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Canada, U.K., Netherlands discuss humanitarian coalition for Ukraine

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson invoked the Battle of Britain as he opened a bilateral meeting Monday with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau as the two leaders met to discuss the rapidly evolving crisis in eastern Europe.

The two met in the officer's mess under a portrait of the Queen at a Royal Air Force base in Northolt, west of London. It was one of the major bases in the defence of the United Kingdom during the Second World War, and they spoke about its history before turning to the brutal, modern war taking place in Ukraine.

"Canada and the U.K. are at one on many things," Johnson said, before noting the two nations were "particularly united in our stand against [Russian President Vladimir] Putin's aggression in Ukraine."

Trudeau said he was happy to be there with "Boris" to support the Ukrainian people and to "hold Russia to account and stand up for democracy around the world."

The two leaders were also on hand for the arrival of Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte, who is joining them for further talks later Monday.

The three leaders are discussing Johnson's proposal to create a humanitarian coalition of nations, one point in a six-point plan the U.K. has put forward to address the crisis, where the mounting civilian death toll has caused widespread outrage.

On Monday, following pleas from French President Emmanuel Macron, Russia agreed to open humanitarian



corridors in several Ukrainian cities, including the capital Kyiv, as well as Kharkiv, Sumy and Mariupol, the besieged southern port city.

There is one catch, though, according to maps published by RIA, the Russian news agency - the safe passage corridors lead to either Russia, or the country's ally Belarus.

The Ukrainian government described the plan as a "completely immoral stunt."

It may be a moot point, however, as there are several reports that Russian forces have continued their shelling.

The limited ceasefire came after a weekend where tens of thousands of Ukrainian civilians attempted to flee the Russian bombardments of their cities, but were forced back into shelter after being targeted.

In addition to the humanitarian crisis, Canada, the U.K. and the Netherlands are discussing what

further military assistance the three nations can provide in terms of weapons.

Canada is working on providing anti-tank weapons, rocket launchers, grenades and other non-lethal equipment. It has previously delivered machine guns, carbines, hand pistols and 1.5 million rounds of ammunition.

Last week, Britain's under-secretary of defence, James Heappey, told the U.K.'s House of Commons that Britain would provide a further package, but refused to discuss the details.

NATO, including Canada and the U.K., has rejected the imposition of a no-fly zone over Ukraine, saying it could lead to a dangerous escalation of the war and bring Western nations in direct confrontation with Russian pilots.

The three leaders, however, are under pressure to come up with an alternative.

Russia announced yet another limited ceasefire and the establishment of safe corridors to allow civilians to flee some besieged Ukrainian cities Monday, but the evacuation routes led mostly to Russia and its ally Belarus, drawing withering criticism from Ukraine and others.

Ukrainian officials accused Moscow of resorting to "medical siege" tactics in some places. In one of the most desperate of the encircled cities, the southern port of Mariupol, there were no immediate signs of evacuation.

Russian forces continued to pummel some Ukrainian cities with rockets even after the new announcement of corridors and some fighting continued in some areas, indicating there would be no wider cessation of hostilities.

"Hitler struck the fourth floor under us," Dmitry Soderenko said from his Kharkiv hospital bed. "Immediately, everything started burning and falling apart."

"When the floor collapsed beneath him, he crawled out through the third floor, past the bodies of some of his neighbors."

In Mariupol, where an estimated 200,000 people hoping to flee were becoming increasingly desperate, Red Cross officials waited to hear when a safe humanitarian corridor would be established.

The city is short on water, food and power, and mobile phone networks are down. Shops have been looted as residents search for essential goods.

Police moved through the city advising people to remain in shelters until they heard official messages broadcast over loudspeakers to leave.

Hospitals in Mariupol suffered shortages of antibiotics and painkillers, and doctors performed some emergency procedures without them.

The lack of phone networks has left anxious citizens approaching strangers to ask if they knew whether relatives living in other parts of the city were safe.

At the International Court of Justice in

Ukraine rejects Russian proposal for humanitarian corridors that lead to Russia, Belarus

"Every house, every street, every checkpoint, we will fight to the death if necessary," said Mayor Vitali Klitschko. Dozens of makeshift kitchens are serving food to soldiers.

"I'm carrying out my duty, working for my country, thanking our soldiers," Natalia Antonovska said at one kitchen. "That's why I'm here, and I'm very proud of it."

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At the International Court of Justice in



The Hague, Ukraine pleaded for an order to halt Russia's invasion, saying Moscow is already committing widespread war crimes and "resorting to tactics reminiscent of medieval stage warfare."

Russia smothered Monday's hearings, leaving its seats in the Great Hall of Justice empty.

Growing anti-agriculture Well into the second week of war, Russian troops have made significant advances in southern Ukraine and along the coast, but many of its efforts have become stalled, including an immense military convoy that has been almost motionless for days north of Kyiv.

The battle for Mariupol, in particular, is crucial because its capture could allow Moscow to establish a land corridor to Crimea, which Russia annexed from Ukraine in 2014 in a move that most other countries considered illegal.

The fighting has sent energy prices surging worldwide, stocks plummeting and is threatening the food supply and livelihoods of people around the globe who rely on the farmland in the Black Sea region.

The death toll, meanwhile, remains unclear. The UN human rights office

reported 406 confirmed civilian deaths, but also warned the number is a vast underestimate. Police in the Kharkiv region said Monday that 209 people have died there alone, 133 of them civilians.

The Russian invasion has also sent 1.7 million people fleeing Ukraine, creating what the head of the UN refugee agency called "the fastest-growing refugee crisis in Europe since World War II."

Russia's proposal "hypocrisy," Macron said in the latest ceasefire proposal, most of the evacuation routes were heading toward Russia or its ally Belarus, something that Ukrainian Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk called "unacceptable."

Belarus served as a launching ground for the invasion.

"I don't know many Ukrainians who want to seek refuge in Russia. That's hypocrisy," French President Emmanuel Macron said in an interview on French news broadcaster LCI.

U.K. Europe Minister James Cleverly was also critical of Russia's proposal, saying, "Providing evacuation routes into the arms of the country that is currently destroying yours is a nonsense."

The Ukrainian government instead

proposed eight routes that would allow civilians to travel to western regions of Ukraine, where there is no Russian shelling.

Shelling, rocket attacks continue Earlier, Klitschko, Kyiv's mayor, said in a Telegram video address that "peace battles" continued Monday in the Kyiv region, notably around Bucha, Hostomel, Vorzel and Irpin.

A few kilometers away, in the small town of Ilovaisk, where shelling reduced one area to rubble and shards of glass, rescuers and residents picked through the ruins as chickens pecked around them.

Russian forces also continued their offensive in Mykolajiv, opening fire on the city some 480 kilometers south of Kyiv, according to Ukraine's military. Rescuers said they were putting off fires caused by rocket attacks in residential areas.

Zelensky calls for stronger sanctions In the face of a series of punishing sanctions by Western countries, Russia has grown increasingly isolated. The ruble has plunged in value, and the country's economic trade ties with the West have been all but severed. Moscow has also cracked down on independent reporting on the conflict and arrested anti-war protesters en masse.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky urged even more punishment for Russia on Monday, including a global boycott of Russian oil imports and other products.

"If the invasion continues and Russia does not abandon its plans against Ukraine, then we need a new sanctions package," Zelensky said in a video address. "If [Russia] doesn't want to abide by civilized rules, then they shouldn't receive goods and services from civilization. It can be called an embargo, or it can be just morality."

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Law Society of Ontario cancels upcoming bar exams over possible test material leak

Ontario bar exams scheduled for this month have been cancelled as the Law Society of Ontario investigates the possibility that test materials were leaked ahead of time.

The law society said in a news release Saturday that it decided to cancel barrister and solicitor examinations that were to be written online from March 8 to 11 and March 22 to 25 "to protect the public and the integrity of its licensing process."

"We appreciate that this decision is upsetting news to those candidates not involved in improper conduct," Diana Miles, CEO of the professional regulatory society, said in a written statement.

"However, this is a critical and necessary step to protect the integrity of the licensing process and the reputation of those candidates not involved."

The law society said it had information indicating some people may have accessed exam content.



Evidence suggests "potential involvement of third parties" in the leak, the statement said.

Approximately 1,100 candidates had been scheduled to write exams during the affected time period, starting on Tuesday.

Exams will be rescheduled as soon as possible, the law society said, with further information to come through candidates' email accounts.

A probe by external investigators into the matter will also review candidates who recently wrote exams. The law society said it had

informed some candidates who would have been eligible for licensure that they won't be eligible to be called to the bar while assessments of their exams are pending.

Other candidates who would soon have been eligible to take licensing exams have also been notified that their prior licensing exams are also being assessed, the law society said.

"At this point in time, no conclusions should be drawn from any delay in a candidate's licensure," the law society said. "Next steps will be informed by the

results of the investigation." Rami Aziz said he found out in a Saturday afternoon email that his solicitor exam, scheduled for March 22, was cancelled.

He said he understands the seriousness of the situation, but the uncertain timeline for rescheduling has thrown his career plans over the next several months into limbo.

"I need to know what is my next step," he said by phone from Toronto.

After the solicitor exam, Aziz had planned to take the barrister exam in June and begin articling in July.

He plans to continue studying while he waits for answers, but he said a lengthy rescheduling delay could force him to push back his other plans, which would be a major setback after years of paying for his studies.

"I was looking forward for the day that I start working in order to start improving my financial situation," he said. "A delay by two or three months, that's a lot in my current debatement."

Lawyer Navdeep Gul Vikh tutors students ahead of their bar exams. She said eight of her students found out on Saturday that their upcoming exams were cancelled.

Putin critic Navalny assists Canada in latest list of Russian sanctions, Trudeau says

Canada sanctioned 10 more individuals in response to Russia's war in Ukraine on Monday, this time on the advice of President Vladimir Putin's top critic, Alexei Navalny.



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced the new sanctions while in the United Kingdom alongside British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Netherlands Prime Minister Mark Rutte.

The 10 individuals being penalized are "completely in this unjustified invasion," Trudeau said.

"This includes former and current senior government officials, oligarchs and supporters of Russian leadership," he said. "The names of these individuals come from a list compiled by jailed opposition leader Alexei Navalny."

Among the latest individuals sanctioned are Margarita Simonyan, editor-in-chief of Russian state-funded TV network RT, and Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov, according to an amended list updated March 6 on the federal government website.

A Ukrainian man rides his bicycle near a factory and a store burning after it had been bombarded in Irpin, on the outskirts of Kyiv, Ukraine on March 6. Emzilio Moremsini/AP

Trudeau said Europeans have started to realize that Moscow is an unreliable partner.

Johnson has suggested that shifting Europe's energy sources away from Russian control could affect the world's climate change targets. He insisted that doesn't mean those goals are being abandoned.

The U.S., meanwhile, is discussing a ban on Russian oil. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Washington is prepared to move unilaterally if necessary.

Rutte said that while no one doubts Europe must diversify its energy supplies, the work of untangling the continent from Moscow has to be done in an orderly manner.

"It is a step-by-step process," he said. "We have to make sure to de-leverage our dependency on Russian oil and natural gas. If we forced companies to quit doing business with Russia in that realm, that would have enormous consequences."

forced to shelter from Russian shelling in cities in the centre, northern and southern parts of the country, Ukrainian officials said.

The war, which began Feb. 24 after Putin ordered his troops into the country, is well into its second week. However, Putin's plan to overrun the country quickly has been met with fierce resistance.

Russian troops have made significant advances in southern Ukraine and along the coast, but many of its efforts have stalled, including a massive military convoy that has been almost motionless for days north of Kyiv.

Since the invasion began, western allies including Canada have punished Russia and its collaborators with severe sanctions, and have threatened to impose more if Moscow continues its aggression in Ukraine.

Johnson announced Monday that the U.K., Canada and the Netherlands will create an international support group to coordinate allied efforts to provide Ukraine "long-term and unwavering assistance now and in the future."

Last week, Canada said it's imposing a 35 per cent tariff on goods from Russia and its ally Belarus. Furthermore, the federal government is revoking Russia's and Belarus' status as a most-favoured-nation trade partner under World Trade Organization (WTO) provisions.

In addition to sanctions, Canada has promised to continue to support Ukraine in its fight against Russia. National Defence Minister Anita Anand said last week Ottawa will send up to 4,500 M72 rocket

launchers and up to 7,500 hand grenades in addition to previous lethal aid sent to the country.

Canada will also be providing Ukraine with \$1 million toward the purchase of high-resolution modern satellite imagery, Anand added.

"The courage of Ukrainians in standing up to the Russian invaders has inspired and humbled us all," Trudeau said on Monday.

"We need to show ourselves as determined to push back against Putin, against the Kremlin, as hard as we can and as effectively as we can."

Ukraine and Russia set to hold another round of talks.

Russia calls its invasion of Ukraine a "special operation" with the ultimate aim of capturing Kyiv and toppling the government, which Putin regards as a puppet of the United States.

The conflict has uprooted more than 1.7 million people in what the United Nations calls the fastest-growing refugee crisis in Europe since the Second World War.

In the weeks leading up to the war, Moscow built up roughly 150,000 troops near the border, and continuously denied Western accusations it was planning an invasion of Ukraine.

Talks to bring an end to the conflict have yet to produce any breakthroughs.

On Thursday, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Ukrainian counterpart Dmytro Kuleba are scheduled to meet at a forum in southern Turkey, which could be the first potential talks between the top diplomats since the war began.

Russia says deals with 'unfriendly' countries, including Canada, will require approval

LONDON -- Russia said on Monday that all corporate deals with companies and individuals from so-called "unfriendly countries" would now have to be approved by a government commission, according to a government resolution.

The government said it had approved a list of countries and territories taking "unfriendly actions" against Russia, its companies and citizens, in the wake of severe economic sanctions over the Ukraine conflict.

The list follows a presidential decree on March 5 allowing the Russian government, companies and citizens to temporarily pay foreign currency debts owed to overseas creditors from "unfriendly countries" in rubles.

A government statement showed the list of countries included the United States, European Union member states, Britain, Japan, Canada, Norway, Singapore, South Korea, Switzerland and Ukraine.

To make such payments, the government said debtors should open a special type of ruble account with a Russian bank and transfer into it the ruble equivalent of the foreign currency amount owed according to the central bank's official exchange rate on the day of payment.

This temporary arrangement for paying foreign debts applies to payments exceeding 10 million rubles (US\$7.6 million) a month.

Canada announces new sanctions against Russian individuals

Canada announced a further round of sanctions against Russia on Monday following a meeting between Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his counterparts from Britain and the Netherlands.

Another 10 individuals have been named to the sanctions list. Their names were suggested by Alexei Navalny, the jailed Russian opposition leader and activist.

"These sanctions put increased pressure on Russia's leadership, including Putin's inner circle," said Trudeau.

Still noticeably absent from the sanctions list released Monday is billionaire Chelsea football club owner Roman Abramovich. He is a confidante of Russian President Vladimir Putin who also has extensive business holdings in Western Canada.

The Liberal government has faced increasing pressure - notably from the Ukrainian government - to target Abramovich.

Canadian sanctions to date have targeted hundreds of officials in the



The allies say with you. The sanctions have not had the desired effect," Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte said in response to a reporter's question Monday. "They have a huge effect on Russia but they are not against the Russians."

U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson called this meeting with Trudeau and Rutte to promote his idea of a humanitarian coalition to help Ukraine.

Even after the meeting, the corridor remained a vague proposal to provide long-term assistance to Ukraine.

"As Ukrainians resist Russia's

outright with courage and tenacity, the international community must aid their struggle in every way we can," Johnson said.

The three leaders, who met at a Royal Air Force base west of London, also discussed Europe's dependence on Russian oil and natural gas.

Trudeau said Europeans have started to realize that Moscow is an unreliable partner.

Johnson has suggested that shifting Europe's energy sources away from Russian control could affect the world's climate change targets. He insisted that doesn't mean those goals are being abandoned.

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Sonakshi Sinha In LEGAL Trouble, Non-Bailable Warrant Issued Against The Actress In A 2019 Fraud Case

Legal trouble seems to be mounting for actress Sonakshi Sinha as a non-bailable warrant has been issued against her in a fraud case. According to the latest reports, the actress has been asked to appear in Uttar Pradesh's Meerut court next month in a 2019 fraud case. Sonakshi has reportedly been accused of cheating, criminal conspiracy, and breach of trust by an event organizer named Pramod Sharma. Sonakshi has reportedly not attended an event in Delhi, for which she had charged Rs. 37 lakhs.

As per ETimes TV report, Pramod Sharma, the organizer of the event and a resident of Kanpur police station area of Meerut, had planned an event in Delhi and for the same, he invited the Dabangg actress as the Chief Guest. However, she failed to attend the event, following which the event organizer asked her to return their money. The report added that Sonakshi's manager has refused to pay



Pramod Sharma's victory.

After getting no response from the actress despite contacting her several times, the event organizer lodged a complaint of fraud against the actress. It is being said that Sonakshi had visited Meerut to record her statement in this said case. But due to her continuous absence thereafter, the court has now issued a warrant

against her and has asked Sonakshi to appear in court on 25 April. Talking about Sonakshi backing out from the event, reportedly, the actress' team on the day of the event demanded a change in the timing from the organizers. As they refused to adhere to the demand given the fact all arrangements were done, Sonakshi did not attend the event.

Mandira Bedi REVEALS 'A Lot Of Cricketers' Looked Down On Her When She Interviewed Them: 'What's She Even Asking'

Mandira Bedi's journey has had its ups and downs. In a recent interview, Mandira opened up about how a lot of cricketers looked down on her when she hosted her own show at cricket tournaments. She revealed that many would be like 'what's she even asking when asked their questions. Speaking to Pinkvilla, Mandira said, "Nobody accepted me to begin with, certainly not the people sitting on the panel. I'm friends with all the ex-cricketers now who I worked with back then as well but they didn't like that either. They didn't like that there was a woman wearing a saree, dressed up, talking cricket. Nobody fed me any lines, nobody fed me any questions. I was there to represent the layperson who doesn't know every technicality of cricket, who does not know every nuance of cricket."

She further added, "I was told whatever question comes to your mind at that particular time if you're thinking of asking it, I was given that freedom. Of course, I got started by a lot of cricketers like - 'what's she even asking, why is she even asking that. They answered whatever they wanted to answer nothing connected to my question and that can be very intimidating but I kind of was assured by the channel, it was Sony, that backed me and chose me from 150-200 women. They said that we've chosen you with the reason we think you have what it takes to stay, so go ahead and be yourself and start enjoying yourself!" Mandira began hosting the ICC Cricket World Cup in 2003 and 2007. She also hosted the Champions Trophy in 2004 and 2006. The actress was also the host for IPL2.

1st Test: India thrash Sri Lanka by an innings and 222 runs, take 1-0 series lead

India on Sunday took a 1-0 lead in the two-match Test series after defeating Sri Lanka by an innings and 222 runs at the IS Bindra PCA Stadium.

After being bundled out for 174 in the first innings, Sri Lanka were made to follow on and were all out for 178 in 60 overs to complete a meek surrender by the visitors. Ravindra Jadeja and Ravichandran Ashwin took 4/16 and 4/47 respectively in the second innings of a day in which 16 wickets fell.

On the third ball of the session after tea, Ashwin drew Charith Asalanka forward and snatched the outside-edge which hit Rishabh Pant's thigh and flew to Virat Kohli for a catch at first slip. Asalanka's dismissal meant Ashwin went past legendary all-rounder Kapil Dev to have 435 Test wickets and become the second-highest wicket-taker for India after Anil Kumble's 619 scalps.

The next over saw Jadeja trap Angelo Mathews with a big turning-in delivery which opened his front leg and rapped him low on the



back pad. Mathews reviewed but couldn't overturn the decision. Jadeja's next victim in the same over was Suranga Lakmal, who repeated his first-innings dismissal of giving a catch to mid-off, this time to mid-on. Niroshan Dickwella was in attacking mode, hitting Ashwin, Jayant Yadav and Mohammed Shami for boundaries to be the lone ranger for Sri Lanka with the bat. Jadeja grabbed his ninth wicket as Lasith Embuldeniya tried to defend off backfoot and the thick outer edge was pounced by a very sharp Pant.

Dickwella continued to hit gorgeous shots, whipping through mid-wicket, tucking through square leg and driving down the ground. The wicketkeeper batter reached his half-century. But in the next over, Ashwin ended the match with Labiru Kumara holding out mid-off. Earlier, after a career-best 175 with the bat, all-rounder Jadeja bagged a five-wicket haul as India dismissed Sri Lanka for 174 in 65 overs in the first innings. After being made to follow-on, Sri Lanka were 10/1 at lunch.

Ind vs SL: Ravindra Jadeja - I enjoy batting and bowling with Ashwin

Star Indian all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja on Saturday said he always enjoys batting and bowling with Ravichandran Ashwin.

With a major contribution from Jadeja (175*) in the first innings, the hosts declared on 374/8 and are in total control as Sri Lanka were reduced to 108/4 at the end of day 2 in the first Test here at Mohali. Ashwin scored a handy 106 in 61 and bagged two wickets later.

Ravindra Jadeja after the match said: "Feeling really good. Yesterday Rishabh was playing really well, he was taking the bowlers on, as I was just staying at the non-striker's end and enjoying his batting. I was just taking my time and being very calm in the middle, me and Rishabh were talking about building a partnership and had a similar conversation with Ashwin."

"I always enjoy batting with him (Ashwin), bowling with him, it is all about teamwork, one man can't win you the game and it has to be a team effort. The wicket might turn more as the game progresses and the ball is also keeping low, we will try to bowl wicket to wicket," he added.

After the stumps on Day 2, Sri Lanka's score read 108/4 as they are trailing India by 466 runs. For Lankaans Pantam Nissanka (26*) and Charith Asalanka (1*) are still at the crease while for hosts Jasprit Bumrah and Jadeja bagged one wicket each.

Deepika Padukone Or Alia Bhatt? Sanjay Leela Bhansali Asked To Choose And His SHOCKING Answer Will Leave You Stunned!

As filmmaker Sanjay Leela Bhansali needs no introduction, thanks to his amazing body of work. The director is known for his blockbuster movies such as 'Bajirao Mastani', 'Goliyon Ki Raasleela Ram Leela', and 'Padmaavat' to name a few. Bhansali is currently banking in the success of his latest release, 'Gangubai Kathakawi', which is smashing records at the Box Office. The director has worked with both Deepika Padukone and Alia Bhatt but when it comes to choosing between them, Bhansali has his fair reasons why they both can't be compared as performers.



While speaking to Bollywood Hungama, one fan asked Bhansali about Deepika and Alia, and how they are different from a filmmaker's perspective. Bhansali stated, "They are different people. They have different approaches, they have different heights. They have different voices, they have different body language. They have different approach to cinema. All that put together... Deepika is a beautiful girl, wonderful actor. For me, Alia is a very beautiful girl, again a wonderful actor. But if I have to do Bajirao Mastani then I will have to have Deepika, and if I'm doing Gangubai, I will have to have Alia play it. So, each one has their own power that they exude when they find a role that suits them, and you cannot give the wrong role to the wrong actor."

Rahul Dravid condoles Shane Warne's demise: Privilege, honour to play against him

The head coach of India team Rahul Dravid on Saturday paid tribute to Shane Warne after the Australian leg-spinner passed away at age of 52.

The iconic spinner passed away in Thailand following a suspected heart attack. Earlier on Friday Rodney Marsh also passed away.

Dravid also condoled the unfortunate demise of Australian legendary wicketkeeper Rodney Marsh and spinner Shane Warne, calling it a deep loss and he also said it's a really sad day for the game of cricket. "Really sad day for the game of cricket to lose to legends in two days the people who I think truly made the game what it is, who truly loved the game. It is indeed a deep loss. Our thoughts are with the family and all their friends. May their souls rest in peace. I did not know Rod that well but he was a few times but obviously grew up watching lots of Rodney

Marsh and bearing a lot about him," said Rahul Dravid in a video on BCCI's Twitter account. The head coach stated that it was a privilege and honour to play against Warne and it was his cricketer's great highlights. Dravid believes as long as the game will be played the great names like Shane Warne and Rodney Marsh will always be remembered. "I had the privilege and really I think an honour to be able to compete and play against Shane Warne. But more importantly the privilege of getting to know him personally and playing with him alongside as a colleague. I think that probably be one of the highlights of my cricketing career. Just to get to know him a lot will be spoken about him as a great cricketer and we'll know about that."

ability to connect this is great about Shane Warne even you did not meet him very often he could make it feel like this was personal. It feels like a really personal loss, you know it's something that really hurts. It's sad and I think that as long as the game is being played, I think someone like Shane Warne and Rodney Marsh will always be remembered," he added. The leg-spinner was known for his guile bowling and took a total of 1001 wickets. He became the first-ever bowler to scale the peak of 1,000 international wickets. Marsh was a useful batter and the first Australian wicketkeeper to score a century in Tests. He aggregated 3,633 runs in Test cricket including three centuries. In 92 ODIs, he scored 1,225 runs, took 120 catches and effected four stumpings.

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Interest rate hike won't cool Canada's housing market, say experts

Housing experts say prospective homebuyers hoping Wednesday's interest rate hike will cool the country's heated real estate market will likely be disappointed.

They believe pent-up demand for homes is so high and supply still so scarce that the Bank of Canada's decision to hike the rate to 0.5 per cent won't take much of an edge off the real estate market.

"In the past, when there was an interest rate increase coming, people would be like 'maybe it's not the time to buy,' but it's the opposite," said Michelle Gilbert, a Toronto broker with Sage Real Estate Ltd.

"I've got so many people that were like 'I'm going to get my rate hold or my pre-approval finally done' ... They're ready to go."

Her clients aren't letting the rate hike deter them from buying because interest rates are still lower than they were pre-pandemic and they've lived through years of home price increases. Real estate boards have been



reporting soaring prices and a flurry of sales for the bulk of the pandemic as buyers raced to take advantage of the 0.25 per cent interest rate instituted under Bank of Canada governor Tiff Macklem's predecessor Stephen Poloz about two years ago, as the country plunged into the COVID-19 health crisis.

But in recent months, new listings have dropped and realtors and buyers are bemoaning a lack of properties

that has tipped the market even further in favour of sellers. The lack of supply coupled with a sense that low interest rates won't remain is making some even more keen to buy.

Gilbert said a property on a busy street unexpectedly got 20 offers last night.

"That's a sign that people are willing to sacrifice on things that would have been not so great to the average buyer just to get in."

Gilbert has noticed her clients want to get into the market while they can, and believes they won't find better conditions until there's a significant rise in supply or investors are

beginning to see an uptick in virus spread as observed through wastewater surveillance data but he noted that the rise isn't entirely unexpected given the lifting of many public health restrictions.

He also said that 30 to 40 per cent of Ontarians likely have enhanced protection due to a recent COVID-19 infection, which should suppress any rebound in case numbers even with the presence of BA.2.

The BA.2 sub-variant is believed to be 1.5 times more infectious than the original Omicron strain.

Research has suggested that there is some degree of reinfection as a result of the new sub-variant but Moore said that appears to only be happening in a "very small proportion of cases."

"I do believe the highest risk is behind us," he said. "We saw the risk of hospitalization peak around the third week of January and we have had declining rates from 4,000 down to around 800 Ontarians in hospital now testing positive with COVID-19. But it does not mean the risk is gone and hence the reason we're keeping masking and delaying removing it at a population level for the next couple of weeks as we follow the data."

because the trends look so good that we can anticipate removing mandatory masking by the end of March if the trend continues," he said on Thursday. Moore said that the province is

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Canadians book close to 3,000 nights in Ukraine on Airbnb- with no plans to travel

Tracy McCullough has no plans to travel any time soon, but within the span of about 24 hours, she booked accommodations with five Airbnb hosts, along with walking and cycling tours of multiple cities.

The London, Ont. hair salon owner is part of a global wave of people who have made tens of thousands of bookings, using the short-term rental platform to send financial support to Ukrainian Airbnb hosts in the midst of the Russian invasion.

Spurred by the humanitarian crisis that has unfolded around the country since late last month, McCullough has made other donations to World Central Kitchen and the Red Cross. But she says the Airbnb bookings - she's spent more than \$400 so far and says she'll probably stop at \$500 - have given her the chance to make personal connections with people in Ukraine.

"There's something about being able to connect with an actual person in Ukraine and not only give them money, but tell them that you're behind them and that you're thinking about them on the other side of the world," she said on Saturday.

It's an approach to giving that has been fuelled by social media posts inspiring similar donations and extolling the benefits of giving directly to people living in a war zone. Others are making Etsy purchases from Ukrainian creators and artists to offer support.

McCullough heard about the Airbnb idea Friday evening after her daughter sent her a screenshot of a Facebook post and quickly began booking stays in places such as Kyiv, Kharkiv and Odesa.

Alicia Omand, a Toronto marketing director, was similarly inspired by a co-worker's post and paid for a one-night stay in one room of a house just outside Kyiv.

"You never know which charity to give to or how the money is going to be disbursed. You never know exactly who you're helping or if there are admin fees involved," Omand said.

"That's the thing that I like about this is that the money is going directly to them."

In two days' time this week, Canadians made Airbnb bookings for

almost 3,000 nights in Ukraine, according to the company.

Airbnb CEO Brian Chesky said on Twitter Friday evening that over the span of those 48 hours, people around the world booked more than 61,000 total nights in Ukraine, representing about \$2.4 million (Canadian).

Airbnb is waiving booking fees for both guests and hosts in the country. (The company's non-profit arm Airbnb.org has separately pledged to offer free housing on a short-term basis for up to 100,000 refugees from the country.)

After going online to book a stay at some point in the near future, the non-travellers typically contact their hosts to say they're not actually coming, but the money is.

Matt McNama, a senior communications manager for Airbnb in Canada, said the idea of helping out Ukrainian hosts appeared to come in part from a social media post by a Twitter user with the handle @queensjammie on Wednesday. By Thursday, it had taken off.

"The idea took shape from social media and it spread like wildfire to people who are wanting to help," McNama said on Saturday.

McNama said while Airbnb has a team dedicated to ensuring its four million hosts worldwide are legitimate, there are a few steps people can take to make sure their money gets into the right hands.

"If you're going to a Ukrainian listing, check out to see if they've been a host for a while, check out the reviews, see how many check-ins they've had - that will help you identify a reputable host."



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Ottawa announces COVID-19 rules for return of cruise ships to Canadian ports

use ships becoming popular again for Canadian travellers

Strict COVID-19 measures will be enforced when cruise ships return to Canada's ports next month after a nearly two-year hiatus, federal Transport Minister Omar Alghabara announced on Monday.

Ottawa lifted its pandemic-induced prohibition on cruise ships in Canadian waters on Nov. 1, on condition that operators fully comply with public health requirements.

"The industry will have to follow a robust protocol," Alghabara told reporters in Halifax.

Under a framework developed with federal, local and provincial public health agencies, the United States government and the cruise industry, all cruise ship employees and passengers must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 in order to be allowed into Canada, Alghabara said.

Passengers, he added, will need to take a COVID-19 molecular test within 72 hours before they board or take an antigen test within one day of boarding. They will also need a negative molecular test result within 72 hours before their return to Canada or an antigen test result within one day of their arrival, he said.

Cruise ship operators will be required to inspect proof of vaccination and monitor and report test results, Alghabara said, adding that no passenger will be allowed off a cruise ship unless they meet the testing and vaccine requirements.

The cruise ship industry is worth about \$4 billion annually to the Canadian economy and is directly and indirectly responsible for about 30,000 jobs in the domestic tourism sector, the federal government says.

Ontario on track to lift mask mandate by end of March, top doctor says

Ontario's top health official says that the province remains on track to lift its mask mandate by the end of the month, despite signs suggesting that the more infectious Omicron subvariant BA.2 is well on its way to becoming dominant.

Chief Medical Officer of Health Dr. Kieran Moore made the comment during a briefing on Thursday afternoon.

He said that while modelling forecasts point to BA.2 becoming dominant in Ontario by mid-March, there is no evidence that the variant is more virulent than previous strains.

For that reason, Moore said that he is confident that Ontario will still be able to lift the mask mandate for most indoor settings by the end of March as part of broader reopening.

"We'll be monitoring the data in the coming weeks but I do agree with the Premier and the (Health) minister that



because the trends look so good that we can anticipate removing mandatory masking by the end of March if the trend continues," he said on Thursday. Moore said that the province is

hospitals and long-term care homes, for a longer period of time.

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