

Presented by:



2018 CIF AWARD GALA

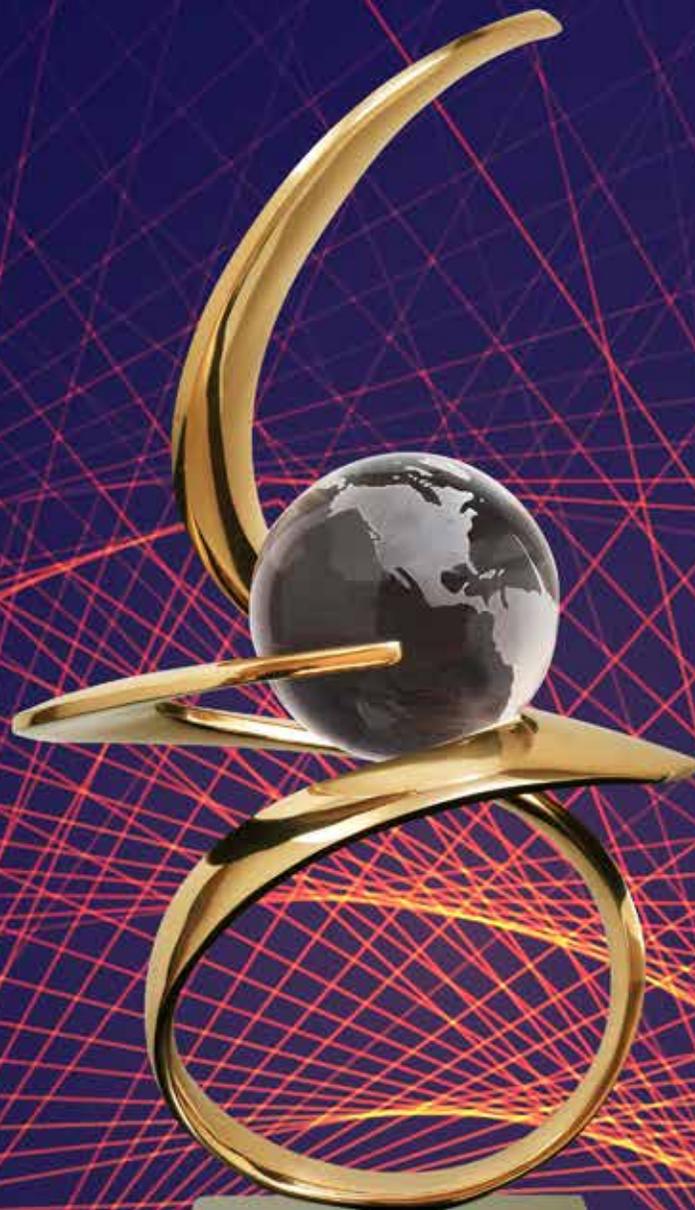


CANADA INDIA
FOUNDATION



Democracies Working Together

Honouring
SPARSH SHAH



2018 CIF GLOBAL INDIAN AWARD

CANADA INDIA
FOUNDATION

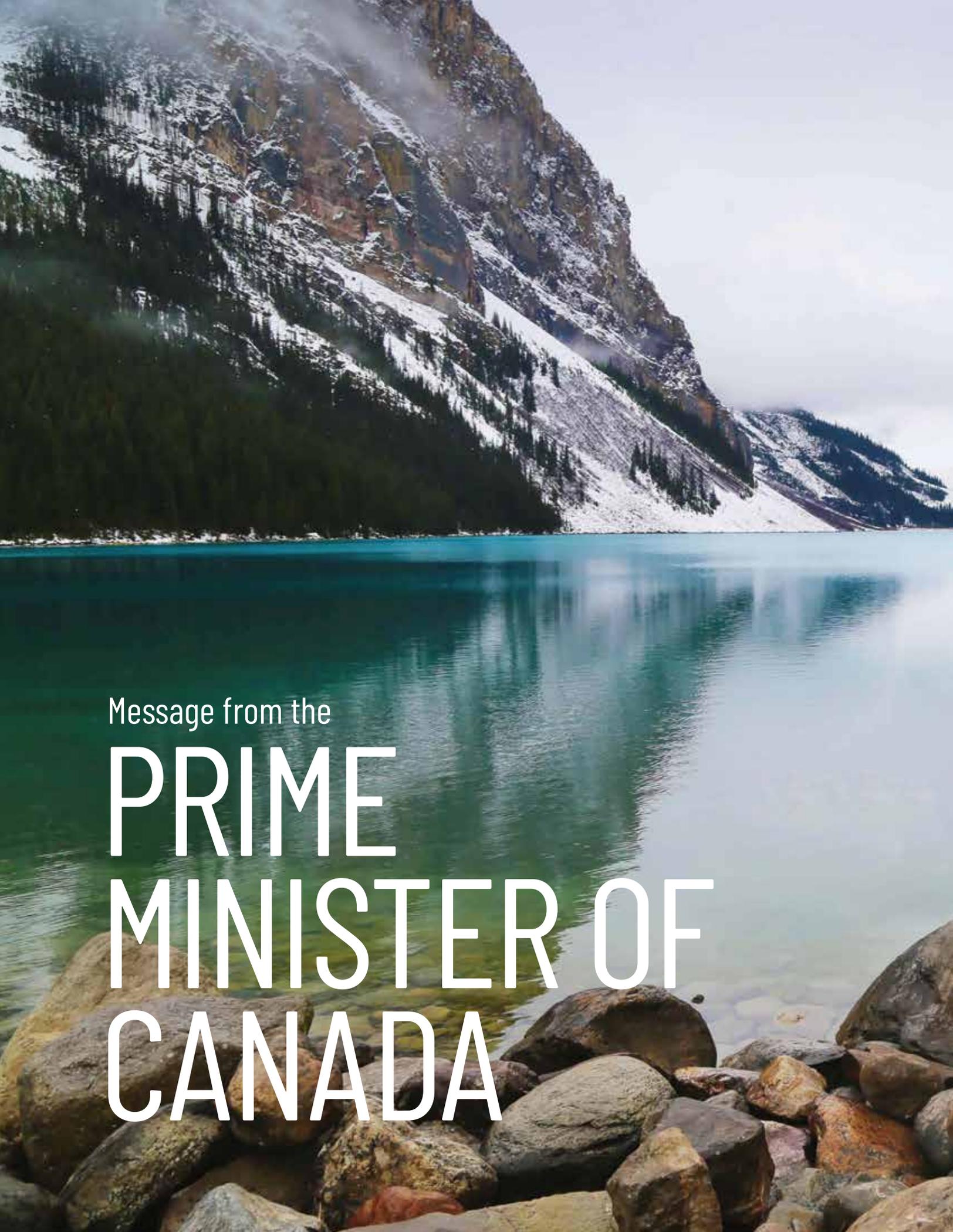


Democracies Working Together

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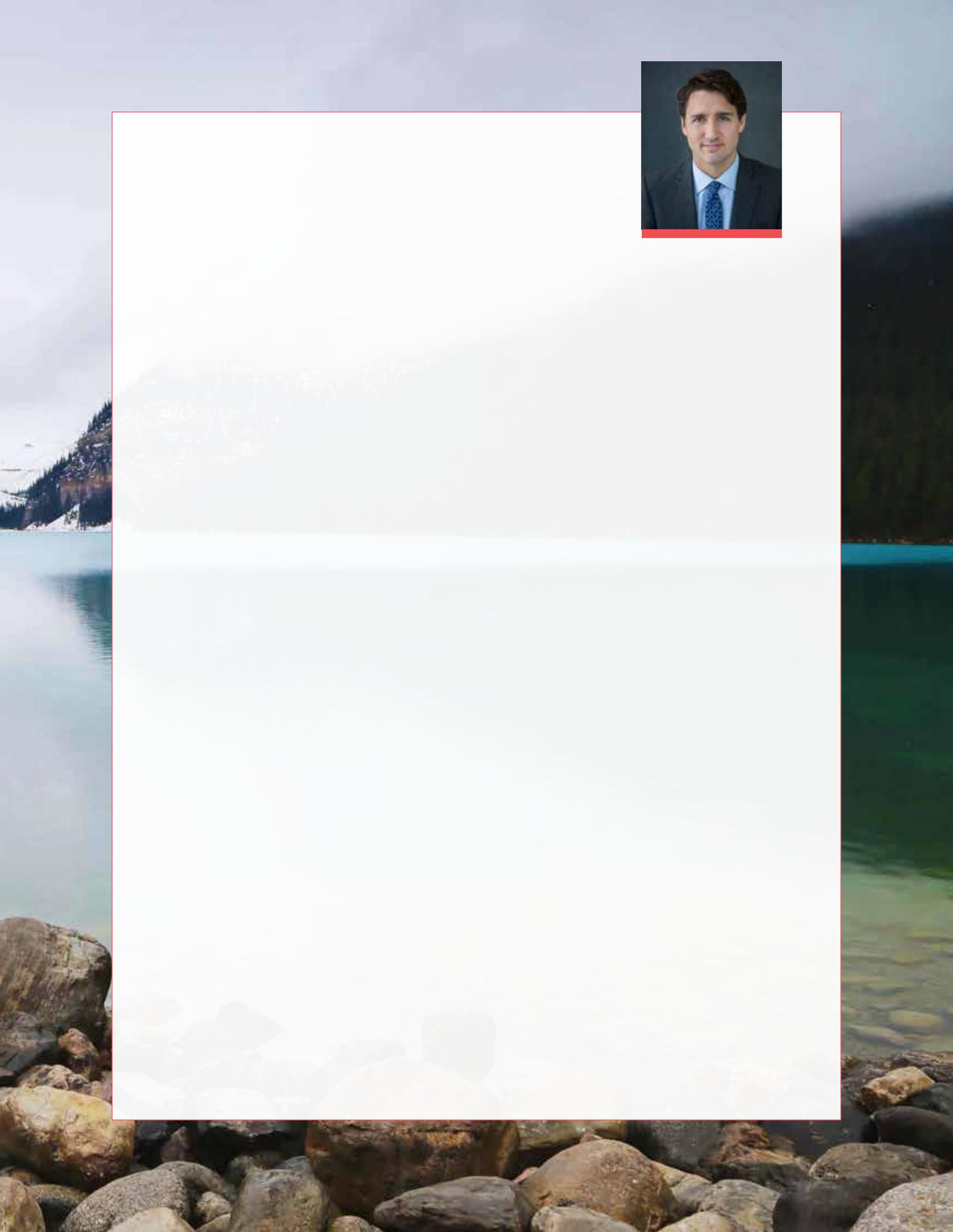


2018
CIF Honouring
AWARD SPARSH SHAH
GALA



Message from the

PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA



Message from the

PREMIER OF ONTARIO







Message from the

HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR CANADA TO INDIA



High Commission of Canada



Haut-commissariat du Canada

Canada and India enjoy a deep and longstanding bilateral relationship. In 2017, two-way merchandise trade between Canada and India amounted to \$8.4 billion, split equally between exports to and imports from India (\$4.2 billion each). That same year, India was Canada's eighth largest destination for merchandise exports. The high level of engagement between the two countries has seen 17 visits by federal ministers, several provincial ministers, and numerous Parliamentarians in the last two years, which culminated in Prime Minister Trudeau's February 2018 visit to India.

During the Prime Minister's visit, new bilateral investments of \$1 billion were announced. A Joint Statement released during the visit outlined the way forward for the Canada-India relationship. The statement also emphasized a commitment on the part of both countries to invest in mutual growth and to ensure greater economic and social empowerment for women. Canada and India also agreed to strengthen cultural and economic ties, work towards building a more peaceful and secure world, and work together on climate change, oceans, space, and clean energy.

These positive trends are reinforced by the significant people-to-people relations between Canada and India. These ties play a central and dynamic role in the Canada-India partnership, particularly because of the growing community of more than 1.3 million Canadians of Indian origin - the largest Indian diaspora community in the world on a per capita basis - and their contributions to our societies.

The Canada India Foundation has made significant contributions in further strengthening these people-to-people ties. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate CIF on completing another successful year as a premier public policy organization, and an important partner in further deepening the Canada-India bilateral relationship.

Sincerely,

His Excellency Nadir Patel
High Commissioner for Canada to India

Canada



Message from the

**HIGH
COMMISSIONER
OF INDIA
TO CANADA**



विकास स्वरूप
Vikas Swarup



भारत का उच्चायुक्त, ओटवा
High Commissioner of India
Ottawa

June 20, 2018

Message

The Canada India Foundation's Annual Award Gala is a fitting occasion to celebrate the Global Indian.

During its decade-long existence, the CIF has played an important role in defining the values that India and the Indo-Canadian community have stood for. At a time when India is rising on the global stage, the Global Indian Award is the perfect tribute to those Indians who are making their mark internationally and setting a new benchmark for excellence.

I am delighted to learn that the 2018 recipient of the Global Indian Award is Sparsh Shah, the singer, song-writer and rapper who has fought disability and created a name for himself at the tender age of 14. He will, no doubt, serve as an inspiring role model for everyone.

On the happy occasion of the Annual Award Gala, I convey my greetings and good wishes to all members of the CIF and commend them once again for their dedicated service to promote India-Canada ties.


(Vikas Swarup)

10 Springfield Road, Ottawa, Ontario, K1M 1C9 Tel.: +1-613-7442406/7440909 Fax: +1-613-7443033
E-mail: hc.ottawa@mea.gov.in Website: www.hciottawa.ca



Message from the

CONSUL GENERAL OF INDIA TO TORONTO



Dinesh Bhatia
Consul General of India
दिनेश भाटिया
भारत का प्रधान कौंसल



Consulate General of India
365 Bloor Street East, 7th Floor
Toronto, Ontario M4W 3L4
Tel: +1 (416) 960-0760
Fax: +1 (416) 960-9812
Email: cg.toronto@mea.gov.in

MESSAGE

I am pleased to learn that Canada India Foundation (CIF) is holding its 8th Annual Global Indian Award Gala on 6 July 2018 at Pearson Convention Centre in Brampton, GTA, Ontario.

Canada India Foundation, a non-profit, non-partisan and non-governmental organization, is fostering support for stronger bi-lateral relations between India and Canada. It is appreciated that CIF has been honoring individuals of Indian origin with an Award, who inspires all, irrespective of borders and culture, for the last eight years.

I take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Sparsh Shah who, despite suffering from Brittle Bone Disease at a mere age of 14, has become inspiration for the people all around the world. On this occasion, I extend my warmest greetings and best wishes to the members of Canada India Foundation and their respective families.

(Dinesh Bhatia)



From The Chair - CIF

A CATALYST OF TRANSFORMATION

By Ajit Someshwar

Institutions are born of a fervent desire to bring about a positive change and to make a tangible difference in the society. Individuals come together to nurture and build institutions because they, as a group, believe in the values that the institution espouses.

The Canada India Foundation was formed because we felt a need to create a proactive platform in the sphere of public diplomacy that would enable us to constructively engage Canada and India in a dialogue and propel them to create a future that would be a true reflection of their shared democratic values. We identified the organisation with a tag-line that would resonate with this inherently democratic values that both the countries share. Our tag-line is 'Democracies Working Together.'

In 2007, a group of like minded individuals decided to create a public diplomacy platform with the objectives of enhancing awareness about contemporary India amongst Canadians, and enhancing the participation of Indo-Canadians in the Canadian mainstream. All of us, who formed the CIF, as well as the leadership that emerged later shared the vision of contributing and making a real difference to both our matrubhoomi and our karmabhoomi.

As we enter the next phase of our growth as an organisation – we are entering our 12th year – we must analyse our past, and based on that assessment, plan for our future. Our past has been a series of superlative achievements. The CIF has steadfastly engaged decision-makers in both Canada and India to create a conducive atmosphere for the two countries to solidify their bilateral relations and make them more meaningful.

An organisation's future is based on its achievements

and its focus. On both these counts, the CIF is assuredly poised to continue playing a significant role as a catalyst of transformation in the Canada India corridor. It has sought this transformation by emerging as a thought leader in the sphere of bilateral trade. It has done so by creating an annual forum to discuss and dissect sectors of significance to the Canada-India bilateral economic relations.

Over the last decade, CIF has organised high profile public policy forums bringing together ministers, senior bureaucrats, private sector CEOs, and leading consultants from Canada and India to discuss policies in focus sectors to enable greater trade. The sector forums have been organised in energy, mining and metals, agriculture and food procession, infrastructure and healthcare sectors.

This year, to coincide with the CIF Global Indian Award Gala, we organised the Higher Education Forum. Higher education has emerged as one of the most important sectors between Canada and India and the forum explored the growing link between education and economic growth that has spurred the demand for quality education, and has led to a surge in globalization of education.

I am proud to be a part of the team that launched the CIF, and it gives me immense satisfaction to note that as Canada-India relations become more meaningful, the CIF continues to perform its role of a thought leader that is a catalyst of transformation.



From The Gala Chair

LET'S WALK THIS ROAD TOGETHER, THROUGH THE STORM

By Anil Shah

One of the mandates of the Canada India Foundation (CIF) is to honour an achiever at its annual CIF Global Indian Award Gala. The annual award recognises an individual who has championed the transformation of India into a global economy and presence on the world stage. The award is the first of its kind outside India and the CIF donates \$50,000 to a charity of the award recipient's choice.

Since its inception a decade ago, the award recipients have been luminaries who have played a transformative role in making India one of the fastest growing economies in the world. They include Sam Pitroda (2008), Tulsi Tanti (2009), Ratan Tata (2010), Deepak Chopra (2012), Narayana Murthy (2014), Subhash Chandra (2016) and Swami Ramdev (2017).

For 2018, the CIF is taking a break from its tradition of honouring entrepreneurial achievers. It is honouring a young lad whose achievements are as stellar as the achievements of the previous recipients. Sparsh Shah is a 14-year-old explosion of talent. He is a singer, songwriter, rapper, and as if all this wasn't enough, he is also an inspirational speaker, with hundreds of thousands of dedicated followers on YouTube, and other social media platforms.

This kind of adulation and following would be an amazing achievement for anyone, but what makes this achievement remarkable is that Sparsh was born with an impairment called Osteogenesis Imperfecta, commonly known as brittle bone disease. He was born with 40 fractures and has had 130 fractures during his 15 years. He lives with 19 screws and 2 rods in his back.

Sparsh, which means 'touch' is known as rapper PURHYTHM (which is a combination of the words Pure and Rhythm). The young rapper's inspiration is the

legendary Eminem, and the cover that he performed for Eminem's I'm not afraid has so far garnered over 70 million views on all social media platforms. When I began writing this note, I googled the song and was fascinated by its stark lyrics, especially the following lines:

*I'm not afraid
To take a stand
Everybody
Come take my hand come
We'll walk this road together, through the storm
Whatever weather, cold or warm
Just letting you know that, you're not alone
Holla if you feel like you've been down the same road*

I realised that the song is a fitting description of the immensely challenging life that young Sparsh faces and the resolute spirit he has developed in overcoming these challenges, of never surrendering to constricting circumstances.

This spirit has motivated the Canada India Foundation to honour this young lad with the Global Indian Award.

Sparsh's life is a spectacular example of the spirit of enterprise that one finds in entrepreneurs. Just as any entrepreneur, Sparsh strives to convert his struggle into success. The difference is that Sparsh's struggles involve overcoming his own physical constraints. This fearless spirit, this untiring zeal are what makes a young, wheelchair bound boy perform a miracle every time he picks up a microphone.

Sparsh's spirit is an inspiration to us all.



From The Gala Co-Chair

THE NEW INDIA

By Pankaj Dave

One of the key objectives of Canada India Foundation is to create awareness in Canada and amongst Canadians of the New India. As the Co-Chair of the Gala, I thoughtfully weighed the options and finally zeroed in writing about India; rather **A New India**.

India's vibrant democracy is now quite mature and is a matter of pride for all Indians and people of Indian origin. However, often this vibrancy results in cacophony of voices that clouds its true achievements. Endless political debate often results in a thick, dark veil being thrown on genuine achievements.

I want to tear the shroud, fling off the veil and show the true picture of the New India. Without being partisan I want to narrate the India story, which is the story of massive, untrammled, irreversible achievements.

Let me list a few facts:

- Nearly 91,000 gram panchayats (cluster of villages) have internet access
- India is building 28 kms of road every day
- Electricity has reached nearly the entire Indian population (only a miniscule number of villages are left without power)
- India has emerged as the world's third largest electricity producer
- India's foreign currency reserves continue to rise and cross \$424.86 billion (April 2018)
- India has received the maximum FDI of all UN member countries (April 2018)
- In the next five years, FDI in India is expected to cross \$75 trillion (April 2018)
- India has emerged as the second largest producer of the solar energy, in 2017-18, solar energy production doubled
- India has emerged as the sixth largest economy in

the world, displacing France, and the IMF has again endorsed Modi government's economic policies

These are undeniably awe-inspiring statistics. No matter how much it is glittering, no statistics can reveal the true picture of waking giant called India. And the picture of the newly emerging India is in what is not immediately visible.

A new country is emerging at a surefooted, self-assured pace that speaks of calm confidence of the leadership that is pivoting India to reach greater glories. Rapid economic development does not occur overnight and when an economy is transitioning from different developmental stages, the progress is justifiably slower.

However, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India has begun to surge ahead because of the strong and clearheaded measures that the Prime Minister has taken in the last four years.

Let me illustrate this with a few examples:

Transportation

The Modi government has taken a bold initiative to make road transportation easier by introducing 'one country one road tax' system. All vehicles will pay the same tax across India. This will enable easier movement of goods across different Indian states. Moreover, the proposed system will provide a hefty rebate to electric vehicles thereby providing an incentive to the innovation in technology of automobile production with a view to controlling environmental pollution.

Health

Modi government has introduced the Ayushman Bharat scheme under which 100 million Indian families will get

₹500,000 worth of health insurance. In effect this would cover 500 million people, which constitute nearly half the population. In addition, by 2022, the Modi government will establish 150,000 health and wellness centres across India (15,000 of which will commence in 2018). These wellness centres will have the facilities to diagnose non-communicable diseases among patients and will be able to detect diabetes, blood pressure, and other health-related issues.

Make in India

Under the Make in India program, Modi government is not only attracting FDI, but is also generating employment. One of the major triumphs of Make in India is the smartphone manufacture Xiaomi's decision to set up manufacturing in India and invest \$2.5 billion into three manufacturing units. These three plants will together generate employment for 50,000 people. Other smartphone giants such as Nokia, Samsung and LG are starting manufacturing units in India that will provide employment to 100,000 people.

Linking India

Modi government is laying special emphasis on physically connecting India. Under its sustained guidance, India's longest road-rail bridge – the Bogibeel bridge in Assam – will be ready in 2018. Due to its location, the bridge will be of strategic importance to India, as it will significantly enhance India's ability to transport troops and supplies to its border with Tibet in Arunachal Pradesh. Similarly, the Modi government is creating the Zojila tunnel to ensure that Leh and Srinagar are connected even during the winter months.

One of the biggest victories of the Modi government has been to free 44 districts of the Naxalite influence. The Modi government is striving to make India terror and militant free.

It can be seen from the above that India is on a high growth trajectory that is inclusive and one that will continue for a long period. Canada understands this and working in unison to make the Indian dream into a reality.



CANADA INDIA FOUNDATION (CIF)

- CIF is a National, Non-Profit, Non-Governmental, Non-Partisan Organization.
- Established in 2007 to :
 - foster support for stronger bilateral relations between Canada & India.
 - To educate Canadians on the changing face of India.
 - To promote deserving Indo Canadians in the political processes of Canada.

Key Initiatives :

- CIF Global Indian Award Gala
- Theme-based Bilateral Forums
- Leadership on important Public Policy Issues.
- Speaker Series
- Annual CIF Golf Tournament



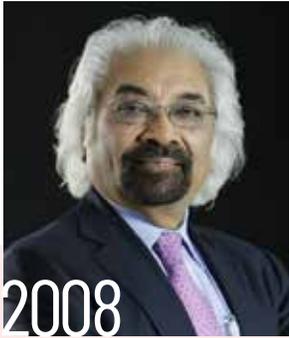
CIF GLOBAL INDIAN AWARD

- Recognizes the transformation of India into a Global economy and Ascendancy on world stage.
- Raises the profile of people of Indian origin globally.
- \$ 50,000 donated to a charity of Award Recipient's Choice.
- First Award of its kind outside India.
- Brings together who's who in Canada's Business & Political circles, making it the most high profile Indo-Canadian event in Canada, year after year.

PREVIOUS

AWARD

RECIPIENTS



Sam Pitroda

Chairman

National Knowledge
Commission
Government of India



N. R. Narayana Murthy

Founder

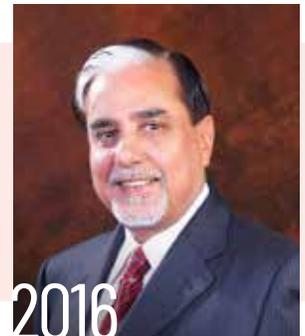
Infosys



Tulsi Tanti

President and CEO

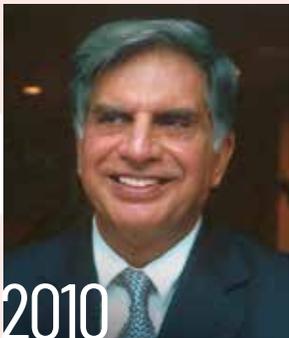
Suzlon Energy



Dr. Subhash Chandra

Media Mogul and Chairman

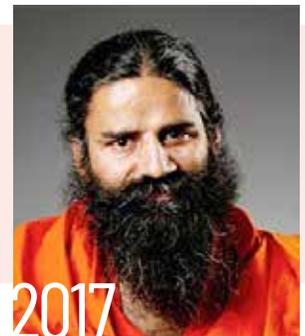
Essel Group



Ratan Tata

Chairman

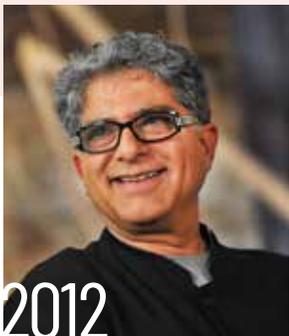
Tata Group



Swami Ramdev

Yoga Guru

Founder - Patanjali Ayurved



Deepak Chopra

Author

World Renowned
Expert in Mind - Body Medicine



2018 CIF GLOBAL INDIAN AWARD RECIPIENT

SPARSH SHAH

Sparsh Shah was born on the 1st of May 2003, in Iselin, Middlesex, New Jersey, United States. His parents are Jigisha and Hiren Shah who have been there for him from the start and imbibed values into Sparsh that have helped him become the person he is today.

Sparsh means to 'touch' and no one else has lived up to their name as much as Sparsh has in just 15 years. Sparsh himself says that he wants to touch the hearts

of everyone he meets, and his dream is to inspire the world and perform live for an audience of a billion people.

Sparsh has osteogenesis imperfecta, brittle bone disease in layman's terms, however that has not stopped him from become a motivational speaker, Sparsh is also known as a rapper Purhythm, a combination of pure and rhythm as he is a clean

rapper and as he puts it 'all about the rhythm'.

He was born with 40 fractures and despite doctors telling his parents that he wouldn't survive long, Sparsh has beaten all odds. With 19 screws and 2 rods in his back and over 130 fractures over his life, Sparsh and his family has persevered through it all.

Sparsh's parents discovered his musical talents early on when Sparsh would sing along to the radio in car rides and even correct the singing of his parents if they were out of tune. They enrolled Sparsh at the age of 6 to learn Indian classical vocal training and then American vocal training at the age of 9. He then became the first to coin the term 'raga rap' for his unique fusion of Indian classical singing with American rapping. Sparsh launched his first cover album, "Tribute To Eminem" in October, 2016.

His motivation comes his family and relatives and his fans but the one source of motivation for Sparsh is God, whom he says blessed him with his life and his talents.

Sparsh rocketed into all platforms on social media for his cover of "Not Afraid" by Eminem, who is Sparsh's favorite rapper. He chose the song for its inspirational lyrics and he felt he could also emotionally connect with the song. The cover has garnered over 70 million views combined on all social media platforms.

Sparsh has performed for over 75 live performances, including at Grammy Park as the Next Generation: Emerging Artist, NBA Preseason Referee Meet, NY Knicks Vs Phoenix Sun Game as well as Harlem Globetrotters Game at Madison Square Garden, NJ Devils Game at Prudential Center, Garden of Dreams Concert at Radio City Music Hall, NCPAA for TEDx Gateway, Diwali@Times Square, United Nations HQ.

Sparsh also has appeared on several radio and television shows such as BBC, NBC: Little Big Shots, SONY: Keys to Kismat and even hosted shows as the MC.

Sparsh has memorized and can recite 250 digits of Pi and he can speak some of the 12 longest words in English dictionary in less than 18 seconds. Moreover,

he has written several poems, short stories, motivational and inspirational speeches.

Sparsh says of how his mother, Jigisha Shah would tell him that his bones might break but his voice would never break. Now it seems that his drive to inspire the world is just as unbreakable as his voice.

Sparsh displayed his motivational speaking skills at the TED Talk: "How I turned Impossible to I'M Possible and you can do it too" at Asia's largest TEDx event: TEDx Gateway. After his talk, Sparsh was the most trending speaker of the event on the internet.

No matter what life threw at Sparsh, he found a way with the help of his loved ones and he wants to spread that love and remind anyone that needs reminding that you can do anything.

This is why Canada India Foundation is proud to give this award for to an exceptional individual that not only excels in their art but also shares the joys and experiences of their life to inspire others and strives to make this place a better world. Sparsh Shah is truly a global Indian that has not only faced adversity every day of his life but overcome it every single day and go beyond that to 'sparsh' our hearts.

Canada India Foundation congratulates Sparsh Shah for being the CIF Chanchlani Global Indian of 2018 and is proud to recognize the contributions of a rising star that is just 15 years old.



SPARSH SHAH

INTERVIEW OF OUR AWARD RECIPIENT

1. How does it feel to be chosen for the CIF Global Indian Award? Did you ever expect this honor, or has it blindsided you?

It is my immense honor to be chosen for the CIF Global Indian Award. I was amazed to know the list of previous honorees, and when my dad told me that I was chosen for this year's award unanimously, I frankly felt shocked, but also very happy and humbled to be recognized by such a prestigious organization, Canada India Foundation.

2. What has kept you going despite the hardships you have to face while dealing with Brittle Bone Disease (Osteogenesis Imperfecta)? Moreover, what would you want to say to others with Brittle Bone Disease?

I believe that everything that happens to us in this world is the part of God's plan; we just have to trust in Him and that plan. I would never have survived

the forty fractures I had during my birth (and all the rest of my life) without God's grace, and my parents always told me that I was born for to change the world. So despite every hardship I go through while dealing with brittle bone disease, music, my faith and trust in God, and my positive attitude about life are my reasons to go on, because we all have a greater purpose in life than just ourselves. I am also blessed with amazing parents, grandparents, other family members, friends, fans and supporters everywhere I go. They are always there for me in my critical times of life. Their positivity and encouragement gives me so much strength and courage to keep on going in life and live my purpose to the fullest.

So to everyone else who goes through Osteogenesis Imperfecta or any other difficulties in life, I hope you remember this simple saying: "The Lord never closes one door without opening another." The door on my

ability to stand and walk may have been shut for me, but music was the door opened for me, and that's what has changed my life. Even though I've had over 135 fractures in life, music has not only shaped me into who I am today, but it has given me the opportunity to help so many people all over the globe. So what if there's a talent or gift you have that you've never acknowledged in your life? Why not use it? Maybe that's your open door!

3. What is something you can do that others usually can't? I have heard you can recite over 250 characters of Pi (π), say some of the 11 longest English words in 18 seconds and rap as fast as Eminem. What am I missing?

The funny thing is, as I explained in my TEDx Talk, "...although seemingly difficult things, such as memorizing long and complex words words and numbers, are simple for me, seemingly simple things, such as standing and bearing weight, are impossible for me." Sometimes, I can draw using reference images pretty well (I've kept my drawings to this day), and I also have this uncanny ability to know the basic functions of any electronic device in a matter of minutes. In fact, I've been able to absorb new information really well since I was little, but that's pretty much it.

4. I know you wanted to be a paleontologist as a kid. But look at you now, singer, songwriter, rapper, producer and an inspirational speaker, all that at 14! What began this process for you and how did you reach where you are now?

I first began to learn piano when I was three, but that didn't work because I broke my arms a lot. So I learned my first Indian classical singing lesson at the age of six, and I've been learning Western vocal music for about four years now. So that's how my career got started. But the time I turned completely from an aspiring paleontologist to a musician began when I had a summer camp assignment to write a list of things we would do in our career when we grow up. That was when I thought that maybe I could do both

jobs at the same time, so I wrote a Venn diagram describing what I'd do as part of both careers. But as my interest for prehistoric animals decreased, my love for music exponentially increased, and that was how I ultimately realized that music, really, was my God-given calling in life.

5. "Sparsh" means "to touch" and you have said yourself that your goal is to "sparsh" as many hearts as you can. What is next for you in your plan to "sparsh" hearts? What are we going to see next for you?

Well, I have many plans to "sparsh" people's hearts, especially in my musical career. Berklee College of Music is my dream college, and they are willing to let me begin online training courses. This is a unique opportunity to start pursuing an online Bachelor's Degree in Music at a very early age. I have been writing songs (28 now) as well as poems quotes, inspirational speeches, and I'm learning to produce music. I am planning to release my original album of songs in the near future, continue to speak and perform (including pro bono performances for non-profits) and plan to write a book or two in the future too. And who knows? Maybe I'll win a Grammy award one day for my music. But in the grand scheme of life, I believe all these great things on the horizon are only little stepping stones for my ultimate dream: to continue my journey of inspiring everyone around the world, helping others, and contributing to make this world a better place.

6. What are your hobbies, Sparsh? What is it that you like to do in your spare time?

I like to play video games with my brother, play chess, read books, listen to music and watch inspirational videos in my spare time. In addition, I also love nature and animals, and so I love birdwatching (I even have a feeder in my front-yard!) and when the weather's beautiful I'll go to the park or somewhere out of my house and become completely immersed in nature. As I said in my one of my recent posts, "If God is the potter, nature is His pottery; and the best way to enjoy it is to go outside!"

INTERVIEW WITH SPARSH SHAH CONT...

7. You have an ever-increasing presence on social media and along with-it exposure to new people and stories. What are some unique ways in which this has affected your life and vice versa?

Social media (especially internet) has been a boon to me as it has enabled me to reach people in over 200 countries from my home itself. I have been blessed to have over 120 million views on all social media by now, but most importantly I am able to inspire and change so many lives with my music and life story of turning impossible to I'm possible. With me on a wheelchair, I would not have been able to reach that many people all over the world without social media. My big dream of singing and inspiring a billion people has definitely become a very real possibility with the help of technology. It has also helped me to learn so much about other inspiring personalities and follow their footsteps in life.

8. Is there anything you would like to say to our readers, Sparsh?

My life lessons are simple:

1. Find your passion
2. Never hold yourself back
3. Help Others
4. Dream Big

But most importantly, never let anyone tell you that you cannot do something in life. As I always say I can turn impossible into I'm possible, then you all can do it too. "If you believe it, you can achieve it."

So if you ever want to know more about my life journey, please feel free to check out my social media:

www.facebook.com/purhythm

www.youtube.com/c/SparshPurhythm

Twitter: @SparshPurhythm

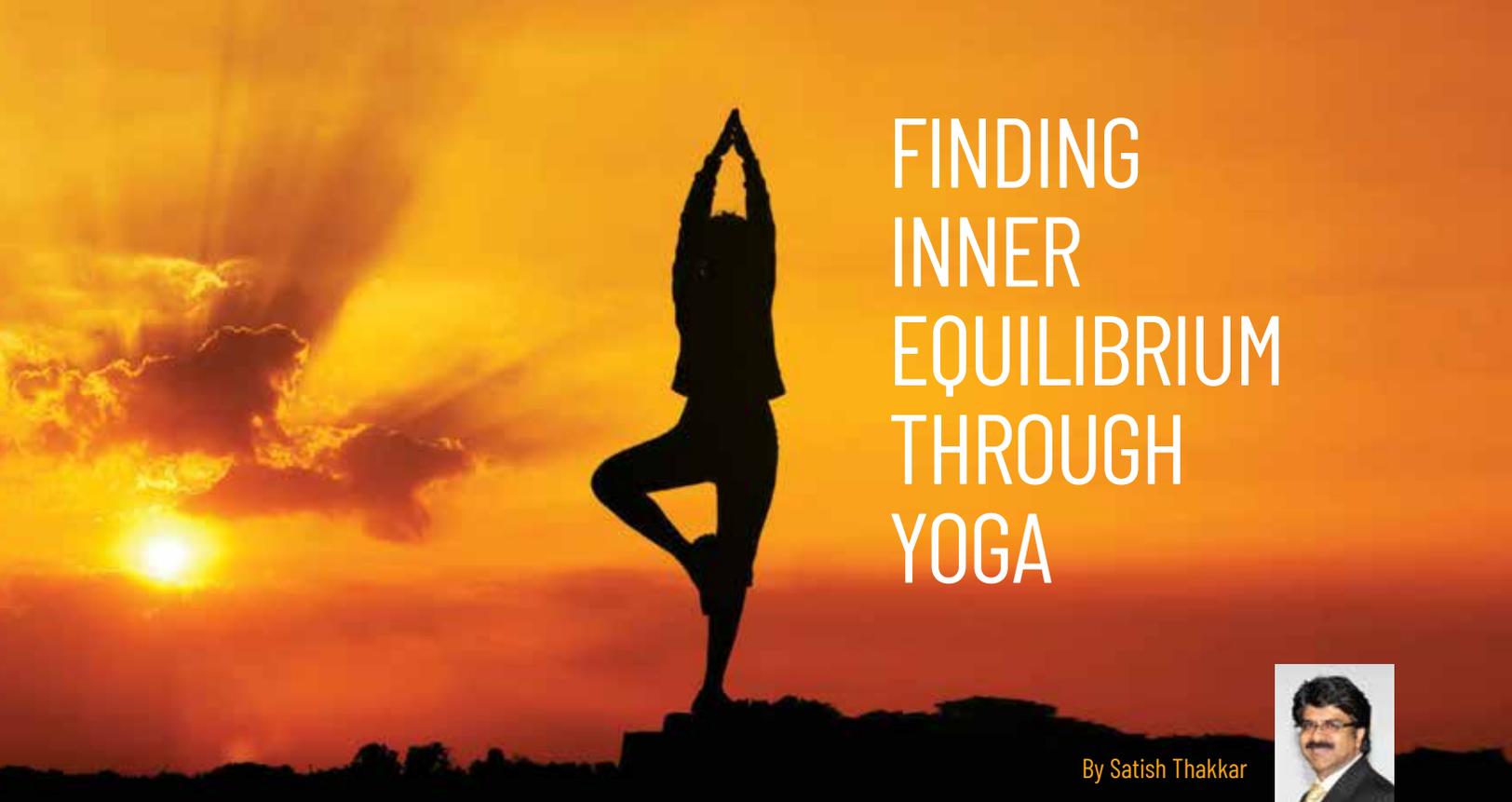
Instagram: @ShahSparsh



In the west, yoga has enjoyed an ever-rising popularity and acceptance for more than a century. It may seem mystifying to many that a tradition that traces its roots back to thousands of years and one that lays emphasis on spiritual rather than the material should find such tremendous resonance in a society that is quintessentially at the opposite end of the spiritual-material spectrum.

However, this seeming paradox has a simple and straightforward answer. In societies where materialism has held sway for hundreds of years, and scientific determinism has become a prevailing dogma, many fundamental answers about the individual's mind, body and soul have, while overanalysed, remained unanswered or inadequately redressed.

And that is where yoga, mindfulness, and wellbeing acquire significance. This is because material wellbeing doesn't automatically lead to mental equilibrium. As the adage goes, "Wealth is not happiness." The extra bit that would satiate the mind and soul and enrich the body can be provided by yoga.



FINDING INNER EQUILIBRIUM THROUGH YOGA

By Satish Thakkar



Yoga is essentially a spiritual discipline based on an extremely subtle science which focuses on bringing harmony between mind and body. It is an art and science for healthy living. The word 'yoga' is derived from the Sanskrit root 'yuj' meaning to join. According to yogic scriptures, the practice of yoga leads to the union of an individual's consciousness with the universal consciousness.

According to scientists, everything in the universe is a manifestation of the same quantum firmament. One who experiences this oneness of existence is said to be 'in yoga' and is termed as a yogi who has attained a state of freedom, referred to as mukti, nirvana, kaivalya or moksha.

Yoga refers to an inner science comprising of a variety of methods through which human beings can achieve union between the body and mind to attain self-realisation. The aim of yoga practice is to overcome all kinds of sufferings that lead to a sense of freedom in every walk of life with holistic health, happiness and harmony.

Yoga expects two Ds from the practitioner – dedication and discipline, everything else can be self-taught. Its

practice can and does change our perspectives of life, develop more keenness for life, create genuine and natural sense of good feelings, and a renewed sense of health and well-being. Its therapeutic approaches and principles represent the essence of a broad holistic dimension to health and disease.

The practice of yoga facilitates mind and body coordination, emotional equanimity, intellectual clarity to its practitioners. Today, as the importance of yoga in every aspects of life is realised, more practitioners of yoga are looking for deeper understanding and philosophical bases of yoga and its practices.

Following the establishment of 21 June as the International Day of Yoga, millions of people globally have been participating in the yoga day celebrations. Each year, the number of United Nations member countries who participate in the International Day of Yoga has consistently grown and nearly 200 UN member countries are observing the event, an unrivalled record for an event celebrated on a global scale.

SMART VILLAGE

By Dr. V.I. Lakshmanan



Economic liberalization in India during 1990s resulted in rapid economic growth. It resulted in the impressive growth of IT sector, near-universal adoption of mobile telephony, proliferation of educational institutions, and rise in literacy rates. However, this also increased the migration to cities, which were already under pressure from the population growth. Cities cannot provide quality of life to an ever increasing population and influx of migrants from villages. People need clean drinking water, access to quality education, affordable healthcare and housing, which cannot be met. As a result, people are forced to live in slums under sub-standard conditions.

The solution to this problem was envisioned by Former President of India Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam. He called his vision "PURA", which stands for Providing Urban Amenities to Rural Areas. PURA or Smart Village can be a transformative concept in the growth of human civilization. Recently a conference on Smart Villages was organized at the Fields Institute, University of Toronto during April 4th and 5th, 2018. The conference was attended by many delegates that included Panchayat representatives from India, First Nation Community leaders, professors from

Stanford, New York, University of Toronto and York University, government officials, community leaders, researchers and students. This was the second conference on Smart Villages, which had its origin in the discussions between the author and Professor Kumar Murty at University of Toronto during Kalam Memorial to carry his legacy forward.

In numerous lectures across India, Dr. Kalam laid out his vision of bringing India's villages and rural areas into the 21st century. It has been the author's privilege to have coordinated three visits by Dr. Kalam to Canada, in 2008, 2010 and 2012 (see picture below). The initial visit by Dr. Kalam was organized by the author on behalf of Canada India Foundation (CIF). The vision of PURA was shared by Dr. Kalam during these visits. He spoke to several thousand people of Indian origin and others during the lectures that were delivered in Toronto, Ottawa, Vancouver and other Canadian cities. The lectures were subsequently compiled in a book titled "Prosperity and Peace for the 21st Century", which was published by Canada India Foundation. The foundations for Dr. Kalam's PURA vision for villages were physical connectivity by providing roads, electronic connectivity by providing

communication network and knowledge connectivity by establishing professional and technical institutions, which together would enable economic connectivity and consequent empowerment of villages. Dr. Kalam's grand plan for India consisted of 7000 PURAs covering 600,000 villages.



Figure 1: Author (Dr. V.I. Lakshmanan) with Former President of India Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam

The vision of PURA (smart village) is to modernize villages without losing the native culture. Villages have a sense of community that gets lost in cities, where life gets more individualistic. Villagers meet and greet each other through out the day, be it at temples, river banks or road crossings. Ancient India's heritage and culture has been preserved in the villages. Wealthy and learned villagers were involved in many charitable activities such as building schools, water wells, ponds, rest houses and temples. Kings used to donate the income from many villages for the purpose of running educational institutions. These villages were called Agrahāra villages. Now that the traditional support system has gone, people are migrating to cities. If employment opportunities are generated in villages, younger people will stay with elders in villages instead of migrating to cities. This will provide social comfort resulting in less mental disorders. Elderly people will not be left alone and get the physical and emotional support they deserve.

Smart villages will provide connectivity; access to knowledge, skills development, and education; quality health care; entertainment; and access to market for local produce and products. This will create

sustained social and economic activities in the rural areas. Instead of relying completely on government for funding, smart villages can be developed with public private partnerships. Author has been involved in providing health care and skills development for people in rural South India (see pictures below). The career planning event took place in Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu, India and was organized by Dina Thanthi, a daily newspaper and Cape Institute of Technology, a rural College in India.

Smart villages are needed in Canada as well. Here in Canada, native communities have to travel many thousand miles for healthcare. Native communities will benefit immensely from mobile healthcare units connected digitally to state-of-the-art facilities in metropolitan cities. Quality education can be provided to northern communities by connecting classrooms electronically to leading universities. The concept of smart village is not only of benefit to India but the whole world.



Figure 2: Mobile diagnostic clinic serving rural areas of Tamil Nadu



Figure 3: Career planning meeting for rural area Grade 12 Children

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AJIT SOMESHWAR :
(CHAIR)

Ajit H. Someshwar is an Indo-Canadian entrepreneur, philanthropist and social activist based in Toronto, Canada. He is President & CEO of CSI Group as well as co-founder and current Chair of Canada India Foundation. Someshwar was appointee of the Government of Canada to the Board of Export Development Canada.

Prior to this, during the 2008-2009 global recession crises, Canadian finance minister Late Jim Flaherty appointed him to an 11-member advisory panel along with likes of Mike Lazaridis, Paul Demarais and Geoff Beattie to advise him on federal budget and the economy. Ajit was born in Bombay (Mumbai) and obtained a degree in Commerce and Economics from the University of Bombay. He also has a Chartered Accountancy (C.A.) designation from India and England & Wales. Prior to starting his businesses in the early 1990s, he was vice-president of operations, planning and analysis for CIBC's assurance venture. He moved to Canada from England in 1987.

Someshwar is an active fundraiser for hospitals, charities and the arts. In September 2010, he, along with fellow businessmen donated a Maple-Leaf Shaped 17 ton Monument to the Canadian Armed Forces for their exemplary service as global peacekeepers. The unveiling ceremony was attended by a large number of Canadian Armed Forces personnel in their ceremonial attire, as well as leaders including defense minister Peter Mackay, opposition leader Michael Ignatieff, and finance minister Jim Flaherty. Ajit was President of the Indo-Canada Chamber of Commerce from

1991-93. He has advised governments on both sides on the Canada India Civil Nuclear treaty and has been very vocal about the importance for provincial and federal governments to put in a concerted effort on regularizing immigrants professional qualifications and experience, making the process of absorbing them into the Canadian system a little less painful. For more information : www.csican.com



ANIL SHAH :
(NATIONAL CONVENER)

Anil is the founder and CEO of Ni-met Metals Inc. a large nickel and alloys trading and supply house with offices in Canada, Dubai, Mumbai & Shanghai. He is also the founder and CEO for Ni-Met Home and Garden Products Inc. He serves on the board of the Trillium Hospital group (A consortium of several large hospitals in Ontario), is the past recipient of ICCC President's award and served the Chamber on its' advisory board. A Chemical Engineer by education, Anil has an eye for the right opportunity and supports various charitable causes. He was Co-Chair of the 2014 CIF Award Gala and is the current National Convener for Canada India Foundation. For more information : www.ni-met.com

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ANITA DALAKOTI :
(TREASURER)

Anita has been recognized among the top 1 % of financial services professionals around the world for over a decade. CEO of Apple Insurance and Financial Services Inc, Anita has traveled extensively around the world. Fluent in many languages including Russian and Mandarin, Anita has lived and worked in China for over 15 years before immigrating to Canada. She has also worked for the Australian Government as a Liaison with the Chinese Government. She has been a recipient of the five star Wealth Advisor Award in 2012 and 2013 and was ranked 4th among the top 50 financial advisors in Canada. She has been Governor of the Board, Law Foundation of British Columbia and a member, Million Dollar Round table (MDRT) For more information : www.appleinsurancecanada.com



PANKAJ DAVE :
(SECRETARY TO THE BOARD)

Pankaj is the founder / CEO for Manas International Inc, trading Steel and Metal Products internationally. Lived and worked in three continents, he has carefully nurtured truly global associations. A Mechanical Engineering Graduate with an MBA, Mr. Dave is well-travelled and speaks English, Hindi and Gujarati. For more information, www.manasintl.com



SATISH THAKKAR :
(EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER)

Satish Thakkar is a Canadian entrepreneur, a committed community leader and a passionate philanthropist, with a number of accomplishments to his credit in a short span of time. In 2013, Canada's Parliamentary Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development heard him on the future course of Canada-India bilateral ties. In 2012, as President of the Indo-Canada Chamber of Commerce (ICCC), Satish catapulted the 37-year-old Toronto-based bilateral chamber to new heights. A year later, looking for an Indo-Canadian to spearhead its outreach into Canada's Indian community, the William Osler Health System Foundation nominated him as the Chair of the Indo-Canadian Friends of Osler, Satish pledged and raised \$1m for the foundation.

A CGA from Ontario, and a Chartered Accountant from India, he is the Founder CEO of the Excelsior Financial Group (EFG Canada) – a financial and business consulting boutique. In 2011, Satish was part of the core team that organised the biggest convention of the Indian Diaspora in North America, PBD Canada 2011. He has utilized the many platforms, such as Toronto Board of Trade and Conference Board of Canada, among others, to advocate the formation of multi-ethnic business networking forums for small businesses. Satish has been the recipient of many accolades including an Ivy Thomas Award by CGA Ontario for his outstanding business, public service and charities in 2013 and member of the year award from ICCC. In 2012, the Canadian Immigrant magazine awarded him the Top 25 Canadian Immigrant Award. For more information : www.efgcanada.ca

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**DR. V. I. (LUCKY)
LAKSHMANAN :**
(EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER)

Dr. Lucky Lakshmanan is an internationally renowned teacher, scientist and innovator in the area of sustainable development. He has more than 40 years of hands-on experience in technology commercialization and skills development initiatives with both private and public sectors, including the United Nations.

His company Process Research ORTECH is a global leader in sustainable process technologies through its laboratory and pilot project. Lucky is a member of several private and public sector advisory committees on Natural Resources, Recycling Technologies and Waste Management. Apart from CIF, Lucky was also one of the Co-founders of Sringeri Vidya Bharti Foundation (SVBF), Canada. For more information : www.processortech.com



**DR. TERRY
PAPNEJA :**

Dr. Terry Papneja presents a model combination of professional excellence (in his chosen profession as a dentist), entrepreneurial success and philanthropic zeal. After graduating in Dentistry from Indore, India,

Terry Papneja moved to Canada in 1981. He

acquired his degree in Dentistry from University of Toronto and opened his first dental office in Brampton in 1986, which has grown today to eight dentists and 50 staff members. He started his second dental office in 1990 in Mississauga, which was also a success and eventually sold to one of his associates. Selling his second office afforded Dr. Papneja money and time, which he immediately applied to charitable causes and has been doing so since then.

His initial donation of \$ 60,000 helped to start a school for under-privileged children in small town of Kareli in Madhya Pradesh, a province in Central India and he continues to support the school financially. Today the school has over 1000 children on its roll. Dr. Papneja has also regularly organized Oral Cancer Surgery Camps in India for people in abject poverty. Dr. Papneja's biggest contribution for the cause of charity, however, is the starting of the Canadian Chapter of AIM for SEVA, an organization founded by Swami Dayananda, which works towards educating poor children.

In the last eight years, the Canadian chapter of AIM for SEVA has raised over \$2 million. Operating with zero-administrative cost, it has ensured that all the money raised goes directly to the charitable cause. Dr. Papneja has been honoured as "Humanitarian of the Year" by the Indo-Canada Chamber of Commerce.

He also served as a board member with Hindu Maha Sabha Temple in Brampton. For more information : www.axisdental.ca

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RAJINDER MINHAS :
(EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER)

Rajinder has over 10 years of professional experience within the software and pc hardware industry. She has developed, managed and maintained the I.T. activities for worldwide software manufacturers and developers.

She is the owner of RM Software Consultants, providing consulting services to Corporations and small businesses for their I.T needs, has trained over 500 city of Mississauga and region of peel employees in the adult re-education programs in I.T. She has commissioned and designed programming applications such as bond pricing systems, trading floor applications and property management systems. It was while developing a system for a real estate developer for their property management division that she developed a passion for the real estate industry and today, along with her husband Harpreet Bal owns her own real estate brokerage, specializing in commercial real estate as well as new housing development.

She is a proud supporter of United Way and Heart & Stroke Foundation, while also supporting fundraising efforts for local schools and various other charitable organizations.



**VIJAY SASTRY
KOTAMARTI :**
(EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER)

Vijay Sastry is a CPA, CGA LPA, FCA (India), CPA (US) and CPA (Kenya), Practicing as a Chartered Professional Accountant in Canada serving individuals, small and medium size enterprises with Audits, Reviews and Compilations, Tax planning, Business Plans and Business Process re-engineering and auditing not for profit organizations. He has been a Trustee - Telugu Cultural Association of Greater Toronto, Producer - Telugu Bharati Radio and Television, Member - Rotary Club of Brampton and contributed articles on Tax in Statements of Certified General Accountants of Ontario. For more information : www.vijaysastry.com



BARJ DAHAN :

Barj is the President of Sandhurst Group of Companies, one of the largest Tim Hortons Franchisees, ESSO dealers and Real Estate Developers in British Columbia. A past Chair of Canada India Foundation, Barj is also the Co-founder for Canada India Education Society (CIES), a registered Canadian Charity and the Dahan Prize for Punjabi Literature. Barj is also a certified Yoga teacher and a motivational speaker. For more information, www.sandhurstgroup.ca

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**JATINDER (JAY)
MINHAS :**

Jay is the President and CEO of Elegant Development Inc. with over 20 years of experience in real estate investment, development and general contracting, including single and multi-family dwellings, commercial development and construction projects, land acquisition, sub-division and development in the cities of Vancouver, Richmond, Burnaby, Coquitlam and Surrey, British Columbia.

Along with his extensive commercial endeavors, Jay is also a committed community leader with active personal involvement and fund-raising. He is the President and Director of Progressive Intercultural Community Services Society of Surrey, BC and President of Guru Nanak Mission Awareness Society of BC, where he is involved in the building of a 100 bed charitable hospital.

He is also a major funds contributor for Kwantlen Polytechnic and Carleton University, Sant Baba Bhag Singh Educational complex and other institutions.

He is also active in the health front, having been Chair of Heart and Stroke Foundation of BC and Yukon, fundraising Chair of Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation of Canada and many others. An active Rotarian, he has been honoured with the Paul Harris Fellowship Award given to Rotarians who have made significant contributions to Rotary projects. For more information : www.elegantdevelopment.com



HEMA BHATT :

Hema Bhatt was born and raised in Malaysia. She began her career in Travel and hospitality, managing a travel agency, before becoming a homemaker to raise her family. While a homemaker, she started a home-based service to deliver gifts for all occasions, employing single mothers, enabling the latter to make a living and contribute positively to society.

She moved to Vancouver in 2003 and started Natu' Oil Services in 2004, in partnership with her husband, followed by Global Agri Trade Corporation in 2006. She took on progressively greater responsibilities in her organizations, following health setbacks for her husband and is currently Vice-President, Operations. Natu' oil Services specializes in international trade of palm oil based ingredients for animal feed and food manufacturing industries.

Global Agri-trade Corporation and Natu' Oil Services Inc. are part of the Bhatt Group of Companies involved in the development, marketing and distribution of products primarily from Palm and Coconut oils into animal nutrition, human food and technical industries in Canada, USA, MENA, EU and CIS markets. Natu' Oil Services Inc. has been awarded Business of the Year 2016 (11-30 employees) by the Tri-Cities Chamber of Commerce. Hema is a Member of the Vancouver Board of Trade and Rotary Club. For more information : www.natuoil.com

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RAMESH CHOTAI :

Ramesh is President of Bromed Pharmaceuticals. Born in Uganda, Ramesh completed his training as a Pharmacist in UK and Switzerland. He came to Canada in 1972 and has built a very successful group of companies that manufacture and distribute medical and healthcare products around the world. His company, Bromed Pharmaceuticals Inc. is one of the largest Canadian Importer of Pharmaceutical raw materials from India. A well-known Philanthropist, Ramesh is the past President of Hindu Mandir and Cultural Centre, Vice-Chairman of Canadian Museum of Hindu Civilization and received 2004 President's Award from ICC.



RAHUL SHASTRI :

Rahul Shastri is a Senior Partner at law firm KAGAN SHASTRI, based in Toronto, Canada and heads the firm's litigation department. He has represented a myriad of clients, from both the private and public sectors, in complex disputes both within Canada and abroad. Rahul currently serves as counsel or in an executive position on several not-for-profit and charitable institutions. Rahul was the 3rd National Convenor for Canada India Foundation. For more information : www.ksllp.ca



**MAYURKUMAR
DAVĒ :**

Mayurkumar Dave is Managing Partner of Canada-based C Shantilal Advisory Group Inc. which specializes in Knowledge Education, Government Relations and Business Advisory.

He takes pride as one of the most niche and boutique international student advisor where he promotes Canadian higher education mainly for undergraduate, graduate studies and MBA programs. He does advice and provide consulting to many students year over year to pursue their ambitious higher education goals. He believes knowledge is power in education. His in-depth knowledge - mainly in STEM - provides appropriate higher education opportunities in universities, colleges and schools across Canada and the USA. Along with this, he also advises various universities and colleges about their academia and student exchange programs which includes short study holidays and institution tie-ups.

He does advice various businesses between Canada India corridor along with emigration guidance and relocation services.

He is proud supporter of Milton District Hospital Foundation. He is an active member of Canada-India Business Council and Indo-Canada Chamber of Commerce. His interests are global and current affairs as he is an avid reader. For more information : www.csadvisorygroup.ca

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GIRISH KEKRE :

Girish Kekre is the Vice President of Ni-Met Metals and Minerals Inc. as well as Ni-Met Resources Inc. A Chemical Engineer by education, Girish brings in senior management experience and a very valuable expertise in non-ferrous metals and scrap metals. He worked as a process superintendent for Agro-Chemicals and Food Company Limited, Kenya – a \$100 million joint venture between VEV of Austria, Nanji Kalidas Mehta of Kenya and the Kenyan Government. Back in 1979, as an assistant manager, Girish undertook a rationalization project to revamp the 100 TPD oil refinery and 40 TPD Hydrogenation Unit. For more information : www.ni-met.com



BHUPINDER SINGH KHALSA :

Bhupinder Singh (Gitu) Khalsa is the Founder and CEO of Rane Impex. A Geo-technical engineer, he came to Canada from India in 1986 and is a pioneer in introducing Indian Marble and Granites to North America and Europe. In 2010, Bhupinder supported a Grand Memorial for Canada's fallen soldiers. Exquisitely carved in black granite and shaped as a Maple Leaf, this 15 tonne memorial is dedicated to Canadian Armed forces and placed at the premises of Canadian Museum of Hindu Civilization in Richmond Hill, Ontario. Bhupinder is a proud member of the Board of Governors at Canada India Foundation. For more information : www.raneeimpex.com



CHIRAG SHAH :

Chirag is the Founder and CEO of Subhtech Solutions Inc. an information technology consulting firm created to assist organizations with advanced technology integration, primarily in ERP and CRM. Subhtech enhances and empowers customers and partners to implement, customize and manage integrated systems. Chirag has recently launched a new company called Vayam Mantu Advisors Inc., providing services in education, business consulting and pulses. A member of CIF, ICCA and C-IBC, Chirag has raised funds for Milton District Hospital Foundation, Vaishno Devi temple-Oakville and other charities. www.subhtech.com



RUPESH KAPADIA :

Rupesh is a managing partner with Kapadia LLP, Chartered Accountants and has a public accounting experience for over two decades, dealing with multinational companies as well as owner-managed companies. Rupesh also has a law degree from India. It enables him to understand the legal aspects of a business, keeping the numbers in mind. Rupesh has written articles and spoken on Canadian tax and accounting issues at various forums. For more information : www.kapadiallp.com

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SURJIT BABRA :

“Serial Entrepreneur” Surjit was born in Punjab, grew up in Kenya, trained as a travel agent in London (UK) and after establishing a hugely successful travel firm in Europe, came to Canada in 1979. Surjit’s company – Skylink Group – established a global presence through brands such as Skylink Aviation, Skylink Express, Skylink Software (Global Travel Software), Skylink Travel, Flylink Travel, Tourcan Vacations and Skylink Holidays. In 2014, as Chairman of Highbury Canco, he acquired the Heinz plant in Leamington, Ontario. A proud supporter of Trillium Hospital and Sick Kids Hospital, Surjit is also involved with several humanitarian causes.



RAM GOPAL :

Ram holds a Bachelor of Ayurvedic Medicine & Surgery from Guru Nanak Dev University (Punjab), opened his own hospital with a team of surgeons and medical specialists and practiced as a Naturopath. However, fate took him into a new world of security and surveillance.

After immigrating to Canada in 1994, Ram started his own security company in 1998, employing more than 400 security personnel. Today, he is the Managing Director of Swami

Holdings Inc, a conglomerate of 4 Security, Private Investigation and Surveillance firms including a Security Training Institute with head office in Vancouver (B.C.).

Mr. Ram Gopal has also been involved in real estate development and investments for over 10 years.



**HARIHARAN (HARI)
GAUTAM :**

Hari is the CEO of Grintex Technologies Inc. Canada (a subsidiary of Grintex India Ltd) He has been instrumental in introducing cutting edge technologies to India in the domain of Jelly filled and Optic Fibre telecommunications, Geo Augmented GPS aided Navigation System for a Satellite based Navigation System, Radar and State of the Art Air Traffic Control Systems for Aviation, Strategic Defense Technologies etc.

Hari directed the design team for India’s Polar Antarctic Research Ice Breaker Ship Project and Strategic Naval special mission ships. He has engaged with fortune 100 companies on high technology programs. Gautam is widely travelled and lived in Europe, North America, Middle East and Asia.

He speaks German, Italian, English, Hindi, Tamil, Bengali, Malayalam languages and has been an advisor to MARS ONE Space Program. For more information : www.grintex.com

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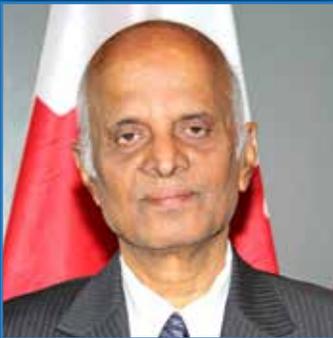
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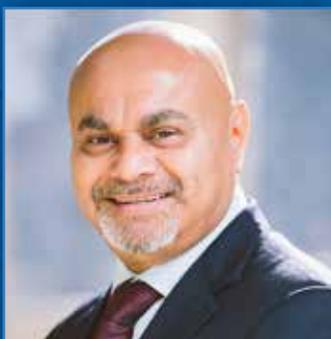
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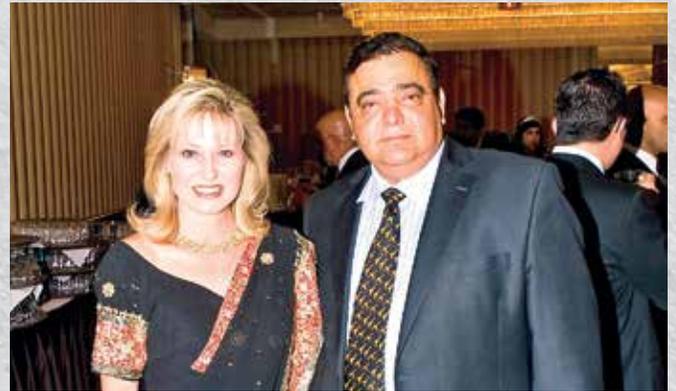
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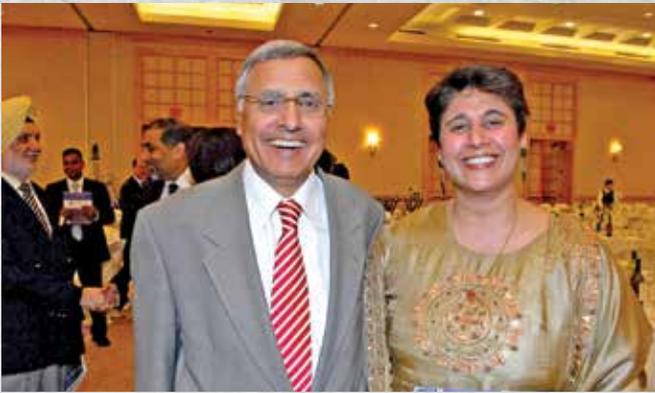
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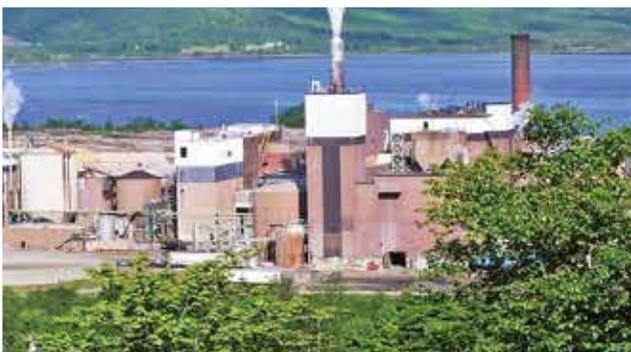
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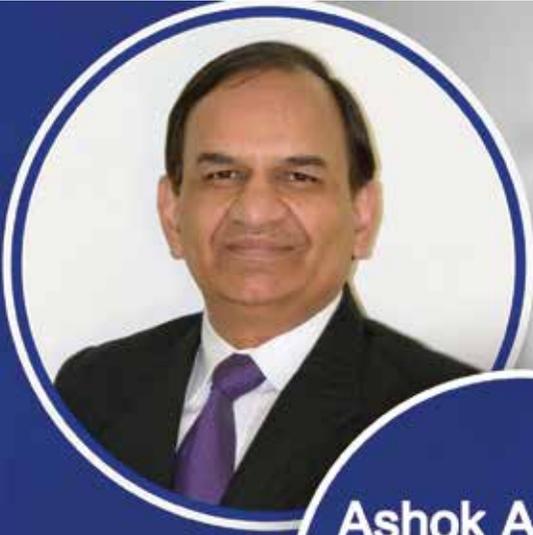


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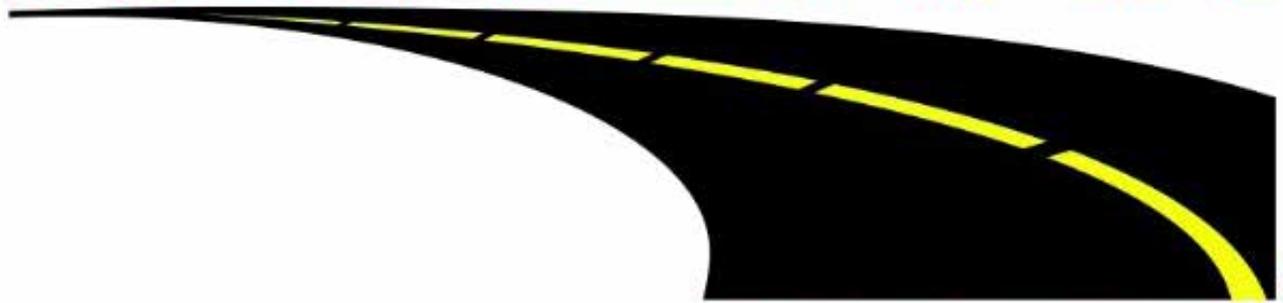
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