

CANADA INDIA FOUNDATION



Indian HC Patnaik Exudes Confidence on the Future of Canada India Bilateral



Toronto, November 4, 2025: Canada India Foundation hosted an exclusive reception in honour of India's High Commissioner in Canada, His Excellency Dinesh Kumar Patnaik on 4 November 2025. Acknowledging that it was his first major Indo Canadian community engagement, Mr. Patnaik, was open, friendly and very optimistic in his interactions with the members and guests.



Welcoming the HC, Pankaj Dave, National Convener, CIF, noted, “In one way, the current relationship between Canada and India is a bit like old friends meeting again after a period of distrust and suspicion. It is normal to expect certain reluctance, to hold back, before a full hug. But we are glad that there are in place serious and committed leadership in both capitals, paying close attention to the challenges ahead. We appreciate your role in taking our ties forward during this crucial time and you can always count on the support of Canada India Foundation in achieving this objective.”

Dave also quoted from India's ancient text, *Arth Shastra*, that sets down guidelines on how to conduct economic and political affairs in a mature and patient manner in order to produce results.

Mohamed Firin, MPP, York South – Weston, who was a special guest said that Ontario and India shared common democratic values, besides a robust economic partnership. “Ontario is always ready to partner with India for the benefit of our people,” he added.

Also present at the event were Deepak Anand, MPP for Mississauga Malton and Sheref Sabawy, MPP for Mississauga Erin Mills.



Dinesh Patnaik sportingly took part in a very entertaining and informative fireside chat anchored by Ritesh Malik, Chair, CIF. Patnaik began by saying how India views Canada as a very important country and “perhaps, you have the highest percentage of Indians per capita anywhere in the diaspora!” “It is a G7 country, has a lot of natural resources that we require. You name it only after coming here I realized how foundational the relationship is. You name any field and there are Indo Canadians in very important roles. This relationship is special and needs to be honoured.”



Replying to queries from Ritesh Malik, the High Commissioner paid a huge compliment to the Indian diaspora. Noting that he has been to 107 countries during his professional life, he said, “Wherever I have gone every leadership has always said that if for any reason we need immigrants, send in the Indians. Indian immigrants in every country have the highest per capita income, education, home ownership, car ownership you name any category, they figure at the top. Another thing that used to make me proud is that the category we come among the lowest is crime. The number of Indians in jails is always the lowest! We don’t indulge in nefarious activities. This is something that we all should be proud of.” He added that though this pristine image may have taken a bit of beating in the last two years, especially in Canada with the news regarding extortion, assaults and violent protests coming out of the community here.

“We must keep our community strong. We need to change the perception back to what it was – a hardworking and peaceful community.”

Patnaik spoke on the very fulfilling job as a diplomat in repairing a critical relationship with a great deal of fondness for the people of Canada. “Canadians are one of the nicest

people you can meet.” But a few have exploited this goodness to serve their own ulterior motives. But the most effective way to keep our image intact, he noted, is not to engage or fight the fringe elements, but make the centre strong. “The only way we fight evil is to make the good stronger. Every society in the world has its own fringe elements, including India. Will you bring these elements to the centre and make them more important? Or will you sideline it so that the centre becomes strong and the fringe becomes irrelevant? That’s what we should work towards, to make the fringe irrelevant and strengthen the centre.”

Patnaik noted with satisfaction that whoever he has met so far in Canada, be it belonging to political class, to business and academia, everyone wants the Canada India relationship to grow. He paid a special tribute to the bold vision regarding the bilateral future as clearly outlined by Prime Minister Mark Carney and Foreign Affairs Minister, Anita Anand.

Following the fireside chat, the High Commissioner also answered questions from the members on different aspects of the Canada India bilateral relationship.

Sanjay Makkar, National Co-convenor, CIF, in his concluding remarks thanked HC Patnaik for choosing the CIF platform to share key insights and offer solutions to strengthen the Indo Canadian community and the bilateral. As the reception coincided with the day Canada was presented with a new budget, Makkar also made a strong appeal to stay focused on the economy to move us out of the uncertainties we face. “The budget makes it clear, we are faced with serious challenges, and it will take the combined efforts and determination of all Canadians to move past the current difficulties. Instead of politics as usual - dividing communities, creating tensions, putting the break on entrepreneurship - we now need to shift urgently into a single priority – economy, economy and economy,” he said.

The event was emceed by community favourite, Jake Dheer.

