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## Is Canada slipping into a 'one-and-done' party leader pattern?

When Ontario Liberal Leader Steven Del Duca said he would resign in the wake of last week's provincial election, he became the latest addition to a big group of Canadian party leaders to get only one kick at the electoral can.

Conservative Leaders Andrew Scheer and Erin O'Toole only got one shot. Liberal leaders Stéphane Dion and Michael Ignatieff were afforded just one opportunity each. Iain Rankin in Nova Scotia and Andrew Wilkinson in B.C. each only had a single chance to win.

Almost all of those leaders resigned. But it certainly appeared they were quitting, amid internal party pressures, to avoid the embarrassment of being ousted.

It's not so for every leader. On the same night that Del Duca resigned after four atop Ontario's NDP, Stephen Harper lost his first election, before winning the next three. Robert Stanfield got three strikes before Joe Clark took over the federal Tories. The most extreme examples, Wilfrid Laurier and Mackenzie King, each led their parties in seven elections, with a few losses sprinkled in among the victories.

These days, party leaders who lose elections often (but not always) resign. Winning no doubt helps with longevity, but for those who lose, is the cutthroat "one-and-done" model on their terms?

Western University political scientist Christine de Clercy says, while there is a general lack of

## Feds temporarily suspend random arrival testing at Canada's airports

The federal government announced Friday it will suspend the mandatory randomized arrival testing for incoming travellers at Canada's airports, a move that comes as the U.S. signals it will ease up on some testing requirements.

As a result, starting Saturday, June 11, only unvaccinated travellers will be required to take a test upon entry into Canada.

Up to now, fully vaccinated travellers were being subjected to random COVID-19 testing upon arrival.

The policy change is being billed as a "pause" because random arrival testing will be suspended between Saturday and June 30 - and the government plans to bring it back on July 1.

"It is important to note that [randomized testing] will be reinstated as this is the only way we have of detecting new variants coming into the country, given that provinces and territories are no longer doing any PCR testing," Marie-France Proulx, a spokesperson for Health Minister Jean-Yves Duclos, told CBC News.

While the random arrival testing eventually will return, the government announced that, starting next month, all testing, including for the unvaccinated, will be moved off-site - meaning travellers will no longer be forced to give a sample for a test at the airport.

This change will mean airports can dismantle dedicated testing sites that have taken up space in the customs halls.

In an interview with CBC's Power & Politics, Tourism Minister Randy Boissonnault said the three-week pause in random testing will give the government time to set up off-site testing as the program shifts away from the country's airports.

"It's going to make sure that the airports flow more quickly. The airports aren't designed to be mini



health care centres and so this will help with staff, it'll help with congestion," Boissonnault said. "So this is a good step in the right direction."

It wasn't immediately clear what the shift to "off-site" testing will mean for arriving passengers.

Canada is one of the few Western countries that still has some form of arrival testing at this late stage of the pandemic.

Critics, including a number of public health experts, have said that this sort of testing regime is unnecessary now that there is widespread natural and vaccine-induced immunity to the virus. They've called the policy a bureaucratic burden that was adding to already lengthy delays at airports, which are grappling with clogged customs facilities.

The government has defended the arrival testing program as a way to track how many COVID-19 cases are slipping into the country. They've also said the program could be used to detect new virus variants of concern.

The U.S., which has never had arrival testing, announced Friday it will drop its pre-entry testing requirement for air travel. As of Sunday, U.S.-bound passengers won't have to get a test before boarding a flight.

Some of Canada's airports, most notably Toronto's Pearson International, have been plagued by hours-long delays in recent weeks. The federal government has been criticized for its handling of the often chaotic situation, which has left passengers stranded and staff stressed.

The Greater Toronto Airport Authority (GTAA), the organization that runs Pearson, has long urged the government to drop random arrival testing because the program causes delays.

GTAA also has said the already dire customs situation is likely to only get worse because the number of international flights arriving at that airport will increase by some 50 per cent in the coming days as airlines ramp up their summer schedules.

Nearly 1 in 4 homeowners would have to sell if interest rates rise more, survey finds

Nearly one in four homeowners say they will have to sell their home if interest rates go up further, according to a new debt survey from Manulife Bank of Canada.

The survey, conducted between April 14 and April 20, also found that 18 per cent of homeowners polled are already at a stage where they can't afford their homes.

Over one in five Canadians expect rising interest rates to have a "significant negative impact" on their overall mortgage, debt and financial situation, the survey found.

The Bank of Canada remains on a rate-hike path as it tries to tame inflation, which is now at a 31-year high at 6.8 per cent. On June 1, the central bank increased its key interest rate by half a percentage point to 1.5 per cent.

The Manulife survey also found that two-thirds of Canadians do not view home ownership as affordable in their local community.

Additionally, close to half of indebted Canadians say debt is impacting their mental health, and almost 50 per cent of Canadians say they would struggle to handle surprise expenses.

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## Housing prices in Canada could fall 15 per cent by Dec. 2023 after Bank of Canada rate hikes: report

As the Bank of Canada continues to hike rates in order to curb inflation, housing prices in Canada could fall 15 per cent from their peak by the end of next year, a new report says.

The average price of a home in Canada peaked at just over \$790,000 in February 2022, making it 50 per cent higher over two years. But the report, published on Wednesday by Desjardins, says by December 2023, the average national home price could fall to around \$675,000.

Since the Bank of Canada began to raise interest rates in order to combat inflation, home prices has steadily declined. Desjardins says that average price of a home in Canada fell 2.6 per cent month-to-month in March and 3.8 per cent in April.

But despite the expected drop, Desjardins notes that \$675,000 is still nearly 30 per cent above what it was in December 2019, when the average price of a home was \$530,000 in Canada. Jimmy Jean, chief economist and strategist for Desjardins, says he expects the decline in home prices to be "fairly manageable".

before stabilizing, citing increasing levels in immigration and continuing shortage of housing supply amid strong demand.

"Our expectation is for the housing market to cool to moderate, but we're not expecting any collapse by any measure," Jean told CTV News on Thursday.

For most homeowners who intend to keep living in their homes for decades to come, including those who jumped into the market near their peak, Jean says his housing correction will be a "small blip."

"Housing is an investment normally you make for the long-term," Jean said. "Ultimately, you're buying a product to live in, a family, to live into. So, over the long term, things will stabilize and pick up again. So, it's not a major concern from a perspective."

But it's a different story for real estate investors who were expecting huge gains from rising housing prices.

"If you rent out a property, sometimes, if you don't collect enough in terms of rent to make up for the mortgage costs or the utility costs, those decisions were still justified by the idea that prices would

keep appreciating," he said. "Now it's an eye opener."

The Bank of Canada is expected to raise rates again by another 50 basis points in July, and bank governor Tiff Macklem has indicated that interest rates may have spiked to 3.0 per cent.

But Desjardins economists believe Macklem won't have to go all the way to 3.0 per cent and say 2.25 per cent will be enough to slow inflation.

"The Canadian economy is highly rate sensitive," Jean said. "We think this moderation will be significant and will cause economic growth, and therefore inflation, to slow, and that will remove the necessity for Tiff Macklem and the Bank of Canada to hike all the way to three per cent."

While a 1.5 per cent drop is what Desjardins forecasts nationally, some regions may experience even bigger corrections, particularly in parts of Canada that saw that steepest pandemic-era home price increases.

After years of population declines, the Maritime provinces saw an explosion in

population growth from 2020 and onwards, as the advent of remote work enabled more Canadians from big cities to flock to the coast, seeking larger and more affordable living spaces.

In turn, P.E.I., Nova Scotia and New Brunswick saw the highest housing price increases in the country. Compared to December 2019, the average price of a home in those provinces rose 62 to 70 per cent in February 2022. These provinces are also expected to see the largest corrections, Desjardins says, with housing prices could drop between 18 to 20 per cent.

The Prairies and Newfound and Labrador saw the smallest pandemic-era spikes in housing prices. These provinces rely heavily on oil, and crude prices took a nosedive in the early months of the pandemic. Home prices in these regions are only expected to fall between two to 10 per cent by December 2023, the Desjardins reports.

B.C.'s home prices are also expected to fall 15 per cent, closely mirroring the national average, while prices in Quebec will fall 12 per cent thanks to its "much greater housing affordability and less overvalued market," he reports.

Ontario's home prices are expected to decline 18 per cent, but these drops will vastly differ across regions. Much like the Maritimes, the communities within a few hours drive from Toronto saw home prices jump 70 per cent between December 2019 and February 2022 as many Canadians began to work from home.

## This is how Canadians are surviving the soaring cost of everything



Skyrocketing prices are forcing more Canadians to make tough decisions, leaving even middle-class families to choose between buying the food they need and paying their bills.

A recent survey from Food Banks Canada found that nearly one in five Canadians reported going hungry over the last two years.

"It's a definite struggle," he said. Arsenault said the family used to be able to afford to stock up on extras when grocery shopping, but now they can only afford necessities - despite hunting for bargains.

"We're barely just scraping by on getting enough for what we actually need," he said. "We've cut out a lot of meat... Instead of buying steaks, you buy pork chops."

Arsenault said while he noticed a jump in prices early in the pandemic, it's gotten a lot worse in the last six months.

"We run out of stuff a lot," he said.

Surviving on oatmeal, eggs and tuna

Johnnie Barlow, a resident of rural Prince Edward Island, knows that reality all too well.

"In the last few months with the price of everything going up, there's nothing left. By the first week of the month, I'm out of money," he said.

Barlow currently relies on income assistance because he has a brain tumour that affects his thinking, making it difficult to work.

Since the financial support he receives isn't enough to cover rising costs, he said he's had to start restricting his diet.

Later, Barlow said, he's been surviving on oatmeal, hard-boiled eggs and tuna.

"I'm trying to stay healthy as cheaply as I can," he said.

Barlow joked that "it's great for weight loss" and said he's trying to keep a positive outlook.

He's also had to cut back on the nutritional supplements he used to buy to help treat symptoms caused by the tumour.

Barlow, who lives 20 minutes from Charlottetown, said he's hoping to

soon return to his job selling home heating and cooling systems. But to do that, he needs to pay for repairs on his car, the only mode of transportation available where he lives.

"You have to spend money to make money," he said.

Costs keep rising, but wages stay the same

Even families with more disposable income say they're taking a hit.

Christine Taylor, who lives in southern Ontario, said she's finding it hard to pay all of her family's bills, and the worries about those less fortunate.

"This direction is not economically sustainable. It will break people - not only financially, but emotionally and mentally," she said.

Taylor, who has a job in the fuel and energy industry, said she and her husband, who works in home and mobile electronics, bring in a combined annual income of about \$85,000. Yet it's not enough to keep up with all of the expenses that come with owning a home and raising two teens.

"We just get by," she said. "And costs keep rising and our wages stay the same."

Taylor said they've postponed paying some bills in order to cover the cost of vehicle repairs.

She's also started hunting for bargains at the grocery store and planning more meals that will make leftovers.

Extra expenses - like an annual family trip to Thunder Bay, in northwestern Ontario, or horseback riding lessons - are some of the cuts they've had to make.

## Toronto to offer monkeypox vaccine clinics targeting high-risk communities

Toronto Public Health says it will start holding vaccination clinics to immunize high-risk individuals against the monkeypox virus starting on Sunday.

It says several clinics will be held in the coming weeks to vaccinate those who have had close contact with someone who tested positive and those at higher risk of being exposed to the virus.

Sunday's clinic is intended for employees of the city's bathhouses.

Toronto Public Health says there are 11 confirmed cases in the city as of Saturday, two higher than the provincial total of nine released a day earlier by Canada's chief public health officer when she reported a national case count of 12.

Dr. Theresa Tam said most of the cases are among men who said they had had sexual contact with other men, though the virus can spread to anyone who has had close physical contact with an infected person.

Monkeypox belongs to the same virus family as smallpox, and smallpox vaccines have proven effective in combating the related virus. The National Advisory Committee on Immunization advises offering a single dose of the InVivacare vaccine to individuals with a high risk exposure to a probable or confirmed case of monkeypox, or in a setting where transmission may take place within four days.

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# Sonam Kapoor gets trolled for flaunting her bare baby bump in a tube top and jacket; netizens call her, 'Wannabe Rihanna'

Sonam Kapoor is becoming a fashion inspiration to all the would-be mothers and we just damn love what she is wearing during her pregnancy. Just recently Rhea Kapoor shared pictures of Sonam and her chilling on the London streets. While Sonam happily flaunted her baby bump in an Uber cool tube top paired with a jacket and loose pants and she is giving us major fashion vibes and how. Well, no Bollywood actress brings up her fashion game like Sonam and the reason she is called the fashion icon of the industry. While her fans are hailing her casual avatar, Sonam is getting badly trolled by the netizens as they call her wannabe Rihanna. Many slammed her for not always going with the west culture even now. One user wrote, "WANNABE RIHANNA... copy kar karke hi zindagi nikal gayi in bollywood valo ki". Another user commented, "Rihanna wanne be"



The third user slammed this trend and said, "It's been a while as a trend in the west Bollywood is following it now! Flaunting a preg bump is 'that good feeling' for going to be mothers." One user said that how new she is flaunting her baby bump, later she wouldn't want to show her baby's face because that is a trend as well. "Dad m baache me nah nahi dikhathe...". They do celebs think that they are the only women who get pregnant?!? mean, have you ever seen anybody

# Neetu Kapoor reveals she and Rishi Kapoor had broken up during Amar Akbar Anthony's song 'Parda Hai Parda' shoot

While several performances await the audience this week, the terrific performance by 'All Star' group on 'Parda Hai Parda' will steal the spotlight. After enjoying every bit of their act, Judge Mani Pandey can't help but request Neetu Kapoor to recreate this superb act on stage. Neetu Kapoor sportily steps up and gives a marvelous performance taking everyone down the nostalgia, she goes ahead and shares her fond memories of the late Rishi Kapoor from the song's shoot saying, "Rishi Ji and I were at loggerheads at the time of this song's shoot. We used to fight a lot with each other and had broken up at that time. It was a romantic song when I had to play a rose but what was going in my mind was something else". However, their natural chemistry certainly worked its magic in the end and this song finished line after years in the making. The film stars Amitabh Bachchan, Ranbir Kapoor, Alia Bhatt, Nagarjuna Akkineni, and Mouni Roy.

# Ranbir Kapoor opens up about his married life with Alia Bhatt: 'We still haven't realized that...'

Ranbir Kapoor, who tied the knot with Alia Bhatt on April 14 in an intimate ceremony, has opened up about his married life. The love story, which started on the sets of his upcoming film Brahmstra, finally came to fruition when the two exchanged vows in front of roughly 50 guests. While it's been 5 years since Ranbir and Alia dated, the actor said that there has been no major change after marriage. "There was no such major change. We are together for five years. We thought that if we got married then we have done it, but we also had some commitments. The very next day of our marriage, we both left for work. Alia went on her shoot and I also went to Manali. When she comes back from London and my film 'Shaamshah' releases, we are thinking of taking a week off. We still haven't realized that we are married," Ranbir told Dainik Bhaskar. Barely a few days after their



much-hyped wedding, both Ranbir and Alia went back to work to fulfill their professional commitments. While Alia has been left off to an undisclosed location for the shoot of Stone, Ranbir flew to Manali for Sandeep Reddy Vanga's upcoming Bollywood biggie Animal. When Ranbir was asked his ambitions to pursue a career in Hollywood like his wife, he said, "I don't have any dreams of Hollywood. I only have dreams of Brahmstra. I think original

# SL vs AUS: Dasun Shanaka stuns Australia to hand Sri Lanka consolation win

The T20 series between Sri Lanka and Australia culminated in a breathtaking fashion with the hosts chasing down a 176 run target set by Australia with just 1 ball to spare. Sri Lanka looked down-and-out of the contest when they lost their fifth wicket at 108 runs halfway through the 15th over. At the time, they still needed 69 from 26 balls with skipper Dasun Shanaka the only recognized batsman at the crease.



However, Shanaka decided to take matters into his own hands and launched a stupendous assault on the Australian pacers. Along with a handy contribution from Chamika Karunaratne, the duo plundered 59 runs from the last 3 overs to seal the chase, and bring joy to the hearts of fans all around the island nation.

# \$12 mn per match: IPL set to be No. 2 sports league

On the eve of the e-auction for Indian Premier League's (IPL) five-year media rights, the Indian cricket board is bullish; currently at No. 4 behind National Football League (NFL), English Premier League (EPL), and Major League Baseball (MLB), in terms of 'per match broadcasting fee', the board expects IPL to jump to the second spot.

Unperturbed by the late withdrawal of e-auctioner giant Amazon from the high-profile media deal, the board's sports broadcasters Disney Star, Sony, Zee, along with the new entrant Viacom-Reliance, Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) secretary Jay Shah said that even if the rights go at base price, the valuation of cricket's biggest tournament would have taken a giant leap.

"At present, a National Football League game costs a broadcaster about \$17 million, which is the highest for any sports league. That's followed by English Premier League, at \$11 million and the Major League Baseball figure, too, is roughly the same. In the last five-year cycle, we got \$9 million from one IPL game. This time, going by the present minimum base price that we have set, BCCI will get paid \$12 million per IPL match. That's a giant leap for Indian cricket on the world stage. We will be just behind NFL," Shah told The Indian Express quoting a BCCI study on global sports leagues.

# Mitchell, Blundell hit tons as New Zealand make England toil

NOTTINGHAM: New Zealand's Daryl Mitchell scored an impressive 162 not out while Tom Blundell also hit a century to put the tourists in a strong position at 481-5 at a rain-enforced early tea break on day two of the second Test against England on Saturday.

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دینی گورنر، رنگے ٹینیڈیا میں اور جیوز Immigrant Canadian جن کی عمر 45 سال سے زیادہ ہوگی، محضرات رجوع کریں۔  
Canadian Citizen اور بڑی بیوی کی زندگی گزارنے والا مسلمان اور ذہین ہوں۔  
Contact: 647-529-3166

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## 'Major' national security investigation underway into Parliament Hill explosives scare

A "major" national security investigation is underway in light of a warning from Canadian border security agents about potential explosives in vehicles parked near Parliament Hill, sources tell Global News.



Parliamentarians and their staff were told to "shelter in place" Saturday afternoon as police descended on Ottawa's downtown core due to what law enforcement sources described as a credible threat of explosives in the area.

Police searched two vehicles, one parked near the intersection of Slater Street and Metcalfe Street, the other near Canada's Supreme Court building. Two people were detained in relation to the incident.

Multiple national security and law enforcement agencies, including a RCMP-led national security team, the Ottawa Police Service and high-ranking intelligence officials, are engaged in the investigation.

Two law enforcement sources told Global News that the tip about potential explosives came from the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), whose intelligence branch focuses on detecting "high-risk people and goods at the earliest point" of their travel to Canada.

In a statement to Global News, the CBSA refused to confirm or deny their participation in the investigation.

Emergency call logs reviewed by Global News suggest police detained a suspect near Slater and Metcalfe, a busy downtown intersection three blocks from Parliament Hill, at roughly 1:42 p.m. Ottawa police then set up a perimeter around a vehicle.

That vehicle was "cleared" before 2:53 p.m., according to the logs, before a warning about a second vehicle near the Supreme Court on Wellington Street. That vehicle was cleared by 3:33 p.m.

It wasn't clear Saturday night what, if anything, police found in the vehicles.

Following an investigation, no public safety threat was identified. At about 4 p.m. the area was cleared and is now accessible to the public," the Ottawa Police Service wrote in a social media post Saturday evening.

The investigation into this matter continues.

Parliament Hill was evacuated early Saturday afternoon and the Parliamentary Protective Service - the agency responsible for security on Parliament Hill - advised any parliamentarians and staff to "shelter in place" while the investigation unfolded.

"As the situation is ongoing, our highest priority continues to be the safety of the parliamentary community and the public," a spokesperson for the protective service said in a statement.

"We continue to work closely with our security partners."

Ex-officials with Canada upgraded for national security threats - May 24, 2022.

Tensions in the parliamentary precinct have been high after February's convoy protests, and there is an active discussion among MPs and senators over rethinking Parliament Hill's security posture in the wake of that event.

## How to Immigrate to Canada using the Federal Skilled Trades Program The Federal Skilled Trades Program was introduced in 2013 to address the shortage of skilled trades workers in Canada.

The Federal Skilled Trades Program (FSTP) is an economic immigration pathway under the Express Entry system.

It was created to address the shortage of skilled trades workers in Canada as the baby boomer generation reaches retirement age. This, combined with Canada's low birth rate, means there are not enough skilled trades workers in Canada to fill the gap and immigration is vital to maintaining the skilled trades workforce in future.

What is the FSTP?

The FSTP is a dedicated pathway for skilled trades workers to gain status as a Canadian permanent resident. The eligibility requirements differ from other Express Entry programs because they are specific to just one National Occupation Classification (NOC), skill level (Skill level B). There are also different educational and language requirements.

To be eligible for the FSTP, candidates must meet the following criteria:

"At least two years of skilled trades work experience within the five years before applying"

"A minimum Canadian Language Benchmark of 5 for speaking and listening and 4 for reading and writing on their English or French language test"

"Demonstrate proof of funds (if applicable)"

Discover if You Are Eligible for Canadian Immigration

Skilled workers experience

To be eligible for the FSTP, candidates must be able to demonstrate at least two years of paid, full-time work experience or an equivalent amount of part-time experience within the five years before you apply in any of the following NOC occupational categories. All these major groups fall under NOC skill type B:

electrical and construction trades

"Major Group 73, maintenance and equipment operation trades"

"Major Group 82, supervisors and technical jobs in natural resources, agriculture and related production"

"Major Group 92, processing, manufacturing and utilities supervisors and central control operators"

"Minor Group 632, chefs and cooks"

"Minor Group 633, butchers and bakers"

Language Requirements

Candidates for the FSTP must be able to demonstrate a minimum level of proficiency in either English or French. They must have a Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) score of five in speaking and listening and a CLB score of 4 in reading and writing.

Proof of funds

Candidates must be able to show that they have enough money to support themselves and any dependent family in Canada. The amount increases with the number of people you are supporting. Proof of funds comes from the bank or financial institution where you keep your money and will show your average account balances over the previous six months and any outstanding debts. This is not necessary if you are already employed in Canada, or you have a valid job offer from an employer in Canada. Get assessed by a province or territory.

Education

There is no set education requirement for FSTP candidates. However, by obtaining an

Educational Credential Assessment (ECA) or showing a that they have completed secondary or post-secondary education in Canada candidates for FSTP can boost their Comprehensive Ranking System (CRS) score and improve their chances of becoming a permanent resident through Express Entry.

Next steps

Once a candidate has self-assessed that they are eligible for the FSTP, they can go online and create an Express Entry profile on the IRCC website. After you submit your profile, IRCC will provide you with a CRS score. This score is based on criteria such as your age, work experience, language skills and education, among other human capital factors.

The score you receive is ranked against other candidates in the Express Entry pool.

Those with the highest-ranking scores will receive an invitation to apply (ITA) for permanent residence. Once you have received your ITA, you have 60 days to submit your application. IRCC then will evaluate your documents and make the final decision on your application.

Conclusion

Express Entry invitations to FSTP candidates have been paused since December 2021 due to the pandemic. However, invitations will resume in early July of this year. IRCC is looking to clear the backlog of applications and bring processing times to six months for new applications. According to the Immigration Levels Plan 2022-2024, Express Entry will once again become main way Canada welcomes economic class immigrants. By 2024, Canada will look to welcome up to 110,000 Express Entry immigrants.

## 'Unacceptable': Canada says it was wrong to send official to reception at Russian Embassy

Foreign Affairs Minister Melanie Joly says it was "unacceptable" that a Canadian representative attended an event hosted at the Russian Embassy, and has vowed it won't happen again.

As The Globe and Mail first reported, deputy chief of protocol officer Yasemin Heimbecker from Global Affairs Canada (GAC) attended a Russia Day celebration at the embassy in Ottawa on Friday.

The Canadian government has repeatedly condemned Russia for its ongoing invasion of Ukraine - imposing sanctions, sending military equipment to Ukraine, and supporting international efforts to investigate war crimes, in response.

"This is unacceptable. No Canadian representative should have attended the event hosted at the Russian embassy & no Canadian representative will attend this kind of event again. [Canada] continues to stand with [Ukraine] as it fights against Russia's egregious invasion," Joly's tweet reads.

A statement from GAC to CTV News says the decision to send the representative was made by the department and adds that Russian officials will not be invited to Canada Day events.

Ottawa has faced pressure to expel Russia's ambassador Oleg Stepanov in the wake of the country's unprovoked attack on Ukraine. Several European countries have begun the process of removing diplomats.

Interim Conservative Leader Candice Bergen condemned the attendance of the GAC official at the Russia Day celebration.

## From \$0 to \$120 in 2 years - and the price of oil could climb higher

With so much pain at the gas pumps these days and the extraordinary price of oil around the globe, it's almost unfathomable to think a barrel of crude was worthless two years ago.

The price of oil even briefly turned negative in the spring of 2020 after the pandemic hit and travel activity by air, land and sea ground to a near halt.

Oil remains close to multi-year highs and any sign of weakness or a dip in value has been brief before a rebound in price.

The oilpatch is now in a period of record revenue and a wash in cash after a punishing string of years during the last decade - a period that included stubbornly low prices, widespread layoffs and costly pipeline bottlenecks.

"People that have survived and waited out the tougher times are getting rewarded now," said Travis Sperling, industrial sales and operations manager with Winters Instruments, which specializes in manufacturing pressure and temperature gauges.

Prices spiked after Russian President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine in



February sent the market into turmoil. Initially, many expected the exorbitant prices wouldn't last, but sanctions on Russia and recovering economies are offering crude prices staying power.

"This is a long way from the downturn," said Hayden Binde, marketing associate with Montana-based BioSqueeze, which focuses on sealing leaks from oil and gas wells.

Binde was one of hundreds of people in Calgary last week for the Global Energy Show, a conference and trade

emissions or climate change. And many at the conference are also keenly aware that energy prices are too high and causing affordability and inflation problems across the country.

Sherry Martin wasn't sure if her fuel bill for attending the event from Saskatchewan was worth it, but in the end she was happy with how many business leads she was able to pick up.

"If the fuel prices keep going up, it's going to hurt. It's going to really hurt," said Martin, part of the sales team at AGI Environment, which sells steel storage tanks.

After hovering around \$120 US per barrel this week, there is plenty of speculation about where oil prices could go from here. Soaring to \$150 or beyond isn't out of question.

"I sure hope oil doesn't get to \$200," said Cenovus CEO Alex Poiroux.

"I'm a little bit worried that it's going to take a while for the industry to respond to this," and boost oil production, he said.

Oil prices are expected to decrease slightly but still end the year worth more than \$100 US per barrel, said Liam O'Brien, a Calgary-based analyst with Sprotco, an energy consultancy.

Gasoline and diesel prices could fall over the summer months if enough drivers are deterred by the cost of fuel to ditch their summer travel plans. For now, demand remains robust.

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