

# CANADA INDIA FOUNDATION



## CIF E-Newsletter



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### Chair's Message



### Spring Has Come - Now Comes the Hard Work

Dear Friends

There are moments in the life of any long effort when the air simply feels different. When the work of years suddenly becomes visible. When the people you have been trying to convince are already convinced, and the conversation shifts - almost without you noticing from *why* to *how*.

April 14, 2026, was one of those moments for us.

Walking into Parliament Hill on Vaisakhi morning, leading a CIF delegation that had come to Ottawa with a message of urgency and optimism, I could feel something that had been absent for too long - a genuine, unforced sense that Canada and India are ready to move forward together. Not cautiously. Not reluctantly. But with the kind of purposeful energy that serious partnerships require.

The day ended at the official residence of His Excellency Dinesh Patnaik, High Commissioner of India to Canada, who opened his home to our delegation, to

Members of Parliament from across party lines, and to Ottawa's Indo-Canadian community in an atmosphere of celebration, candour, and genuine friendship.

H.E. Patnaik spoke with clarity and warmth about where this relationship now stands. He summarised the Canada India opportunity so perfectly when he compared it to an Indian *thali* (meal) "like the many dishes coming together and making it a wonderful unifying experience."

### ***A Day of Substance on Parliament Hill***

Our delegation held detailed meetings with about twelve Members of Parliament spanning government and opposition benches. The Canada-India relationship has friends on every bench. What it has lacked is the institutional home to channel that friendship into lasting policy.

CIF put five concrete, non-partisan asks on the table: reconstituting the Canada-India Parliamentary Friendship Group; championing the CEPA initiative; establishing a dedicated agri-food working group on CEPA implementation; engaging CIF and other organisations working in this space as a resource available to all Members of Parliament; and restoring Diwali on the Hill in November 2026. And we want **ONE Diwali celebration**, not the many as it happens now. It should be non-partisan, and inclusive of all cultures. One big joyful celebration on the Hill that would be a showcase of joy, harmony and diversity.

We left Ottawa with one clear conviction: the desire for a strong, resilient, and non-partisan Canada-India relationship runs far deeper than any party line. Spring has well and truly come to this relationship. And like all true springs, it was worth the wait.

### ***India's Largest Ever Trade Delegation Headed to Canada***

Now, from that spring, we turn to what comes next. And what comes next is significant.

India's Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal have confirmed he would lead the largest trade delegation India has ever sent to any country - arriving in Canada in late May or early June. Read that again: the largest delegation India has ever sent. To any country. In its history. ([READ MORE](#))

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## **Events**

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### **Kelly Block MP Supports an Active Canada India Friendship Group in Parliament**



22 April 2026: Canada India Foundation held a virtual meeting with Kelly Block, Member of Parliament representing the constituency of Carlton Trail Eagle Creek in Saskatchewan.

During the discussion, CIF Chair Ritesh Malik provided a comprehensive briefing on the Foundation's recent visit to Ottawa. He highlighted a series of productive meetings held with parliamentarians, emphasizing CIF's continued efforts to deepen engagement between Canadian and Indian stakeholders.

CIF underscored the importance of revitalizing the Canada India Friendship Group in the Parliament, advocating for a more active and collaborative role for the group in strengthening bilateral relations between Canada and India. The Foundation stressed that such efforts should transcend political affiliations, focusing instead on shared economic, cultural, and strategic interests.

According to CIF, the Friendship Group has significant potential to serve as a catalyst in elevating bilateral relations to new heights, ultimately delivering tangible benefits to the citizens of both nations in the light of the ongoing dialogue on concluding a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) with India.

The meeting reaffirmed CIF's commitment to fostering dialogue and cooperation between policymakers and community leaders, with the aim of building a stronger and more resilient partnership between Canada and India.

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## **Consul General of India Meets with CIF**



Toronto, April 17, 2026: The Canada India Foundation (CIF) called on Mr. Mahaveer Singhvi, the newly appointed Consul General of India in Toronto, to discuss avenues for deepening bilateral engagement between Canada and India.

During the meeting, CIF Chair Mr. Ritesh Malik highlighted the organization's ongoing initiatives aimed at strengthening the strategic relationship between the two countries. The discussion focused on CIF's role in fostering dialogue, promoting economic collaboration, and enhancing people-to-people ties.

CIF National co-convener Mr. Sanjay Makkar also shared details of its upcoming programs designed to further reinforce bilateral cooperation. These initiatives are being planned in light of recent efforts by both governments to expand engagement, including new measures discussed during Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney's recent visit to India.

Both sides expressed optimism about future collaboration and reaffirmed their commitment to advancing the Canada-India partnership across multiple sectors.

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## **CIF Felicitates Ramesh Chotai, a community Champion**



*Toronto, April 9, 2026:* Canada India Foundation came together to toast and celebrate one of its founding members, Ramesh Chotai, on his appointment as Uganda’s Honorary Consul General in Toronto. Born in Uganda, with his ancestral roots going back to India, Ramesh Chotai’s life is the stuff of legends. After a doctorate in pharmacy from England, Chotai

joined Astra Zeneca in Switzerland and eventually helmed the company’s expansion into Africa. In an emotional recap, pitted with some painful memories of his life in Uganda, he recollected the good old days when Milton Obote, the then President and his father were on friendly terms. “The president had even given him a diplomatic passport,” Chotai, noted, stressing on the historical coincidence that now he carries one too. “By birth I am Ugandan. By ancestry I am Indian. History made me English. Coming here made me a Canadian,” he said cryptically to trace a remarkable life that came nearly to an end when Idi Amin, Uganda’s dictator in the early 70s, had expelled all Indians from the country.

Chotai’s indomitable spirit drove him to strive even harder in his new home of Canada and today, Ramesh Chotai has put his firm imprint on three continents through his highly successful pharmaceutical chain as well as his dedication to community work and philanthropy. And he would always remain loyal to Canada as the country that literally saved him and numerous other lives, by sending rescue planes to Kampala in 1972. “Our plane had fuel only to reach Tel Aviv. Government of Canada arranged a lunch for us there with masala dosa! When I landed here, it was minus 14-degree C. A soldier gave me his coat and I still treasure that.”

CIF presented him with a plaque of appreciation for his years of commitment and guidance to Canada India Foundation. Several members spoke on his unique qualities and their own impressions of Ramesh Chotai. Sanjay Makkar, National Co-convener, CIF, noted that while his contributions to CIF are substantial, he has also contributed to several community initiatives. “We are proud and grateful that

he has given us direction and support at every stage of building the Canada India Foundation.”

Anil Shah, a past Chair of CIF and close associate, recalled that the first ever cheque written that helped begin the journey of CIF, was by Rameshbhai “which motivated the rest of us.” “Everything became possible after that. Before that it was all talk,” he added. Arjun Jasuja took the opportunity, while offering his congratulations to Chotai, to remember another doyen of CIF, the Late Vasu Chanchlani, whose contribution turned the CIF Global Indian Award into a reality. Vinod Vyas reminded the members that Chotai’s generosity was unrestricted as another Indo Canadian organization, ICCC, was also the beneficiary of a ‘first cheque’ from him.

Dr. Lucky Lakshmanan, OC, a past Chair, and one of the founding member, said, “What is important is learning to give. And you learn it by just watching people like Rameshbhai.” Launching into the beginnings of CIF, he noted, “People say he came to Canada as a refugee. I say he came here as an emperor with a cheque book! He set an example on how to build an institution without making it about an individual or individuals.”

Satish Thakkar, Past Chair, CIF, said, “The country that once forced him to leave has now bestowed on him a unique honour, asking him to represent it! He is a living example who inspires all of us with his generosity and work for the community.”

Girish Kekre recalled a time in Australia when they both shared a nice bottle of Algerian wine. A man of many dimensions, Chotai that day turned into an expert sharing his insights into wine with a younger friend.



**HEADLINES**

## India's Largest Ever Trade Delegation on Its Way to Canada



According to reports, India is planning to send its largest ever trade delegation to Canada in the month of May 2026. The agreement to send the business delegation and reconvene the Canada India joint commission on trade was made after India's Commerce Minister, Piyush Goyal, met his Canadian counterpart, Maninder Sidhu, on the margins of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Meeting in the Cameroonian capital of Yaoundé. ([Read more.](#))

## Thousands of Indian Students Face Removal from Canada



Canada's Bill C12 'Strengthening Canada's Immigration System and Borders Act, recently passed, would make it harder for refugee claimants. While tightening qualifying criteria the Bill's provisions apply retroactively to all asylum applications filed after June 24, 2020. Immigration Canada has already started issuing notices of Procedural Fairness to over 30,000 applicants, including 9000 students from India, a large majority from the state of Punjab. Many of them are advised to leave Canada voluntarily or face removal action. ([Read more.](#))

## India's Fast-breeder Reactor Breakthrough

A dream of Dr. Homi Bhabha, regarded as the father of India's atomic energy program, way back in the 60s, is now closer to becoming a reality. The initiation of a controlled nuclear fission chain reaction, known as criticality, at the Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor in Tamil Nadu enables India to move into the second stage of a



three-stage nuclear programme which ultimately aims to achieve a closed fuel cycle using the country's abundant thorium. The international nuclear energy community has welcomed the announcement enthusiastically. India is estimated to possess

thorium reserves that can feed its energy needs for the next 700 years. ([Read more.](#))

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## India Commissions Its Third Nuclear-powered Submarine



India is reported to have formally commissioned the country's third nuclear submarine, INS Aridhaman (S4), which is the third in the Arihant-class of SSBNs (Submersible Ship Ballistic Nuclear), on April 3 at Visakhapatnam. The induction adds to the developing nuclear triad, strengthening its sea-based nuclear deterrent capabilities. The indigenously built SSBN is designed to carry more long-range nuclear-tipped missiles than INS Arihant and INS Arighaat, which were commissioned in 2016 and 2024, respectively. ([Read more.](#))

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## Indian Universities Ranked Among the World's Top 50

India's elite educational institutions have made dramatic strides in the past ten years. The recent ranking by the authoritative QS University Ranking, based in London, England, has included many from India in its 16<sup>th</sup> edition. Four Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) and Birla Institute of Technology (BITS), Pilani, are among the world's top 50 institutions for different subjects, according to the latest QS World University rankings. ([Read more.](#))



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## New Jain Museum Opened in Gujarat



The Jain Community has welcomed the opening of Samrat Samprati Museum at Koba Tirth in the Mahavir Jain Aradhana Kendra campus in Gujarat's Gandhinagar. Named after the grandson of Emperor Ashoka, the museum presents the historical, cultural and spiritual legacy of Jainism. ([Read more.](#))

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## India Builds a Chip Factory in Record Time



India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Kaynes Semiconductor OSAT plant in Sanand, Gujarat, hailing it as a demonstration of the country's prowess in major projects execution. The plant took only 14 months from planning to commission. Marking a major milestone in India's semiconductor mission with a ₹3,300 crore investment (roughly \$500 million), the facility focuses on chip packaging and testing, aiming for a daily production capacity of 6.3 million chips. [\(Read more.\)](#)

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## India's 2500KM Second Freight Corridor Opens

With a successful trial run of its last segment connecting to Mumbai port, the ambitious Western dedicated corridor of over 2500 KM has been declared complete. The twin track fully electrified will speed up goods movement in the North and West of India. The corridor runs through seven states and is expected to lower logistical cost for businesses, especially exporters. [\(Read more.\)](#)



## India to outpace global growth despite uncertainty, says IMF chief Georgieva



International Monetary Fund Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva on Wednesday said India is likely to remain a key driver of global growth despite rising uncertainty in the international economic environment. She noted that India's expansion is projected to outpace the global average by a wide margin, underpinned by solid economic fundamentals. [\(Read More\)](#)

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## CIF Urges Community Members to Donate Blood

Canada India Foundation continued its efforts to help create awareness in the community to donate to the Canadian Blood Services. Blood is always a critical element in healthcare with the power to save lives. CIF is encouraging members of the Indo Canadian community to be proactive and help in this crucial program.

[Click here to join today.](#)

# Make a meaningful impact on the lives of patients in your community and across Canada.

Join us and book your lifesaving blood and/or plasma donation today.

## To join the team:

- 1** Sign in or create an account at [blood.ca/PFL](https://blood.ca/PFL) or use the **GiveBlood app**
- 2** Select 'Partners' from the menu, then 'Join an existing team'
- 3** Search for: **Canada India Foundation**
- 4** For help booking or for more information, contact [info@canadaindiafoundation.com](mailto:info@canadaindiafoundation.com)



Use the camera app on your phone and scan the QR code to book your appointment.

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