



# INDIA CONNECT

*Bringing together Communities and Nations*

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## *A message from the High Commissioner*



It is a great honour and privilege for me to assume responsibility as the High Commissioner of India to Canada this March. I only wish that I was introducing myself to you in less uncertain times. The 1.6 million strong Indian community in Canada has been the bedrock of the dynamic Indo-Canadian relationship. We are proud of the success and achievements of the community, of the leadership position its members occupy in politics, business and society, of the manner in which they have integrated in the larger Canadian milieu. The welfare and safety of the Indian community in Canada remains a priority for the Government of India.

I am deeply impressed by the way the community has stepped forward during this pandemic to assist not only the students and other distressed Indians in Canada, but to serve the Canadian society as a whole. It demonstrates generosity and public spirit, the spirit of 'sewa' that this community is known for.

As this crisis unfolded, we felt the need for an information platform that would help bring together the community and also keep them informed about the more important developments in India, as also initiatives taken by India not just to face the pandemic but more broadly in the political, economic and cultural fields.

It is my great pleasure, therefore, to present to you the first edition of 'India Connect', a monthly newsletter from the High Commission which seeks to bring India closer to our community, students and friends of India. Since this is intended to be your newsletter – in an age where we receive a plethora of information from diverse sources – we would welcome your feedback and support in shaping it so as to best serve the needs of the community.

I hope you will find this edition informative and useful. Please stay safe and healthy. By supporting each other, we will come out stronger from this crisis.

Yours sincerely

(Ajay Bisaria)

**See a profile of the new High Commissioner [here](#)**



## Telephone conversation between PM Modi and PM Trudeau

Prime Minister Modi spoke on phone Prime Minister Trudeau on 28 April 2020. The two leaders discussed the prevailing global situation regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. They agreed on the importance of global solidarity and coordination, the maintenance of supply chains, and collaborative research activities. Prime Minister thanked the Canadian Prime Minister for the assistance and support extended to the Indian citizens present in Canada, especially Indian students.

Prime Minister Trudeau appreciated the support provided by Government of India for Canadian citizens in India. Prime Minister conveyed the assurance that India's productive capabilities in the pharmaceutical sector would remain available for assisting the citizens of the world, including those of Canada, to the best of India's abilities. The two leaders agreed that the partnership between India and Canada could contribute meaningfully to the global effort to fight the pandemic, especially through collaboration in research and technology aimed at finding a vaccine or therapeutic solutions to COVID-19.

## India engages the world in fighting COVID19

India has responded to the COVID19 Pandemic as a global leader. Not only has India's domestic response to the crisis been exemplary, but it has helped other countries deal with the emergency as well. India has supplied vital medicines as a gift to over 40 countries and ensured commercial exports of them to another 60 countries, including Canada. It has organised rescue and evacuation operations at short notice and arranged for emergency medical supplies, including personnel, to assist a number of developing countries. India has reinvigorated the SAARC, despite Pakistan's dourness, by not only forming a fund, but also using technology for international interaction and training of medical personnel. And it is engaged with the world through the G-20 and bilateral interactions in virtual conversations with over 100 countries to enhance the global pandemic response. [Read the story](#)



## High Commission of India in Canada launches automated helpdesk-CAN-Bot to assist people in Canada

**CANbot** says

Welcome to the High Commission of India in Canada. How can I help you today?



CANbot, the smart virtual help-desk answers your queries on #COVID19 & related issues and lets us serve the community better. You can check-out the bot by visiting our website [www.hciottawa.gov.in](http://www.hciottawa.gov.in) or on [WhatsApp](#) by pinging

+917949126996 [Learn More about CANBot](#)



## WHO lauds India's "tough and timely" anti-corona actions

World Health Organization's comments came after Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the extension of current lockdown. "Despite huge and multiple challenges, India has been demonstrating unwavering commitment in its fight against the pandemic," said WHO's South-East Asia Regional Director, Dr Poonam Khetrpal Singh. The nationwide lockdown to facilitate effective physical distancing, coupled with the expansion of core public health measures such as detection, isolation and tracing contact of coronavirus positive people, would go a long way in arresting the virus spread. [Read further](#)

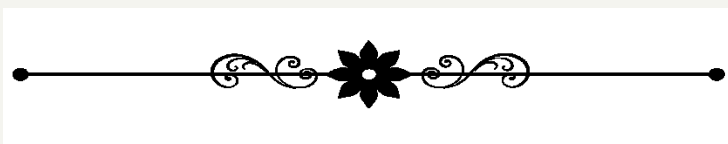


## High Commissioner's interview with Indian media



"India and Canada are strategic partners. In the G20 context, too, they are partners. Even during Covid-19 crisis, the two countries are cooperating on all fronts.... the priority of both countries is to protect the health and welfare of their own citizens."

The new High Commissioner recently interacted with Indian media on challenges of dealing with COVID-19 pandemic. [Read More](#)



## ARTS & CULTURE

### How a pioneer publisher sparked India's love for printed books

Munshi Nawal Kishore (1836–1895) was among a handful of those who commercialised printing and was responsible for the dissemination of the printed text at affordable prices, thereby democratising access to knowledge, literature and science. That much of his printing output was in Hindi and Urdu also contributed to this process, which is among the 19th century's most significant developments but often glossed over. [Read the story](#)

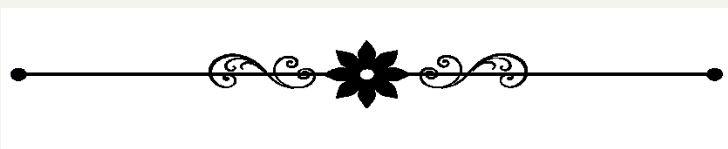


## HEALTH & WELLNESS

### Ayurveda immunity boosters



The Ministry of AYUSH in India has suggested Ayurveda inspired techniques that can be followed every day to make sure your body's immunity is strong enough to fight off infections. [See the news article here](#)



## BUSINESS AND ECONOMY

### India outlines \$23 billion stimulus to help poor hit by lockdown



The Indian government has announced a \$22.6 billion stimulus plan to directly aid poorer communities affected by the coronavirus lockdown. Further steps are expected to be announced, to offer financial support to businesses. [See the story](#)

### Invest India launches Business Immunity Platform to assist businesses in times of COVID-19

An example of real-time and dynamic updates on India's response to COVID-19 is Invest India's Business Immunity Platform. This unified platform can bring together the public and private sector to fight this pandemic. [Learn more about the initiative](#)



## Business in the times of COVID19- through Virtual means



Business interactions continued through teleconferencing as businesses in both India and Canada looked to leverage the bilateral commercial relations for growth in the post-COVID scenario. On April 21<sup>st</sup>, the High Commissioner addressed a webinar on the future prospects of India-Canada business ties jointly organized by the Confederation of Indian Industries India Business Forum (CII-IBF) and the Canada-India Business Chamber (CIBC). The webinar, which had 230 participants representing businesses, Chambers, and Universities from India and Canada, saw a lively discussion on what the post-COVID19 scenario looked like for commerce and industry. In his remarks the High Commissioner reiterated that

'despite the challenge of COVID—19, India remained a promising investment opportunity for Canadian businesses.' Earlier, on April 8<sup>th</sup>, the High Commissioner had spoken with representatives from Indian companies operating in Canada through a webinar organized by CII IBF about the challenges they face due to COVID—19 pandemic and the road ahead.



## COMMUNITY VIBES

**We salute to the efforts made by Indo-Canadians to support Indian nationals and students affected by COVID-19**

We are proud of the success of 1.6 million overseas Indians settled in Canada. This community is a dynamic part of the Canadian society. Its presence is visible in leadership roles across Canada's political, economic and cultural spheres. Today, the Indian community has helped Indian citizens trapped in a difficult situation through their service. Doctors and pharmacists of Indian origin have offered their assistance by providing medicines and treatment. Many organizations have helped in the distribution of masks and gloves. Special meals or essential items have been arranged for students by Indian restaurants. Wherever needed, accommodation has been provided in Indian hotels and homes. Tax and visa experts have organised webinars for students. About 70,000 students have been provided much needed help. Gurudwaras and temples, too, have played a special role. The Sikh community has always been at the forefront. Gurudwaras have organised langars, distributed large quantities of rations and essential commodities. Institutions like Punjabi Food Service, Seva Canada, Canada India Foundation, ICA, Vedic Sanskruti, CIGF etc. provided all help to the Indian community.



## High Commissioner takes to video conferencing to stay in touch with the community



Technology helped bring members of the Indian community and the High Commission closer in these days of social distancing. The High Commissioner used the state of the art communication facilities in the Mission to safely communicate and motivate the community in Canada. On April 07, the High Commissioner held consultations with leaders from 25 Indian Community organizations spread across Canada to better coordinate efforts to support Indian students and community members in distress due to COVID19 pandemic. On April 9, he took a virtual tour of Canadian university campuses as he joined Indian students in campuses across Canada for an

informative discussion on the issues they faced and the efforts that the High Commission had made with provincial governments and the University authorities for ensuring their well-being. High Commissioner also participated in a video conference with members of the Canada India Foundation (CIF) on 29 April that saw a productive discussion on issues related to supporting Indian students in Canada and business opportunities in India.



## Webinar for benefit of Indian Students



On May 1<sup>st</sup>, the Overseas Friends of India, Ottawa, in collaboration with the High Commission, organized a webinar which featured a distinguished panel of experts advising Indian students about the issues they were facing due to the pandemic. Over 200 students benefitted from the interaction. The Mission and our Consulates in Vancouver and Toronto have been working closely with Canadian and University authorities to ensure well-being of our students here.

Bihar Association of Canada Ottawa has created a web portal with useful resources for the community related to COVID-19. [Check out the portal here](#)



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