

INDO-CANADA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

India Mission 2012

DELHI, JAIPUR, MUMBAI, PUNE JANUARY 6 - 12, 2012





Executive Summary

January 6, 2012 - Delhi

January 7-9, 2012 - Jaipur

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ICCC Mission to India 2012: Speeches

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ICCC Mission to India 2012: **Report** Delhi, Jaipur, Mumbai, Pune - January 6th to 12th, 2012

Executive Summary

The ICCC delegation to New Delhi, Jaipur, Mumbai and Pune from January 6 to 12, 2012, consisted of members from food processing, hospitality, travel and tourism, construction and development, information technology and business-service industries and was accompanied by delegates from the Town of Markham. Delegates also attended the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2012, held in Jaipur from January 7 - 9, 2012. The visit is highlighted below on a city-to-city basis.

New Delhi

In New Delhi, India's Minister of Medium, Small, and Micro Industries (MSME) Mr. Virbhadra Singh; Ministry of External Affairs Joint Secretary (North America) Mr. Jawed Ashraf; India's Chief Negotiator of the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) Mr. Anup Wadhawan and Canada's High Commissioner His Excellency Stewart Beck addressed two back-to-back highly informative sessions organized by the Confederation of Indian Industries, India-Canada Business Chamber, and ICCC on "Canada-India Trade & Economic Relations" and "Avenues for Future Collaboration between Canada and India".

ICCC President Thakkar and Mayor Scarpitti held a meeting with Mr. Som Mittal, President of the National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM). Mr. Mittal shared important advancements occurring in India's IT sector and also the challenges faced by NASSCOM members in penetrating the Canadian market. The ICCC President discussed the opportunities for collaboration in Canada's IT market, given the concentration of IT services available in the Greater Toronto Region and the Town of Markham. ICCC intend to invite Mr. Mittal and a NASSCOM delegation in 2012 to engage in a roundtable discussion to provide introductions to the ICT community in the Greater Toronto Area and discuss how Canadian

and Indian industry representatives can be of mutual support for future joint ventures.

The ICCC President and the Mayor of Markham had a meeting with Dr. Rahul Khullar, Commerce Secretary and Mr. Anup Wadhawan in which Mr. Thakkar emphasized the importance of cooperation in small and medium enterprises being an important component of Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CEPA).

At the Reception co-hosted by Canadian High Commission and ICCC, High Commissioner Beck outlined the state of Canada India relations and provided an update on the status of CEPA negotiations and its likely benefits, including the anticipated access into the auto components sector.

Jaipur

The ICCC and the Town of Markham participated in a roundtable with the Rajasthan Industrial Development and Investment Corporation (RIICO), Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and the Bureau of Investment Promotion. Speakers offered important insights into the business opportunities in Rajasthan such as education; organic foods; IT sector; and travel and tourism. ICCC extended an invitation for a Rajasthan delegation to visit Canada with a focus on mutually important sectors such as mining and minerals, cross-border services, and energy exploration.

The ICCC delegation had meetings with members of India's Union government, including Mr. Sachin Pilot, Union Minister of State for Communications and IT, Government of India; Dr. Didar Singh, Former Secretary MOIA, Government of India; and Ms. Sujata Sudharshan, CEO, Overseas Indian Facilitation Centre.

The President of ICCC and the Mayor



of Markham met with public officials from State Governments, such as Mr. Narendra Modi, Chief Minister of Gujarat; Mr. Ashok Gehlot, Chief Minister of Rajasthan; Mr. Rajendra Pareekh, Minister of Industry, NRIs, Public Undertaking, Economics & Statistics, Government of Rajasthan; Mr. Aimaduddin Ahmad Khan, Minister of Medical & Health, Family Welfare Ayurveda, Health Education, Government of Rajasthan; and Mr. Purshotam Aggarwal, Commissioner Investments and NRIs, Bureau of Investment Promotion.

President of ICCC Satish Thakkar participated in a panel discussion on the role of Indian Diaspora organizations in India's economic development, alongside representative Diaspora organizations from other countries with large Indian Diaspora, highlighting:

- The importance of social and technological innovation to India's relationship with its Diaspora.
- That in the Indian context, technological innovations from the Indian Diaspora can and should be harnessed to answer the needs of the environment and society.
- The importance of networks between Diaspora organizations and overseas governments (at all levels) to promote connections with the government and, business, education and social innovation groups in India and pointed out that forums like Global INK and the regional PBDs) are important means to build on these relationships.

Dr. Anita Singh spoke on a panel on youth engagement and emphasized the need for the youth to expand innovative ideas in areas of social development, using examples from young Indo-Canadian Diaspora that have made important contributions to the areas of life sciences, human-computer interaction and social activism.

The ICCC was honoured to be a recipient of the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award at the Jaipur PBD, presented by the President of India Shrimati Pratibha Devisingh Patil, recognizing "outstanding achievement in the field of Public Service and in recognition of valuable contribution in promoting the honour and prestige of India and in fostering the interests of Overseas Indians."

Mumbai

Representatives from the Canadian Consulate in Mumbai offered to members of the delegation important insights into the promises and challenges of doing business in India. They offered an important perspective about the types of industries and demands of the Indian market from a Canadian viewpoint.

The Delegation had an important meeting with 25 members of the Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion Council, representing all of India's largest gem and diamond producers. Chairman of the Diamond Bourse of Canada, Mr. Bhushan Vora, briefed the meeting on the opportunities available in the Canadian sector for Indian gem and jewellery producers particularly in the diamond sector. Both sides agreed that representatives from the Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion Council will visit Canada this year for a roundtable session and individual meetings to further explore the potential in partnerships in the area of diamonds and gems.

MOUs were signed with the All India Association of Industry (AIAI) and the World Trade Centre (WTC) organization in Mumbai with the objective to expand trade and economic relations between Canada and India through:

- The exchange of trade and investment-related information to strengthen technological and industrial cooperation;
- Exchange of publications and information about trade and investment policies developed in their respective countries;
- Development joint ventures through trade inquires, business ventures, international forums, information and technology support systems.

The Mayor of Markham met Mrs. Shraddha Jadhav, Mayor of Mumbai and exchanged views on the opportunities for collaboration between Mumbai and the GTA. Their discussions focused on sharing best practices in the areas of recycling, waste disposal, infrastructure development and distribution. The Mayor Scarpitti also mentioned Markham's decision to name Mumbai Street in the township. The meeting concluded with an invitation to the Mayor of Mumbai to visit the GTA in the upcoming year.



Conclusions

This mission to India of the ICCC & Town of Markham has highlighted important opportunities for mutual learning and advantages in certain areas of the emerging comprehensive economic partnership between Canada and India. ICCC can and must play a stronger role than it is today in linking concerned organizations in both countries. The ICCC has identified three central objectives from this Mission for its future work:

First, the ICCC has identified Small and Medium Enterprises as a priority sector. In Canada, SMEs contribute 45 per cent of GDP, 75 per cent of net employment growth, and 60 per cent of all jobs in numerous sectors, including services, agriculture, food processing, human resources and information technology. SMEs are also crucially important to the Indian economy, accounting for 20 per cent of India's GDP, 65 million jobs and 45 per cent of manufacturing and exports. Given that SMEs have limited resources for overseas market research, ICCC is committed to creating opportunities for networking between SMEs, offering substantive insights into and showcasing the opportunities available in the Indian market. In particular, this mission connected the delegation with Indian economic organizations with significant representation in the SME sector and highlighted a growing interest in Canada amongst these groups, such as the newly-formed CII Canada Committee. The ICCC believes that these connections will be crucial for the expansion of Canadian SMEs into the Indian market and will continue to develop these relationships from this mission.

Second, the ICCC looks to build on the "PBD-plus" model of this business mission. The PBD is a crucial forum for engaging with Indian policymakers, business community, media and globally-minded advocacy groups. The Jaipur PBD highlighted important regional opportunities in various sectors, such as mining and minerals, cross-border services, organic foods and food processing, IT sector, and travel & tourism. However, for this year's mission the ICCC chose to include three

additional cities, engaging with business communities in Delhi, Mumbai and Pune. The Chamber believes that this extension has offered fruitful opportunities for delegates to learn and compare the opportunities available in various regions in India. Further, building on the 2012 Mission, the ICCC hopes to open next year's PBD-Plus mission to a larger and more representative group of delegates with additional destinations in its itinerary.

Third, trade relations with India have grown by 25 per cent in the last year, and as much of this increase is due to activities originating from Canada's urban centres, the ICCC intends to follow its strategic objective to engage with sub-national governments interested in exposure to the Indian market. Given the Town of Markham's booming information technology sector, the ICCC was able to target the mission's objectives towards networking in this sector. Meetings with the Mayor of Mumbai, the President of NASSCOM Mr. Som Mittal, and the CII's Clean Technology Initiative allowed the Town of Markham to share best practices, learn about India's ICT opportunities and interests, and identify next steps for engagement.

In closing, we would like to thank all the organizations that made this trip a success, particularly the Town of Markham, Confederation of Indian Industries (CII), Indo-Canadian Business Chamber, Rajasthan Industrial Development & Investment Corporation Ltd (RIICO), Bureau of investment Promotion (BIP), Indian Merchant Chamber (IMC), Rajasthan Association of North America (Canada), Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), Overseas Indian Facilitation Centre (OIFC), World Trade Centre (Mumbai), the All India Association of Industry, and the SP Jain Institute of Management and Research. We are also grateful for the financial support from the State Bank of India (Canada), ICICI Bank (Canada), Bombardier-India, the Canadian High Commission and the Town of Markham who supported various events throughout the Mission. Finally, we would like to thank the Consul General of India Mrs. Preeti Saran for her support in planning this mission.



January 6 **Delhi**



Canada-India Economic Relations: The Way Forward

The Delhi portion of the mission gave an impressive start to the mission, with events attended by over 125 Indian industry representatives and addressed by high-quality speakers. The ICCC was pleased to have India's Minister of Medium, Small, and Micro Industries (MSME) Mr. Virbhadra Singh; Ministry of External Affairs Joint Secretary (North America) Mr. Jawed Ashraf; and India's Chief Negotiator of the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) Mr. Anup Wadhawan speak at two back-toback sessions on "Canada-India Economic Relations" and "Avenues for future collaboration between Canada and India" held at the illustrious Hotel The LaLit in Delhi. The audience was composed of representatives from the Canadian delegation, the Canadian High Commission, the Confederation of Indian Industry and the Indo-Canadian Business Chamber.

The ICCC President had also a meeting with Dr. Rahul Khullar, Commerce Secretary and Mr. Anup Wadhawan while in Delhi. Further, the ICCC was pleased to have the participation of Aaron Rosland,

Senior Economic Officer at the Ontario International Marketing Centre at the discussions in Delhi.



Avenues for Future Collaboration:

- ICCC approached this meeting as an opportunity to:
 - o Learn about the most recent events in Canada-India relations
 - o Impress upon participants the importance of the SME sector on CEPA negotiations



- o Discuss the major opportunities and challenges towards the conclusion of CEPA
- ICCC proposes to invite to Canada policy makers from India from Ministry of MSMEs, MEA and Ministry of Commerce and Industry to continue the dialogue on Cooperation in SMEs sector, and to discuss additional objectives for Canada-India relations via CEPA
- ICCC has undertaken to work closely with CII's recently formed "Canada Business Committee" in mounting forums in Canada and India with a focus on the SME sector
- ICCC is very pleased to build on its collaboration with ICBC and hold other events in the coming years

Meeting with Mr. Som Mittal

President, The National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM)



In Delhi, ICCC President Thakkar and Mayor Scarpitti held a meeting with Mr. Som Mittal, President of NASSCOM; an organization representing India's major information technology companies. Mr. Mittal shared important advancements occurring in India's IT sector and also the challenges faced by NASSCOM members in penetrating the Canadian market. In return, the ICCC discussed the opportunities for collaboration in Canada's IT market, given the concentration of IT services available in the Greater Toronto Region and the Town of Markham.

Avenues for Future Collaboration:

The Indo-Canada Chamber of Commerce intend to -

- A) Invite Mr. Mittal and a NASSCOM delegation in 2012 to engage in a roundtable discussion and various sector-related meetings in order to;
 - o Provide introductions to the ICT community in the Greater Toronto Area
 - o Discuss how Canadian and Indian industry representatives can be of mutual support for future joint ventures
- B) Liaise with a NASSCOM representative stationed in Canada with a view to:
 - o Use strategic technology locations such as the Markham Convergence Centre to promote Canadian-Indian ICT business opportunities
 - o Liaise with NASSCOM representatives in calendar 2012



- o Securing their participation in ICCC networking and roundtable events
- o Determining the mutual benefits from cooperation between the Indian and Canadian ICT communities
- o Understanding each other's perspectives on cooperation in the IT industry
- o Undertake and provide forums to discuss and articulate to policy makers in both countries on key technology-related bilateral issues

Meeting with Mr. Virendra Gupta, Head of Trade Affairs CII on Clean Tech Forum 2013

Mr. Gupta and Mayor Scarpitti engaged in an interactive session on the opportunities for collaboration in the environmental arena. Interest was expressed in Markham's recycling initiatives and its solid waste management programs. CII invited Markham to consider participation at its CleanTech Forum in February 2013.

Reception at Canadian High Commission



The Canadian High Commission hosted a warm welcoming reception for the delegation at the Canada Club. This reception introduced members of the delegation to High Commission staff as well as members of the Indo-Canadian Business Chamber, which works closely with the High Commission in the promotion of business opportunities between the two

countries. In his remarks, High Commissioner Beck outlined state of Canada-India relations and provided an update on the status of CEPA negotiations and the anticipated access into the auto components sector. He noted the vibrant Canadian presence at the Indian Auto Show taking place concurrently in New Delhi.



January 7-9 Jaipur



The PBD and its related meetings were a huge success for the delegation. In particular, the ICCC was awarded the prestigious Pravasi Samman Award by the President of India Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil for its contribution to Canada-India relations.

The PSBA award states:

I, Pratibha Devisingh Patil, President of India, confer on you the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award in acknowledgement of your outstanding achievement in the field of Public Service and in recognition of your valuable contribution in promoting the honour and prestige of India and in fostering the interests of Overseas Indians.

Jaipur 9 January, 2012 President

The ICCC was also well represented in the proceedings of the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas. On January 7, Dr. Anita Singh spoke on a panel on youth engagement alongside Dr. Renu Khator, President and Chancellor of the University of Texas and Lord Karan Bilimoria, founder and President of Cobra Beer. Dr. Singh emphasized the need for the youth to expand innovative ideas in areas of social development, using

examples from young Indo-Canadian Diaspora that have made important contributions to the areas of life sciences, human-computer interaction and social activism.

On January 9, President Satish Thakkar represented the ICCC on a panel, which discussed the role of Indian Diaspora organizations in India's



economic development, alongside representative Diaspora organizations from other countries with large Indian Diaspora. In his comments, Mr. Thakkar focused on the importance of social and technological innovation to India's relationship with its Diaspora. In the Indian context, technological innovations from the Indian Diaspora can and should be harnessed to answer the needs of the environment and society.



Mr. Thakkar also focused the importance of networks between Diaspora organizations and overseas governments (at all levels) to promote connections with the government and, business, education and social innovation groups in India. Forums like Global INK and the regional PBDs (as held in Toronto in 2011) are perfect venues to build on these relationships.

In addition to the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, the ICCC had meetings with multiple high-ranking government officials and elected representatives in India to bring to light the importance of Canada to India's economic growth. These meetings included members of India's national government, such as:

- Mr. Sachin Pilot, Union Minister of State for Communications and IT, Government of India
- Dr. Didar Singh, Former Secretary MOIA, Government of India
- Ms. Sujata Sudharshan, CEO, Overseas Indian Facilitation Centre, CII



In addition, the ICCC and the Town of Markham met with public officials from state governments, including:

- Mr. Narendra Modi, Chief Minister of Gujarat
- Mr. Ashok Gehlot, Chief Minister of Rajasthan
- Mr. Rajendra Pareekh, Minister of Industry, NRIs, Public Undertaking, Economics & Statistics, Government of Rajasthan



- Mr. Aimaduddin Ahmad Khan, Minister of Medical & Health, Family Welfare Ayurveda, Health Education, Government of Rajasthan
- Mr. Purshotam Aggarwal, I.A.S, Commissioner Investments and NRIs, Bureau of Investment Promotion, Government of Rajasthan
- Mr. Sunil Arora, Chairman, RIICO
- Mr. Rajendra Bhanawat, Managing Director, RIICO

• Business-to-business meeting with Gujarat State-Representatives

Avenues for Future Collaboration:

- In these meetings, the ICCC presented these officials with the PBD report
- Invited government and business representatives to strengthen their collaboration with Canada.

Reception at City Palace, Hosted by Maharaj Shri Narendra Singh



The delegation was pleased to have an opportunity to meet with Maharaj Shri Narendra Singh and Maharani Diya Kumari in a reception at City Palace in Jaipur. The Maharaj is well acquainted with the Greater Toronto Area, having traveled to Markham for an international polo tournament in support of a local charity. The ICCC looks forward to welcoming Maharaj Shri Narendra Singh on his next trip to Canada.

RIICO-FICCI-BIP: Interactive Session with Canadian Delegation



The ICCC and the Town of Markham participated in a roundtable and a reception with the Rajasthan Industrial Development and Investment Corporation (RIICO) and the Bureau of Investment Promotion.



The session was attended by 125 people, including Rajasthan's largest industrialists, looking to match capabilities between the Canadian delegation and the Rajasthani companies. Fruitful B2B meetings were accomplished both in the formal part of the meeting and post-meeting networking reception.

Avenues for Future Collaboration:

- The ICCC offered comments about bilateral opportunities in the SME Sector, with a focus on clean technology.
- Speakers offered important insights into about the business opportunities in Rajasthan such as: o Education; Organic foods; IT sector; Travel and Tourism
- Invitation for a Rajasthan delegation to visit Canada in 2012 which will focus on sectors which are important to both Rajasthan and Canada such as mining and minerals, crossborder services, and energy exploration.





January 10-11 Mumbai



Briefing by Canadian Consulate and Trade Commissioner to the Delegates

Upon arrival, the delegation was received by representatives from the Canadian Consulate in Mumbai, who offered important insights into the promises and challenges of doing business in India. They offered an important perspective in the types of industries and demands of the Indian market from a Canadian perspective.



Roundtable with Gem & Jewelry Export Promotion Council

This was directly followed by meeting with 25 members of the Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion Council, representing all of India's largest gem and diamond producers. The meeting uncovered important untapped potential between Canada and India with special focus on diamond manufacturing, and the cutting and polishing industry. As Canada is the third largest diamond producer in the world and India cuts and processes 90 per cent of the world's diamonds, the potential for collaboration is crucially important.

This meeting concluded with both sides agreeing that representatives from the Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion Council will visit Canada this year for a roundtable session and individual meetings to further explore the potential in partnerships in the area of diamonds and gems. Chairman of the Diamond Bourse of Canada, Mr. Bhushan Vora, briefed the meeting on the opportunities available in the Canadian sector for Indian gem and jewellery producers.



Avenues for Future Collaboration:

- Follow up on an MOU to be signed with the Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion Council;
- Organize a potential visit by the GJEPC to the Prospectors & Developers Association of Canada (PDAC) meeting in April.
- Organize Gem and Jewellery sector-specific meetings in Canada to foster better links with the Indian industry.
- ICCC is looking forward to a partnership in the area of rough/cut and polish diamonds.

Dinner reception with World Trade Centre & All India Association of Industry



A dinner reception held for the delegation at the World Trade Centre had over 100 attendees. It also saw the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the ICCC, the Town of Markham and the WTC organization in Mumbai.

Avenues for Future Collaboration:

- Completed MOUs with the WTC and the AIAI with the objective to expand trade and economic relations between Canada and India through:
 - The exchange of trade and investment-related information to strengthen technological and industrial cooperation;
 - o Exchange of publications and information about trade and investment policies developed in their respective countries;
- o Development joint ventures through trade inquires, business ventures, international forums, information and technology support systems;
- ICCC representatives were invited to INDIALLIA conference, an international business development forum for B2B meetings, in April;
- Future interaction with the WTC and AIAI was ensured with an invitation to these organizations to Canada in 2012.



Roundtable with Indian Merchant Chamber and S.P. Jain Institute of Management and Research: "Enhancing Cross Border Relations between India and Canada"

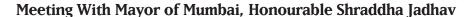


The delegation met with representatives of the Indian Merchant Chamber. They were introduced, in a roundtable session, to various individuals active in cross-border trade, academics, taxation, and cross-border financing. This session highlighted some of the major successes already achieved by Canadian

companies such as the recent partnership between the Schulich School of Business and the S.P. Jain Institute, while highlighting the potential for new partnerships. This event was followed up with a reception sponsored by ICICI Bank (Canada) with 50 attendees from the IMC and other business-representatives.

Avenues for Future Collaboration:

- Representatives from the S.P. Jain Institute invited a follow-up delegation from Canada to come to the institute to learn about the Indian market.
- Create a directory of cross-border service specialization in both Canada and India.
- Identify the CEPA-related opportunities and challenges in cross-border trade, legal issues, taxation and banking.





The Mayors of Mumbai and Markham engaged in an interactive session on the opportunities for collaboration between Mumbai and the GTA. Their discussions focused on sharing best practices in the areas of recycling, waste disposal, infrastructure development and distribution. The Mayor Scarpitti also mentioned Markham's decision to name Mumbai Street in the township. The meeting concluded with an invitation to the Mayor of Mumbai to visit the GTA in the upcoming year.



January 11-12 **Pune**

The ICCC was also very pleased to have been a part of the Town of Markham's meetings in Pune. The Town of Markham signed an MOU with the Maratha Chamber of Commerce designed to mutually reinforce business and investment opportunities. The delegation met with representatives at the Venture Centre to discuss potential collaborative commercialization initiatives with the Markham Convergence Centre (MCC). Markham has an additional connection to

Pune through Quanser, a Markham based company that has established a Centre of Excellence at Pune's College of Engineering. Mayor Scarpitti and delegates visited the Quanser Centre of Excellence at the College of Engineering, where Quanser donated a fully equipped robotics lab to the College. As well, representatives of Giesecke and Devrient (G&D), which has offices in Pune and Markham, met with the Town of Markham delegation.

Avenues for Future Collaboration:

- Collaborations between the Venture Centre and MCC on commercialization opportunities
- Markham to liaise with Seneca College in the field of higher education
- Advance these bilateral relationships to facilitate business connections and attract investment to both Markham and Pune.





ICCC Mission to India 2012: News Coverage

Pravasi Samman Award for Indo-Canada Chamber of Commerce by H.E. President of India

Kumar Rakesh (INDIA)

Published Wednesday January 11, 2012

Global Governance News

http://globalgovernancenews.com/News-Full.aspx?id=NEWS-20120111112929381

Jaipur: The PBSA is the highest honour conferred by the Government of India on overseas Indians or an institution run by overseas Indians. The PBSA acknowledges contributions by an organisation in eight different spheres, and includes contributions that lead to a better understanding abroad of India, support to India's causes and concerns in a tangible way, and building closer links between India, the Indian Diaspora and their country of residence.

Accepting the award on behalf of the ICCC, Mr. Satish Thakkar, President of the Chamber, said, "This is an extraordinary honour being bestowed on the ICCC. This singular recognition by the Government of India of the ICCC's many contributions over the last 35 years is a tribute to the successive leadership of past presidents and in particular to our vibrant members across Canada."

Mr. Thakkar is at present in India, leading an ICCC-Town of Markham business delegation to India and the UAE.



Her Excellency Shrimati Pratibha Devisingh Patil, the President of Republic of India, conferred the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award (PBSA) to the Indo-Canada Chamber of Commerce (ICCC) on Monday, January 9, 2012, at a glittering ceremony held at the Birla House in Jaipur.

The delegation, comprising over 60 small and medium business entrepreneurs from diverse sectors is also participating in the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas convention of the Indian Diaspora in Jaipur besides visiting Delhi, Mumbai, Pune and Dubai. The Mayor of Markham, His Worship Mr. Frank Scarpitti, is the co-leader of this delegation.

Over the last three-and-a-half decades, the ICCC has focused on fostering Canada-India relations, and in the process, promoted brand India in Canada. It has done so by building closer links between India and the Indian Diaspora in Canada by continuous engagement and creating economic opportunities through its trade and Diaspora programs.



In 2011 – which was celebrated as the Year of India in Canada – the ICCC co-hosted with the Government of India in Toronto the regional convention of and for the Indian Diaspora in North America and the Caribbean on the theme 'Building Bridges: Positioning Strategies for the Indian Diaspora'; over 800 people from across the globe attended the convention.

The High Commissioner of India in Ottawa, Mr. S. M. Gavai, in his congratulatory message said, "This is in recognition of ICCC's contribution towards the promotion of India Canada friendship. We are confident that this signal honour conferred by the Government of India will further encourage the institution to work towards the promotion of ties between India and Canada, particularly in the field of trade and commerce and people to people relations."

In commenting on what he described as a "well-deserved award," High Commissioner for Canada to India, Mr. Stewart Beck said, "Over the years, the ICCC has done an excellent job in strengthening the people-to-people and business-to-business relations that are so important in strengthening our bilateral relationship. The ICCC did an outstanding job in organizing the regional Pravasi Bharatiya Divas in Toronto last June, one of the many events from last year's Year of India in Canada."

Preeti Saran, Consul General of India in Toronto, said, "I have had the pleasure of interacting with the ICCC leadership and its membership over the last many years. This award is a wonderful recognition of this pioneering organization's splendid work on so many fronts. I want to congratulate Satish Thakkar, President, ICCC and his team on this milestone achievement."

(Press Released in New Delhi by Ms Archana Mirajkar, Senior Media and Communications Officer, High Commission of Canada in India, New Delhi)

Raj Govt Officials Discuss Investment Options with Delegation

Monday January 9, 2012

Jaipur, Dec 8 (PTI) Representatives of Rajasthan government today discussed with a Canadian delegation investment options in different sectors of the state.

During an interactive session with the Indian Diaspora on the sidelines of the 10th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas here, senior officials briefed them of possibilities of tie-ups in sectors like girls" education, technical education and IT among others.

Veenu Gupta (Principal Secretary, School and Sanskrit Education),



Vipin Chandra Sharma (Principal Secretary, Technical Education), Ashwini (Director Rajcomp) and representatives of Rajasthan State Industrial Development and Investment Corporation (RIICO) and FICCI interacted with the delegation.

The president of Indo-Canada Chamber of Commerce (ICCC), Satish Thakkar also invited industrialists and businessmen of the state to Canada for investment opportunities.

Mayor of Markham town, Frank Scarpitti said the chamber and the administration of the town were committed to promoting Markham as a globally competitive business destination. *PTI SDA*

http://news.in.msn.com/national/article.aspx?cp-documentid=5735549 Retrieved on January 10, 2012

Minister of Micro Small & Medium Enterprises addresses "India - Canada Partnership: the Way Forward"

Combined Strengths of India's and Canada's Services Sectors Complement Each Other

Canadian Firms can collaborate with those in India in Order to Harness each others' Strengths in Developing Innovative Products and Services.

To strengthen business relations between India and Canada, the Indo Canada Chamber of Commerce along with Confederation of Indian Industry and India-Canada Business Chamber, a Round Table was held here. The purpose was to establish direct linkages between Canadian and Indian companies to boost business between the two countries.

Welcoming all the Canadian guest and delegates the Minister of Micro Small & Medium Enterprises, Shri Virbhadra Singh said, "it gives me immense pleasure to be here for the Roundtable. I congratulate the organizers for putting together this event that would help in enhancing bilateral engagements between Indian and Canadian MSMEs. We should indeed take a leaf out of the Canadian tradition

of strong government-Industry interface. He urged the delegates to avail the benefits of the opportunities that this interaction provides".

The Minister further added, "I would like to give you a snapshot of the MSME sector in India. The Micro, Small and Medium Sector has emerged as an engine of growth of the Indian Economy. It has contributed significantly towards India's robust economic growth even in the face of the global financial crisis. The Sector consisting of 26.1 million units, as of today, provides employment to over 60 million persons. The Sector through more than 6,000 products contributes about 8% to GDP besides 45% to the total manufacturing output and 40% to the exports from the country. The Sector has also the distinction of creating comparatively much more employment per unit of investment.

The Sector is expected to perform an important role during the 12th Five Year Plan Period (2012-17) in enabling the country to achieve the



envisaged overall growth rate of 9% during the Plan. The Government has been providing support and sustenance to the Sector through a plethora of programmes and policies. I would also like to inform the foreign delegates about the robust and efficient legal institutional framework. Further, India is perhaps one of the few countries in the world which has enacted an exclusive act for MSME sector. Therefore, investment in the sector is quite secure and has the protection of a well defined act."

Shri Virbhadra Singh also said, "the ministry has taken several initiatives to promote the growth and development of MSMEs in India. A recently initiated program that would be of interest to you is the National Manufacturing Competitiveness Programme (NMCP) which aims to develop global competitiveness among Indian MSMEs. The Programme envisages substantial investment towards enhancing the entire value chain of the MSME sector. All the 10 components of NMCP have already been operationalised and are likely to spur innovation and growth in the MSME sector. These include Quality Management Systems and Quality Technology Tools, Design Clinic Scheme, Building Awareness on IPRs, Support for Entrepreneurial and Managerial Development, Marketing Support/Assistance to MSMEs, Setting up of New Mini Tool Room and Lean Manufacturing Competitiveness Scheme. What will be of more interest to you is that the Programme will be implemented through Public-Private-Partnership mode with close physical and financial participation of the private sector. I invite our Canadian friends to participate in this Programme".

Applauding the international cooperation the Minister said, "one of the principal drivers of India's economic growth has been the services sector which predominantly comprises of MSMEs. I am told that the services sector is Canada's largest and fastest growing economic component. The combined strengths of Canada's and India's respective services sectors largely complement each other with opportunities existing for further trade and investment especially in financial services and knowledge-based services. Canadian firms can collaborate with those in India in order to harness each others' strengths in developing innovative products and services".

"MSMEs play an important role in Indian manufacturing sector. In the current competitive scenario technology upgradation is the only way to improve the quality and cost competitiveness of MSMEs. It is, therefore, imperative for them to imbibe technology to stay competitive and become global. Several Indian MSMEs have indeed started implementing various technologies aimed at improving efficiency and productivity of their operations. The MSMEs in India are looking to exploit such opportunities in countries like Canada through joint ventures, collaboration and technical tie-ups. Segments such as machine tools, pharmaceuticals, medical equipments, textile machinery, mining equipments, auto components etc. provide excellent opportunities for such collaborations and tie-ups".

The MSME sector is a unique area for collaboration between Canada and India, the Minister said, "it is extremely heartening to see the interest of Canadian Industry in Indian MSMEs. Let us work hand-in-hand to intensify bilateral cooperation and encourage our small enterprises to prosper and flourish through greater mutual cooperation".

Present on the occasion were Stewart Beck,



High Commissioner of Canada to India Canadian High Commission, Satish Thakkar, President, Indo-Canada Chamber of Commerce, Nicolas Banerjee-Brodeur, Heads Contracts & Legal Affairs, Bombardier Transportation & Jawed Ashraf, Joint Secretary, MEA.

http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=79399 Retrieved on January 10, 2012

Indo-Canada Chamber of Commerce Wins Diaspora Honour

Renu Mehta

Published Tuesday January 10, 2012 Globe and Mail

A Canadian organization has received the greatest overseas tribute granted by the Indian government. The Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award (PBSA) was presented to the Indo Canada Chamber of Commerce (ICCC) by Shrimati Pratibha Devisingh Patil, the President of Republic of India, at Birla House in Jaipur.

"This award is the ultimate recognition that an overseas Indian organization aspires to get. I am gratified that the Government of India has acknowledged the sterling contributions of our Chamber during the last 35 years," said Satish Thakkar, president of the ICCC, on Monday as he accepted the award.

The Indo Canada Chamber of Commerce is a non-profit organization, headquartered in Toronto with several chapters across Canada. It has a mandate to increase trade between Canada and India. Mr. Thakkar is currently leading a delegation to India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in partnership with the Town of Markham. The delegation, considered as one of the largest missions from Canada, includes Markham Mayor Frank Scarpitti as well as 60 small and medium business entrepreneurs from diverse sectors.

The honour was conferred during the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) convention, an annual event held in India in January to engage and connect with Indians living in other countries. It is celebrated on Jan. 9 since it was on this day in 1915 that Mahatma Gandhi, "the greatest Pravasi", returned to India from South Africa to lead India's struggle for freedom.

PBD conventions have been held every year since 2003.

The PBSA acknowledges contributions by an organization in eight different spheres that lead to a better understanding of India overseas, lends support to



India's causes and concerns, and builds closer links between India, the Indian Diaspora and their country of residence, according to a news release.

http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/toronto/ indo-canada-chamber-of-commerce-wins-Diaspora-honour/article2297551/ Retrieved on 10 Jan 2012

Indo-Canada Chamber Wins Pravasi Award

Tuesday January 10, 2012 South Asian Focus

President of India Pratibha Devisingh Patil this week conferred the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award (PBSA) on the Indo-Canada Chamber of Commerce (ICCC) at a glittering ceremony held at Birla House in Jaipur.

The PBSA is the highest honour conferred by the Government of India on overseas Indians or an institution run by overseas Indians.

Accepting the award on behalf of the ICCC, Satish Thakkar, ICCC president, said: "This is an extraordinary honour being bestowed on the ICCC. This singular recognition by the Government of India of the ICCC's many contributions over the last 35 years is a tribute to the successive leadership of past presidents and in particular to our vibrant members across Canada."

Thakkar is at present in India leading an ICCC-Town of Markham business delegation to India and the UAE. The delegation, comprising over 60 small and medium business entrepreneurs from diverse sectors,

is also participating in the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas convention of the Indian Diaspora in Jaipur, besides visiting Delhi, Mumbai, Pune and Dubai.

Markham Mayor Frank Scarpitti is co-leader of the delegation. India's High Commissioner in Ottawa, S.M. Gavai, said: "This is in recognition of ICCC's contribution towards the promotion of India-Canada friendship."

In commenting on what he described as a "well-deserved award," High Commissioner for Canada to India, Stewart Beck, said: "Over the years, the ICCC has done an excellent job in strengthening the people-to-people and business-to-business relations that are so important in strengthening our bilateral relationship."

Preeti Saran, India's Consul General in Toronto, added: "This award is a wonderful recognition of this pioneering organization's splendid work on so many fronts. I want to congratulate Satish Thakkar, President, ICCC and his team on this milestone achievement."

http://www.southasianfocus.ca/business/article/103325 Retrieved on January 10, 2012



The Indian EXPRESS

CANADANewsline

Pravasi Samman Award for Indo-Canada Chamber of Commerce

STAFF REPORTER

Toronto

he Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award (PBSA) was bestowed on the Indo-Canada Chamber of Commerce (ICCC) on January 9 at a glittering ceremony held at the Birla House in Jaipur.

"This is an extraordinary honour being bestowed on the ICCC. This singular recognition by the Government of India of the ICCC's many contributions over the last 35 years is a tribute to the successive leadership of past presidents and in particular to our vibrant members across Canada," said. Satish Thakkar, President of the ICCC presently in India where he is leading an ICCC-Town of Markham business delegation to India and the UAE.

Over the last three-and-a-half decades, the ICCC has focused on fostering Canada-India relations, and in the process, promot-ed brand India in Canada.

It has done so by building closer links between India and the Indian Diaspora in Canada by continuous engagement and creating economic opportunities through its

aung economic opportunities through its trade and Diaspora programs.

"This is in recognition of ICCC's contribution towards the promotion of India Canada friendship. We are confident that this signal honour conferred by the Government of India will further encourage the



Satish Thakkar, President, ICCC (Left) receiving the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award from Her Excellency Shrimati Pratibha Devisingh Patil, President of India (Centre). Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs Vayalar Ravi (right) Picture by Bashir Nasir

institution to work towards the promotion of ties between India and Canada, particu-

larly in the field of trade and commerce and people to people relations," S.M. Gavai, the

in his congratulatory message.

In 2011, which was the Year of India in Canada, the ICCC co-hosted with the Government of India in Toronto the regional convention of and for the Indian Diaspora in North America and the Caribbean on the theme Building Bridges: Positioning Strat-egies for the Indian Diaspora'; over 800 people from across the globe attended the convention.

The High Commissioner for Canada The High Commissioner for Canada to India described the honour as a well-deserved award. "Over the years, the ICCC has done an excellent job in strengthening the people-to-people and business-to-business relations that are so important in strengthening our bilateral relationship. The ICCC did an outstanding job in organizing the regional Prayasi Bharatiya Divas nizing the regional Pravasi Bharatiya Divas in Toronto last June, one of the many events from last year's Year of India in Canada," said Stewart Beck.

The Indian Consulate in Toronto also

congratulated the president of the Chamber.
"I have had the pleasure of interacting with the ICCC leadership and its membership over the last many years. This award is a wonderful recognition of this pioneering organization's splendid work on so many fronts. I want to congratulate Satish Thak-kar, President, ICCC and his team on this milestone achievement."Said Preeti Saran, Consul General of India in Toronto.



Indian Achievers to Interact with the Youth at PBD

Saturday January 7, 2012 TNN

JAIPUR: An interactive session between some noted Indian achievers and the youth from Jaipur-based colleges will be held as a part of the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) on Saturday evening.

Rohit Kumar Singh, Secretary, sports and youth affairs will moderate the session that will be addressed by noted Indian achievers like Lakshmi Pratury, CEO of Ixoraa Media, Karan Bilimoria the founder of Cobra beer, Anita Singh, fellow at the Munk School of Global Advisory Council at the University of Toronto and Renu Khator, the first woman chancellor of the University of Houston System.

The interactive session has been planned to inspire the youth by providing them an opportunity to share the success mantras of the prominent personalities. "This is the first time that a session especially for the youth has been included at the PBD," Singh told TOI. Nearly 600 youngsters and 100 entrepreneurs have been invited for the event scheduled to be held from 3 pm to 5 pm at the Maharana Pratap Auditorium.

Another session for the youth would take place at the same time and venue on January 9 also and is scheduled to be moderated by member of Parliament and former cricketer Mohammed Azharuddin.

The target audiences for this session, too, are professional degree holders, young entrepreneurs and students in the age group of 18 to 26 years from the state's colleges and universities. The state government had made a special request to the ministry of Indian Overseas Affairs for this session on "Youth Connectivity".

The session on January 9 would be chaired by Mukul Wasnik, Union minister for social justice and empowerment and the panelists would include Wings of Hope CEO and co-founder Rajni Sriram, noted attorney and former senior Obama Administration official Preeta Bansal.

http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-01-07/jaipur/30601721_1_session-indian-achievers-youth-affairs Retrieved on January 30, 2012



PBD 2012: 'India Requires Gender-Based Teaching'

Jaipur, January 8: Overseas Indians attending the Pravasi Bharati Diwas (PBD) here Jan 7-9 feel that to become a developed country, India requires to fill the gaps mainly in the education sector.

"India requires gender-based teaching and it will help to utilize 50 percent of human resources meaningfully. This would also help in women empowerment," Anita Singh, an academician at the University of Toronto, told IANS.

Singh, who belongs to Bhilawat village near Ajmer district of Rajasthan, said that mathematics can be understood differently by girls and boys and so teaching should focus on gender too.

She said that in India, the majority of girls do not have access to quality education, which undermines the overall efficiency of human resources as almost 50 percent do not get proper education.

She said that there still exists conservatism, old values, superstitions and traditions which widen the gap between economically growing India and developed countries.

The most important sector to overcome such obstacles is education, Dr Singh added.

She said that in the next 10 years, India will require thousands of colleges and if teaching is modernized as per the requirements of the day, India will surpass all developed countries in more than one way.



Earlier, Dr. Singh interacted with youth during a session and answered their queries. She said that the rural students like urban should also get top priority.

Dr Singh visited her home state after 10 years and was mesmerized to see changes especially in Jaipur.

"I am very excited and thrilled to be here and after the PBD, I will go to my village to meet family members," she added.

http://www.pravasitoday.com/pbd-2012-india-requires-gender-based-teaching Retrieved on January 30, 2012



ICCC Mission to India 2012: **Speeches**

Speech by Her Excellency the President of India, Shrimati Pratibha Devisingh at the Valedictory Function of the 10th Pravasi Bhartiya Divas Convention and Conferment of Pravasi Samman Awards

Jaipur, Rajasthan, January 9th, 2012

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me immense pleasure to be present here for the tenth Pravasi Bharatiya Divas. As you know, this annual get together of the great Indian family from all over the world, commemorates the return of Mahatma Gandhi, the greatest of all Pravasi Bharatiyas, to India after a successful struggle against apartheid in South Africa. Today, the 9th of January, is the 97th anniversary of this epochal event, which led to a successful non-violent struggle for independence in India, and also inspired other countries languishing under colonial rule.

The Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is a celebration of Indians living abroad. It is an occasion to welcome them to the land of their ancestors, to the country of their origin, to interact with them and re-acquaint ourselves with each other. You may be living in different parts of the world, but what binds us together is that we all spring from the same source. This creates a deep affinity.

The footprints of the Indian Diaspora are widespread and its presence felt in every continent. The Indian overseas community is not only large, but is becoming increasingly influential in the economic, professional and political fields, in the countries in which they are now living. We are proud of their accomplishments.

It is an honour and a privilege to have with

us today Her Excellency Smt. Kamla Persad-Bissessar, the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago; that she has become the first woman Prime Minister of her country, is an achievement that the world-wide Indian community applauds, and I thank her for coming all the way to be with us. I would also like to congratulate all the winners of the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards. It is an extremely distinguished list and we are honoured by the presence of the awardees at this function.

Numerous languages and a variety of customs and traditions have together created a vibrant Indian culture. Its impact is evident in many countries across the world and, in this the Overseas Indian community has played an important role. The cultural vitality of the global Indian is so powerful, that some Indian scholars have even begun to redefine their own identity in terms of your cultural achievements. Take the example of the great Indo-Trini culture of Trinidad and Tobago, which has been created and nurtured over the years. It impresses all with its strength and beauty. Its impact has also been felt in India.

Overseas Indians, who number over 27 million, are symbols of India in their adopted countries. They have done extremely well in their chosen fields and have done us proud. We always look forward to meeting with them and learning from their rich experiences.



The theme of this year's Conference, "Global Indian: Inclusive Growth" is very apt in terms of co-operation of our overseas Indian community that we need, to bring about great inclusiveness to India's growth story. I am given to understand that over the last two days, you have deliberated in detail on how you can contribute to the development of your ancestral homeland. You have discussed several ideas regarding partnerships in health, social entrepreneurship in water, investment and Research and Development in solar energy, and issues of youth connectivity.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the last few decades, India has lifted tens of millions of its people out of abject poverty. We are in a position to feed our population better, to educate our people better and to widen their economic choices. We still have a very long way to go. Health, education and skill development were key areas of the strategy of inclusive development in India's 11th Plan, and they will continue to be focus areas in the 12th Plan. We must ensure that these sectors receive adequate resources and to ensure that resources are spent to achieve maximum efficiency in terms of outcomes. We also need to harness private investment in these areas at a time of economic uncertainty and profound change in the world. We will continue to actively engage with the overseas Indian community as partners in the development and progress of India.

In this Century, human society faces the daunting yet inspiring task of forging "sustainability," in all its activities, so that while meeting current human needs, the requirements of future generations are also safeguarded. It is a great challenge. You all can play a decisive role with the knowledge and

experience you have gained as academics or scholars, scientists and technologists, professionals or businessmen.

We deeply cherish our relationship with the Indian Diaspora. The Government of India is keenly interested in the well-being of the people of Indian origin living overseas. The year gone by saw major development in West Asia and North Africa. This is a region of great importance to India, because of our traditional warm ties with these nations, and also because a large number of Indian nationals live there. The Government of India had to evacuate about 19,000 Indian nationals from Libya and Yemen. The Government sent special aircraft and ships to these countries to bring back Indian citizens free of cost. Similarly, special flights were flown out of Egypt for more than 700 Indian tourists and Indian nationals working with various companies there.

I am delighted to note that the Indian Community Welfare Fund, originally established in 18 countries to provide timely succor to overseas Indians in distress, has now been extended to all Indian Missions. I would like to congratulate the Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs, Shri Vayalar Ravi and his Ministry, for their keen concern for the welfare of Overseas Indians.

I also appreciate the Know India Programme, which is an endeavour to maintain links with the Diaspora youth.

It brings groups of young overseas people of Indian origin to India, with a view to promote awareness on different facets of life here and the progress made by India in various fields. I have had the occasion to meet some of the groups coming under this Programme, and in my



interaction with them, I have spoken about their abiding links with the country of their origin - India. We must continue to promote greater exchanges between the youth as an important aspect of forging linkages and maintaining the tradition of close bonds.

With these words, I wish all present here a Very Happy New Year! I wish all of you great success, progress and prosperity. We are meeting in Jaipur, a beautiful city also called the 'Pink city'. It attracts a large number of tourists. I hope that the delegates to this Conference will be able to go around the city.

Thank you. Jai Hind!



Prime Minister's Address at the Tenth Pravasi Bhartiya Divas

Jaipur, January 8, 2012

I am very happy to welcome you all in this beautiful and historic city of Jaipur for this year's Pravasi Bharatiya Divas. Rajasthan represents Indian hospitality at its very best. It is renowned for its culture, heritage and legends of valour, honour and sacrifice. Today, symbols of modern Rajasthan sit side by side with monuments of breath-taking beauty. I am sure that your stay in this beautiful city will renew your pride in the richness of India's civilization.

This year we are privileged to welcome one of the most distinguished Pravasi Bharatiyas as our Chief Guest. Madam Kamla Persad-Bissessar created history by becoming the first woman Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago. She distinguished herself in her earlier careers in education and law. Subsequently, she responded to the call of public service and proved what a person of talent, dedication and commitment can achieve anywhere in this world.

In welcoming Prime Minister Madam Kamla Persad Bissessar today we also seek to honour the large Indian Diaspora in the Caribbean. We are proud of their achievements. Their journey, often in very difficult circumstances, to those far-away lands began many, many years ago, but their links with India remain strong and deep. Our shared passion for cricket is well known. Which Indian sports fan does not know the names of cricketing legends like Brian Lara or Sonny Ramadhin.

This year's Pravasi Bharatiya Divas marks the tenth anniversary of the event which was first held in the year 2003. This decade has been marked by a visible accretion in the influence and impact of the global Indian across the world. We have witnessed a steady growth in their numbers, levels of prosperity and their skills.

The government and people of India recognize and greatly value the important role being played by Indian communities living abroad. We believe that the Indian Diaspora



has much more to contribute to the building of modern India. We propose to facilitate, encourage and promote this engagement. Over the past year we have taken a number of steps towards this end.

Pursuant to the law that was enacted to enable non-resident Indians to vote in our national elections, the Government has issued notifications for registration of overseas Indians under the Representation of People Act, 1950. This constitutes the first major step to enable Indians resident abroad to participate in our election processes.

In the last session of our Parliament we have introduced a Bill intended to merge and streamline the People of Indian Origin and Overseas Citizen of India schemes by amending the Citizenship Act. This will rectify some of the anomalies in the schemes and provide for an Overseas Indian Card which will be given to foreign spouses of such card holders as well. A large number of workers from Rajasthan are emigrating abroad. We have accordingly established an office of the Protector of Emigrants in Jaipur. I am told that the Government of Rajasthan proposes to build a Pravasi Bharatiya Bhawan in Jaipur. This Bhawan will house the offices of not only the Protector of Emigrants but also a Migrant Resource Centre to provide on-site help to overseas Indians and emigrating workers.

The Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs is implementing the e-migrate project that will provide end-to-end computerized solutions for all processes in the emigration system. The system will link all key stakeholders on a common platform which will be used by workers, offices of the protector of emigrants, recruitment agencies, immigration officials,

employers and the Indian missions abroad.

The scope of our Labour Mobility Partnership Agreements is being expanded to cover not only skilled workers but also students, academics and professionals. Such Human Resource Mobility Partnership agreements are being negotiated with The Netherlands, France, Australia and the European Union.

I am happy to inform you that the government has decided to introduce and sponsor a new Pension and Life Insurance Fund for overseas Indian workers. The scheme will encourage, enable and assist overseas workers to voluntarily save for their return and resettlement and old age. It will also provide a low-cost life insurance cover against natural death. This scheme fulfills a long pending demand of our workers abroad.

We are acutely conscious of the safety and security of Indians living abroad, particularly in regions characterized by instability.

There are over six million Indians living in the Gulf and West Asia. We need to be alert to the unfolding developments in this part of the world. We have conveyed to the countries of the region that we have a stake in the peace and stability of this region, and that we expect that they would appropriately look after the interests of Indian communities in their countries.

Following the upheaval in Libya last year, the Government undertook Operation Safe Homecoming to evacuate more than 16,000 people from the strife torn areas through special flights, passenger and naval vessels. Similar evacuations were carried out in Egypt and Yemen on a lower scale. We stand ready to extend such help elsewhere should the need arise.



Last year, the Government constituted an inter-Ministerial Committee under the Cabinet Secretary to make recommendations on issues relating to repatriation, relief and rehabilitation of Indian nationals affected by recent developments in West Asia. The Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs has prepared an Action Plan to implement its recommendations.

The world is passing through a difficult phase. Many of you are experiencing first-hand the impact of the global economic slowdown. Employment opportunities have declined, there is greater protectionism and attitudes towards migration have also hardened. There is growing social intolerance even in more open societies.

Our country is also going through difficult times. Nonetheless, our economic fundamentals are strong and our constitutional processes are robust. We are up to the task of meeting these challenges we face as a nation. Despite an adverse international environment, the Indian economy is expected to grow by about 7% this financial year ending 31st March. However, we hope to bring back the rhythm of our growth processes to sustain an annual growth rate of 9-10% in the medium-term. Our domestic savings rate which currently stands at 33-35 percent of our GDP will greatly facilitate the realization of our growth objectives. Our efforts to battle inflation are producing results and there has been an improvement in the situation.

We have attempted sincerely to address the rising expectations of our people with regard to governance and delivery of public services. The Right to Information Act has proved to be a powerful instrument of bringing in

transparency in governance.

I am confident that some of the other legislations on these issues, which are now on the national agenda, will make a similar impact in the years ahead.

The theme for this year's event is "Global Indian-Inclusive Growth." Indian civilization and society have always been inclusive in character. It is only natural that our political and economic processes have also to be 'inclusive' in their orientation and in their outcome.

Over the past years, Indian democracy has deepened and gained in strength and vitality as more and more people from the disadvantaged sections of our society have secured their rightful place in our economic and political processes. We wish to unleash the vast human potential of the many millions, who for one reason or another, have been on the margins of our society in the past. Our government is committed to doing so by providing security of education, nutrition and health to every Indian so that he or she is empowered to live a life of dignity and well being. We are also committed to the pursuit of a development strategy which will protect our environment and the essential life-support systems of our planet.

We in India speak in different languages and follow different faiths. But Indian culture has a tradition of assimilating and accommodating diverse traditions, customs, beliefs and peoples. That is what makes Indian society, Indian civilization endure and flourish.

The 'global Indian' is a symbol of this diversity of our ancient land. Your individual prosperity and personal achievement are a symbol of what a diverse people like us can achieve



Many of your forefathers were forcibly taken away from India as labourers; some migrated in distress. Yet, today, the People of Indian Origin are welcomed around the world for the values they represent – values of hard work, values of excellence and enterprise and respect for their communities, their families and their neighbors.

I welcome each one of you to India because I want each one of you to inspire our people with your creative example.

May your path be blessed.

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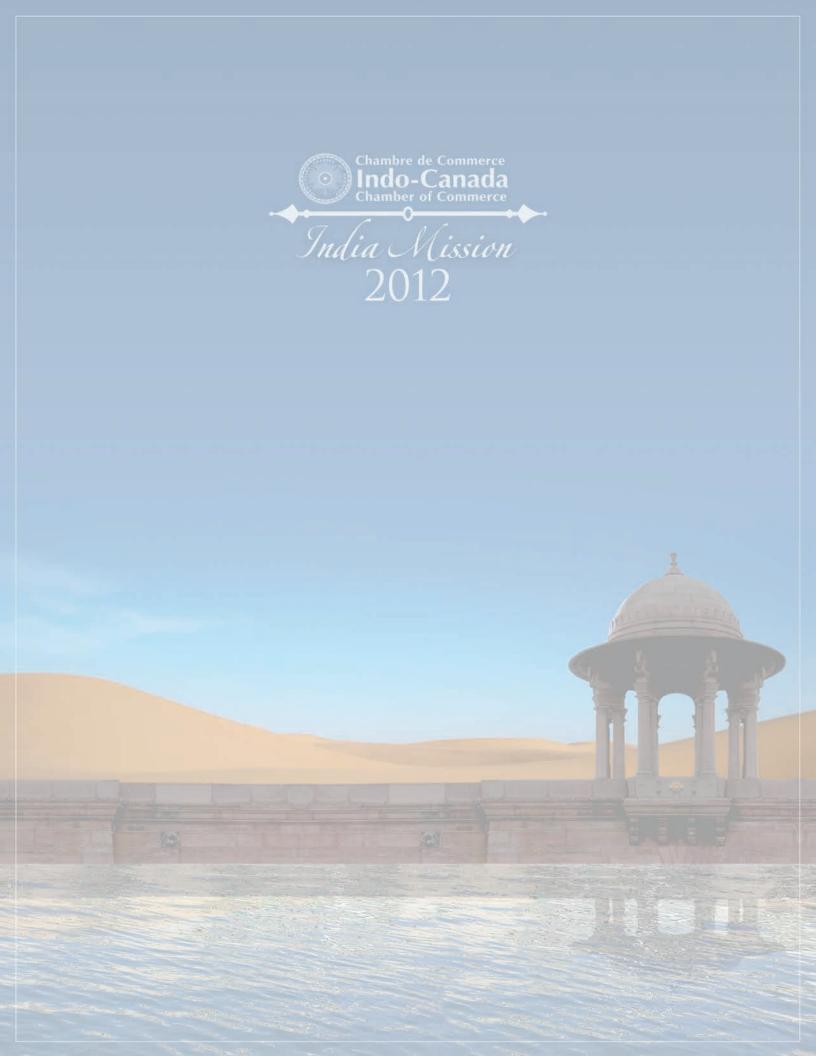
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