

India-Canada Bilateral Relations

Overview

1. India-Canada bilateral ties are underpinned by shared values of democracy, pluralism, expanding economic engagement, regular high level interactions and long-standing people-to-people ties.
2. Prime Minister (PM) Modi's visit to Canada in April 2015 elevated the bilateral relation to a strategic partnership. PM Justin Trudeau paid his first State Visit to India from 18 to 24 February 2018. Both Prime Ministers had informally interacted (pull aside) during G-7 Summit at Biarritz, France on 26 August 2019. The visits and meetings reaffirmed the breadth and scope of Canada-India relations, based on the fundamental principle of respect for sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of the two countries.
3. Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, both Prime Ministers have spoken on April 28 and June 16, 2020 and February 20, 2021 to discuss regional and global issues including global supply chain, collaborations in research & technology for vaccine, medicines supply from India, evacuation of stranded Indians and Canadians.
4. On October 8, 2020, Prime Minister Modi delivered an inaugural address at virtual Invest India 2020 Conference in Canada, stating that shared democratic values drive India-Canada bilateral ties and many common interests, trade and investment linkages were an integral part of the multi-faceted relationship.

Other High-level Exchanges

5. There have been a series of high-level visits and meetings of bilateral mechanisms, since 2019.

From Canada,

- i. Mr. Scott Moe, Premier of Saskatchewan accompanied by Mr. Jeremy Harrison, Minister of Trade and Export Development of Saskatchewan visited India with a trade delegation (18-22 November 2019);
- ii. Mr. Victor Fedeli, Ontario Minister for Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade visited India (November 16-23, 2019);
- iii. Former PM Stephen Harper visited India (6-13 January 2019 & 8-17 January 2020) for Raisina Dialogue and as a part of trade delegation of Saskatchewan, Canada (18-20 November 2019).

From India,

- i. Shri Hardeep Singh Puri, Minister of State (IC) of the Ministry of Civil Aviation visited Montreal from 24 September to 4 October 2019 to attend 40th Session of International Civil Aviation Organisation

- ii. Dr. S. Jaishankar, External Affairs Minister (EAM) visited Ottawa on 19-20 December 2019. Amidst COVID-19 pandemic, EAM has spoken to his Canadian counterpart five times (on 4 March, 21 March, 6 June, 26 July 2020 and 3 February 2021) on a range of bilateral and international issues including COVID related multilateral cooperation
- iii. Commerce & Industry Minister Shri Piyush Goyal spoke to his Canadian counterpart on 29 March, 9 April and 28 July 2020 to discuss maintenance of global supply chains, pharmaceuticals products availability, G-20 cooperation and issues related to bilateral trade.

Parliamentary Exchanges

6. Speaker of Lok Sabha Shri Om Birla visited Canada from 5-12 January 2020 to participate in the 25th Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of Commonwealth (CSPOC) held in Ottawa. Canadian Senate Speaker George J. Furey invited by LS Speaker, visited India from 8-15 February 2020. After general election in Canada October 2019, Mr. Raj Saini, MP from the House of Common has been appointed as the Chair of the Canada-India Parliamentary Association.

Cooperation in COVID-19 Pandemic

7. **Repatriation flights:** Special charter flights were operated by the Canadian High Commission and facilitated by India to evacuate stranded Canadian nationals from India. Air India since May 2020 and Air Canada since August 2020 have been operating non schedule flights between India and Canada. More than 50,000 persons in almost 280 flights have been repatriated from Canada to India in the above flights till December 2020.
8. **Supply of medicines:** Export of a total of 12.34 crore paracetamol tablets, 5 crore Hydroxychloroquine tablets and 3510 kgs of Hydroxychloroquine Sulfate USP (API); and 10 Million eye shield with face mask were approved and shipped to Canada.

Bilateral Mechanisms

9. Both sides pursue bilateral relations through the dialogue mechanisms such as Ministerial level- Strategic, Trade and Energy dialogues; Foreign Office Consultations; and other sector specific joint working groups (JWG). The following bilateral dialogue mechanisms have met since 2018-19:
 - a. Foreign Minister level Strategic Dialogue (22 February 2018);
 - b. Joint Working Group (JWG) on Higher Education (26-28 February 2019);
 - c. 16th JWG on Counter Terrorism (26-27 March 2019);
 - d. Joint Committee Meeting on Civil Nuclear (6-7 June 2019);
 - e. Inaugural edition of Consular Dialogue with Canada (30 September -1 October 2019)

Economic Relations

10. Bilateral trade in goods amounted to USD 6.73 billion in 2019-20 (India's exports : USD 2.85 billion and India's imports: USD 3.88 billion). The bilateral trade in Services in 2019

was USD 3.10 billion. Major items of India's exports to Canada include gems, jewelry and precious stones, pharmaceutical products, ready-made garments, mechanical appliances, organic chemicals, light engineering goods, iron & steel articles, etc. India's imports from Canada include pulses, roots & tubers, newsprint, wood pulp, asbestos, potash, iron scrap, copper, minerals and industrial chemicals, etc.

11. Canadian Pension Funds have invested around US\$ 32.6 billion in India till 2020. Pension Funds and other major investment firms have pledged portfolio investments of over US\$ 50 billion in India
12. More than 400 Canadian companies have a presence in India, and more than 1,000 companies are actively pursuing business in the Indian market. Indian companies in Canada are active in the field such as Information Technology, software, steel, natural resources and banking sectors.
13. India and Canada are discussing Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) and Bilateral Investment Promotion and Partnership Agreement (BIPPA/FIPA). A virtual stocktaking meeting on CEPA and BIPA between India and Canada held on 22 June 2020.
14. **Agriculture** - The bilateral MoU on agriculture cooperation was signed at the federal level in 2009. The first meeting of the JWG set under this MoU was held in New Delhi in 2010, which led to the creation of three sub-groups on knowledge exchange in emerging technologies; animal development and agricultural marketing. A Joint Working Group for Pulses has been set up separately.
15. **Energy Cooperation** - Energy has been a primary area of focus of India-Canada bilateral relations. The last India and Canada Ministerial level Energy Dialogue was held in New Delhi on 8 September 2016. During the visit of PMJT in February 2018, the scope of the Energy Dialogue was expanded to additionally include electricity, energy efficiency and renewable. India Oil Corporation has a 10% participating interest in a Liquid Natural Gas project in British Columbia.
16. **Nuclear Cooperation** - A Nuclear Cooperation Agreement (NCA) with Canada was signed in June 2010 and came into force in September 2013. The Appropriate Arrangement (AA) for the NCA was signed in March 2013, under which a Joint Committee on Civil Nuclear Cooperation was constituted. During PM Modi's visit to Canada in April 2015, Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) and M/S CAMECO Inc. signed an agreement for supply of uranium ore concentrate to India in 2015-2020.

Science and Technology

17. Indo-Canadian Science and Technology cooperation has been primarily focussed on promoting Industrial R&D which has potential for application through development of new IP, processes, prototypes or products. Canada was a partner country for the Technology Summit 2017, held in New Delhi on 14-15 November 2017.
18. Department of Biotechnology under IC-IMPACTS program implements joint research projects in health care, agri-biotech and waste management. The Annual Conference of IC-IMPACTS was held on 6-7 August 2020.

19. Department of Earth Science and Polar Canada have started a programme for exchange of knowledge and scientific research on Cold Climate (Arctic) Studies. A group of scientists from National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR), Goa visited Canada's Arctic Research Station, Cambridge Bay in September-October 2019. A Memorandum of Cooperation between NCPOR and POLAR, Canada was signed on 26 February 2020.
20. **Information Technology** - A Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in Information and Communication Technology and Electronics (ICTE) was signed in 2012 for 5 years and was revived during the visit of PM Trudeau in February 2018.
21. **Space** - India and Canada are pursuing successful cooperative and commercial relations in the field of Space since 1990s mainly on space science, earth observation, satellite launch services and ground support for space missions. ISRO and Canadian Space Agency (CSA) have signed two MOUs in the field of exploration and utilisation of outer space in October 1996 and March 2003. ANTRIX, the Commercial arm of ISRO, has launched several nanosatellites from Canada. ISRO in its 100th Satellite PSLV launched on 12 January 2018, also flew Canadian first LEO satellite, from Indian spaceport Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh.

Education

22. Education is a key area of mutual interest. Recently India became the top source of foreign students studying in Canada. The MoU on Higher Education (2010) with Canada was renewed in February 2018. Under this MoU, both side met in February 2019 in Ottawa to oversee and implement the MoU.
23. The **Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute (SICI)** is a unique bi-national organization fostering, since 1968, education and cultural cooperation and collaboration between India and Canada.
24. **Chair on Guru Nanak Devji in Canadian University:** As part of commemoration of 550th Birth Anniversary of Guru Nanak Devji, it was decided by GOI to set up a Chair on Guru Nanak Devji in a Canadian University.

Security and Defence

25. India and Canada collaborate closely in international fora, particularly through the UN, Commonwealth and G-20. Defence ties have been expanding with mutual ship visits. There is robust cooperation on counter terrorism issues particularly through the framework of the JWG on Counter Terrorism. The security cooperation was further enhanced with the Framework for Cooperation between India and Canada on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism signed by the National Security Advisor of India and the National Security and Intelligence Advisor of Canada on 14 February 2018.
26. The 16th JWG on Counter-Terrorism was held in Ottawa from 26-27 March 2019. A delegation of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) visited India from 12-16 January 2020 and held discussions with Indian agencies on counter-terrorism issues.

27. **FSI-CFSI Cooperation** - The cooperation between Foreign Service Institutes of both countries has seen positive momentum with Canada's Foreign Service Institute (CFSI) trainers imparting three days training program in Bilateral & Multilateral Negotiation and Diplomacy and Global Affairs including Canada's Foreign Policy Approach to Indian diplomats at FSI, New Delhi from 20-23 January 2020.

People-to-People

28. Canada hosts one of the largest Indian diasporas in the world, numbering 1.6 million (PIOs and NRIs) which account for more than 4% of its total population. The diaspora has done commendably well in every sector in Canada. In the field of politics, in particular, the present House of Commons (total strength of 338) has 22 Members of Parliament of Indian-origin.

29. **Consular Access** - Recognizing the dynamic role of people-to-people ties in the India-Canada partnership, both sides agreed to address consular issues of mutual concern through discussion during PM Trudeau's visit to India. The first India-Canada Consular Dialogue was held in Ottawa on 30 September & 01 October 2019.

30. **India-Canada Track 1.5 Dialogue** - India-Canada has established a Track 1.5 Dialogue on involving experts, government officials and business leaders from both sides to explore the possibility of future cooperation. The first round was held in 29-30 October 2018 at Ottawa, Canada. The second round was held on 22 November 2019 in Mumbai.

31. **Cultural Exchanges** - Canada was the Country of Focus at the 48th International Film Festival of India held in Goa in November 2017. There is also an India - Canada Co-production Agreement in films.

32. For the first time, Canada Post and India Post joined hands to issue a commemorative stamp on Diwali in 2017. Diwali has been celebrated on the Parliament Hill for the last 18 years.

33. A number of events to mark the celebration of 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi were held from October 2018 to 2020. Mayor of Ottawa has proclaimed 02 October as Gandhi Day. A number of activities to mark the 550th Birth Anniversary of Guru Nanak Devji were also held in November 2019. Mayor of Halifax has proclaimed August 2020 as "Indian Independence Month".

Febraury 2021