the busiest April ever. Meanwhile, prices kept climbing. According to the Canadian Real Estate Association, its April national home price index was 23.1 per cent higher than a year earlier. The pace of gains has gone supernova and is now far higher

than previous surges in 2006-07 and 2016-17.

The federal Liberals, eyeing an election and fearful of hard choices that might upset homeowners, have been timid. Provincial governments are likewise lukewarm. Municipalities, this despite the wrings of numerous economists. Bank of Montreal economist in late March called on policy makers "to act immediately" to break a "market psychology ... that prices will only rise further."

The one entity that has the firepower to quell the storm is the Bank of Canada. But with unemployment at 8.1 per cent and the country still in the grip of the pandemic, the central bank is not about to raise interest rates. It cannot, should not and will not keep the economy in an attempt to slow

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