

# Canada India Insight

Website : [www.imec.biz](http://www.imec.biz)Call - 416-827-5189 / (e-mail) [Vipul@imec.biz](mailto:Vipul@imec.biz)

For the first time in 13 years, the Green Party of Canada has got a new leader. Annamie Paul Speaks to Canada India Insight Editor Vipul Jani about her party's vision, why it is still limited to just 3 MPs, how to deal with China, on the Pandemic and various other issues on **Page # 2.**



## Editorial

- Vipul Jani



- Do "WE" suffer from a short term memory loss or was \$ 900 million not big enough to remember anymore? Why is Justin Trudeau so hell-bent on destroying Canada India relations, when everybody else is working hard to improve it? Why is there no second, third wave in China? This and more in the Editorial on **Page # 3.**



22 retired High Commissioners and Ambassadors of India have penned a strongly worded Open Letter on the Vote bank Politics going on in Canada and PM Trudeau's interference in India's internal affairs, also exposing the Canadian hypocrisy in terms of opposing India at the WTO. Read the hard-hitting Open Letter on **Page # 4**



- In the October Edition, we wrote about the Cabinet of Canada. This month, meet the 60 Ministers in the Narendra Modi Cabinet of India. They manage the world's largest democracy, of 1.3 billion people. Worth knowing about them, isn't it? **Page # 5 & 6**



- As part of the 18-month long New Punjab, Pyara Punjab Project, a Business Leaders Roundtable was organized with some of the most prominent Punjabi Origin Business Leaders from India and Canada. See what they have to say about their Punjabi roots and how it shaped their life and work on **Page # 7.**



- As part of the 18-month long New Punjab, Pyara Punjab Project, a Political Leaders Roundtable was organized last month. See what MPP Deepak Anand (PC) and MP Ramesh Sangha (Liberal) have to say about their Punjabi roots and how it shaped their life and work on **Page # 8.**



- Farm bills in India are a talk of the town these days. While they contain a lot of good things that can uplift life and incomes of farmers in India, a lot of misinformation and confusion is being spread, knowingly or unknowingly. Canadian cities have also witnessed unwarranted protests. We try to put out some facts and segregate them from fiction on **Page # 9.**



- Well-known Canadian Writer and Columnist Tarek Fatah, in his inimitable style questions PM Trudeau vis-à-vis his support for peaceful protests in India and elsewhere. Does PM Trudeau's "anywhere around the world" pledge exclude Islamic Dictatorships from carrying out human rights violations and crimes against humanity, asks Tarek Fatah on **Page # 10.**

**Tired of buying or selling everything Made in China ?**

**Want more options ? Want to buy / sell products Made in Canada, India, USA ?**

**Want to reduce our dependence on a single source, while helping and supporting our friends and neighbours ?**

**Visit [www.NotfromChina.in](http://www.NotfromChina.in) and let us be Vocal for Local.**

# “ We can not be so dependent upon China for trade ”

**By : Vipul Jani**

For the first time in 13 years, the Green Party of Canada has got a new national leader. Annamie Paul is the first black person and a Jewish woman to be elected as leader of a major party. Although she could not win a seat in the House of Commons, she has increased her vote share substantially in the Toronto Centre riding, winning 32.7 percent votes in the October by-election as against 7 percent in the 2019 federal election. Canada India Insight Editor Vipul Jani spoke to Annamie Paul in a Zoom Interview on her party's prospects and other current affairs.

## Profile :

Annamie Paul has a Masters of Public Affairs at Princeton University and a Bachelor of Laws at the University of Ottawa. She has worked as a Director for a leading conflict prevention NGO in Brussels, as an Advisor at the International Criminal Court in Hague and as a Political officer in Canada's mission to the European Union. She has served on the board and advised a number of international NGOs. Prior to becoming the Green Party Leader, Ms. Paul was the International Affairs Critic in the Green Party of Canada's shadow cabinet. She speaks four languages – English, French, Catalan and Spanish.

**• Let me start with the elephant in the room. Environment and Climate Change are now regular features in any election debate in Canada, US and elsewhere. Why is it that despite such huge awareness, the Green Party still has only 3 MPs out of 338 in the House of Commons (2 from B.C. and 1 from New Brunswick) and a negligible presence in any provincial legislature, anywhere in Canada? What do you think is not working – the message, the messenger or the way the message is being delivered?**

Well, in P.E.I., Green Party is the official opposition. Also, in B.C. and New Brunswick, we held the balance of power until recently. But you are right. We have a very limited number of MLAs across the country and our caucus is small. In



## Interview Annamie Paul

the last election, many people voted strategically, they voted against something, rather than for something. We need to give people more reasons to vote for us than to vote against another party.

**• So, can we expect any new, creative, bold ideas or drastic changes for Green Party?**

People talk about our Climate Change policies, but we also have very innovative policies on how we can complete our social safety net.

**• Canada-US relations were a little strained during Trump Administration. President-elect Joe Biden's views on Keystone XL Pipeline and Oil & Gas sector in general will create a lot of anxiety in Alberta and Saskatchewan. Where do you see Canada-US relations under a Biden Administration?**

US is a very important partner for Canada and we must always try to have a strong relationship with them. That doesn't mean we can not have our own independent foreign policy or views. President-elect Biden knows our country well, he has spent a lot of time in Canada, the Vice President-elect (Kamala Harris) lived in Canada for 5 to 7 years when she was growing up. So, I believe we will have a partner, particularly on the Climate Emergency. Cancelling the pipeline is a very good step. They have also talked about rejoining UN, WTO, Paris Agreement etc. So, I think we can find many things that we can cooperate on.

**• How important is it for you to be in the House of Commons when hundreds of**

**billions of dollars are flowing from Ottawa with not much oversight, the ongoing WE controversy and a federal election that may come within the next few months?**

Well, we may have an election in the next few months. So, in the short time that we have, the best thing that I should be doing is what I am doing right now with you – having conversations with the people and helping them know me and the Green Party. I need to recruit good candidates, helping create a platform for the next election.

**• The Pandemic has destroyed thousands of businesses and seriously impacted the revenue for all levels of Govt – City, Province and Federal. Your party platform talks about National Pharmacare and Dental Care Programs, Guaranteed Liveable Income, Investments in the Co-operative Housing Sector, Reinvesting in Public Transportation and National Rail Network, Increased Funding for Pedestrian, Cycling and Car Sharing Infrastructure and mandating energy retrofits for all buildings by 2030. Where is the money going to come from?**

In 2019, when we put out this platform, we were the only party to have it fully costed by the Parliamentary Budget Office. We have to find tax havens and making sure people who are hiding their revenue abroad pay their fair share. Investments in Education, Healthcare and Infrastructure are very good investments. Bank of Canada has been lending money to the Govt of Canada to pay for these programs. All across the world, Central banks are loaning the money to support the investments their govts are making.

**• China is increasingly becoming a serious problem for everybody, including Canada. As leader of a National Party, how do you think Canada should deal with China?**

Well, the Green Party is very concerned to see the ejection of Pro-Democracy Parliamentarians (in

Hong Kong) We need to recognize that we have not been successful in our policy of liberalizing trade with China in order to liberalize Civil Liberties there and that we try to work with human rights defenders in that country and around the world to make sure China respects Civil Liberties and fundamental human rights and of course, we continue to push for the release of two Michaels. We can not be so dependent upon China for trade.

**• It's obvious that whatever Canada is doing is not working and something needs to change.**

Yes, it's hard to have an independent voice when you are so entangled in trade. Many people have passports of Canada, but are residents of Hong Kong. We have to speak strongly for them. The more we turn back to multilateral organizations and coalition building, the more likely it will be for Canada to influence big powers like China.

**• In terms of the Pandemic, do you think lockdowns have helped more or hurt more?**

I believe that we should have a national strategy from the very beginning, having 13 different approaches has been confusing.

**• Do you think Canada deserves someone better than Dr. Theresa Tam?**

I have full confidence in her. There is only so much a Chief Medical officer can do if the advice is not being followed.

**• Canada-India relations have hit a rough patch under Prime Minister Trudeau. What has been your engagement with India, if any?**

My engagement with India at the moment is only through the Indo Canadian Community here. I would love to see members of the community running for the Green Party, serving as Senior Staff in the party. I hope you will invite me back many times and I will do everything that I can to reach out to the (Indo Canadian) community.

**Watch the full interview at [www.imec.biz](http://www.imec.biz)**

# Editorial

- Vipul Jani



• Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's interference in India's internal affairs, misusing his speech on the auspicious occasion of the 551st birth anniversary of Sikhism's Founder Guru Nanak, has sent shockwaves in the diplomatic circles, effectively destroying any goodwill that was created over the last year or so by various bureaucrats, diplomats, business organizations and other political leaders through a lot of hard work.



While the Trudeau Govt can barely utter a word about China, despite grave provocations and aggression, it is mindlessly damaging relations with India, the 4th largest economy in the world, for the sake of appeasing some anti-india elements here, playing dirty, vote bank politics. The apparent brain washing of this govt at the highest levels is appalling and as an Indo Canadian, very disturbing to say the least. Mr. Prime Minister, you can not talk about how much you care for the Indo Canadians (or their votes) and then keep damaging Canada's relations with India with your words and actions. If India's patience runs out and it decides to treat

Canada back in the same coin, it will be in no one's interest. You need better advisors, who care more about this country, not their own short sighted destructive agendas.

• Premier Doug Ford has forced Ontario into yet another lockdown. Does it make any sense, really? Not to me at least. All the big box stores, with thousands of people in them, can operate just fine, but a small retailer with maybe 2,3,5 customers inside has to close down. Why? On one hand you are asking people to support



local businesses and on the other hand, you are forcing the same stores and businesses to not even open their doors.

The Political leaders and so-called medical experts advising and forcing these idiotic lockdowns make more than six figure salaries and haven't lost a penny since March. Why don't you guys give up your salaries and benefits for 10 months and then lecture people about how we are in this together. I am sorry, we are not in this together, we never were and perhaps never will be. How are people supposed to survive when they can't meet anyone

even for business, can't do any meetings even in Coffee Shops, can't open their stores even for half a day? Not everyone gets CEWS or the Rent Subsidies or other grants and govt largesse. Those big companies that you gave millions of dollars to, many of them have used the money to do share buybacks, pay bonuses and dividends and what have you done about them? Govt of Canada can go after people, asking them to pay back their CERB, but I haven't heard about them going after any big corporation, asking for the money back. How are we in this together? It's pathetic and shameful to see how lopsided and unfair our systems have become. You think people can survive on \$ 1800 a month CRB?

By the time things come back to normal, thousands of small businesses will be gone forever, lives and careers destroyed, there may not be much left to "build back" better or worse. What about the mental health, stress, family problems it is creating en masse? Lockdown is a dumb idea, open everything up again and let adults behave like adults, in charge of their lives on their own.

• While the US, Canada, India, UK.. everyone is struggling with the second wave, I am very curious about why

deaths there? It is certainly not possible that all other countries are stupid and China is the only smart one who knows how to tame the virus. Their theatres are open, their economy is doing much better than everyone else and we Canadians are buying all Made in China stuff as if nothing happened, Why?

• Are "WE" suffering from a short term memory loss? It definitely seems so, because we hardly hear anything about "WE" anymore. The almost \$ 1 billion scandal that rocked the Trudeau Govt just a few months ago has been relegated to the dustbin of history already and most polls are now talking about a Liberal majority again, if elections are held in the Spring. Well, we deserve what we vote for, after all.

• While the governments are only talking about supporting local businesses, a new website [www.NotfromChina.in](http://www.NotfromChina.in) has been launched recently to promote products made (primarily) in Canada, USA and India. It is to offer options to buy and sell things not made in china and reduce our dependence on a single source, something so many countries are now openly talking about.

• 2020 has been a disaster. I don't need to say why. Good thing is, it is about to end. Let



there is no 2nd, 3rd, 4th wave in China? Why don't we hear anything about the cases or

us hope 2021 brings back the joy and cheer in everyone's lives again.

Canada India Insight is supported by:



**Seneca**

## Contact Us

Editor & Publisher : Vipul Jani

11 Crown Victoria Drive, Brampton, Ontario L7A 3A2, Canada  
(Phone) 416-827-5189 (E-mail) [Vipul@imec.biz](mailto:Vipul@imec.biz) (Website) [www.imec.biz](http://www.imec.biz)

### Disclaimer :

Canada India Insight is a monthly e-publication, soon to be printed on a quarterly basis. Articles, Guest Columns and Interviews published are for general information purpose only and we do not claim to provide any advice on any subject. Readers are advised to do their due diligence with regards to claims and offers made in the Articles or Advertisements. The sole purpose of this publication is to share information and knowledge vis-à-vis Canada India Trade and Overall Bilateral relations. Canada India Insight is supported by Canada India USA Development Forum (CIUDF), a Canadian Not for Profit Organization, working to promote bilateral and trilateral relations between Canada, India and USA.

# An open letter by Indian Ambassadors' Group on vote bank politics in Canada

By : Vishnu Prakash & others

Canada is one of the most diverse multicultural societies, where each religion, ethnicity, language and culture is provided the space and encouragement to flourish. The Canadian people in general are friendly, welcoming and hospitable. They nurture warm feelings towards India which are wholeheartedly reciprocated.

The Indian community is steadily growing in Canada and has become a part of the national mainstream. The nearly 2 million strong Indian Diaspora comprises over 5% of the Canadian population, of which the enterprising and valiant Sikh community is close to 700,000. Given the complementarities, India and Canada should be natural partners. Indeed, we enjoy robust economic, energy, educational and people-to-people ties. Canadians are aware of significant additional opportunities for mutually beneficial engagement coming their way, as India steadily progresses towards becoming the third largest economy, in less than two decades. Canadian pension funds and corporate houses, which have already invested over \$50 billion in a variety of sectors in India, are well positioned to scale up.

Yet, the fact remains that not unoften, bilateral political equations develop stress, due to the propensity of certain Canadian political parties and leaders to engage in vote bank politics. It is well known that the separatist and violent Khalistani elements carry out anti India activities, from the

safety of the Canadian soil. They are also radicalising the Canadian youth with far reaching consequences, which is being ignored at the altar of short-term political expediency. Khalistani elements in Canada control a number of prominent



Gurudwaras which gives them access to substantial funds, some of which are allegedly diverted to the electoral campaign of political parties especially the Liberals.

They regularly hold demonstrations, rallies and other events where anti-India slogans are raised and terrorists eulogized. Few Canadian politicians have qualms about attending such events which provides the oxygen of publicity to the separatists. Cooperation and coordination between the Khalistanis and Pakistani diplomatic posts has also been taking place behind the scenes.

Pakistani 'diplomats' conspicuously participate in such pro Khalistani events. Canadian authorities turn a Nelson's eye. There were numerous references to radical Khalistanis and Sikh extremism in the "2018 Public Report on the Terrorist Threat to Canada". However allegedly bowing to their pressure and threats, in an unprecedented development, all

references to them were deleted from the report.

It is obvious that the editorial jugglery does not eliminate Canada's or for that matter any state or non-state actor's global responsibility to overlook fundamentalism, violent extremism or terrorism. Interacting primarily with the Sikh community last week, on the pious birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, Prime Minister Trudeau gratuitously waded into ongoing protests by Indian farmers, saying that the "situation is concerning, and we're all very worried about family and friends."

His comments were uncalled for, disconnected with ground realities and served merely to fan the flames.

The irony is that Canada is one of the most strident critics of India's minimum support price (MSP) at the WTO, yet actuated by questionable motives suddenly opted to express concern and support for the farmers. That the Indian Government has, in good faith, been holding talks at Ministerial level with the representatives of agitating farmers, was conveniently ignored by Ottawa. The Canadian Government, also chose to forget how earlier this year, notwithstanding treaty obligations, they had dismissed the rights of the hereditary chiefs of the first Nations over their traditional lands. Their peaceful protests against natural-gas pipelines passing through their territory were forcefully quashed.

As per the leading national daily "Canada has not figured

out what the "duty to consult" Indigenous people on decisions that affect their rights really means". Back home, encouraged by the Canadian support, the protestors have hardened their stance, adopting an all or nothing approach. Such blatant interference in India's internal affairs to appease a section of the Liberal party's voter base is completely unacceptable and cannot but cast a long shadow on bilateral relations. Such behaviour, against well-established diplomatic norms, is also bound to hurt Canada's own standing in the world.

It further carries the risk of other nations repaying Canada in the same token. India wishes to have the best of ties with Canada. However, no relationship can be one sided. Nor can any country especially India ignore actions which are prejudicial to her national interests and territorial integrity. The choice and decision rests with the people of Canada.

Signed by : (former Indian Ambassadors and High Commissioners) (1) Ajay Swarup, (2) Amarendra Khatua, (3) Anil K. Trigunayat, (4) Ashok Sajjanhar, (5) Bhaswati Mukherjee, (6) G.S. Iyer, (7) J.S. Sapra, (8) Laxmi Puri, (9) Mohan Kumar, (10) O.P.Gupta, (11) Prabhu Dayal, (12) R.C.Arora, (13) R. Dayakara, (14) Satish Chand Mehta, (15) S.K. Mathur, (16) Shyamla B. Cowshik, (17) Suresh Kumar Goel, (18) Veena Sikhri, (19) Vidya Sagar Verma, (20) Virender Gupta, (21) Vishnu Prakash, (22) Yogesh Gupta.



**Muraril Thapliyal**  
Barrister, Solicitor, Notary Public  
Managing Partner



• LAW FIRM •

**Brampton**  
18-2565 Steeles Ave E  
Brampton, ON L6T 4L6

**Richmond Hill**  
7699 Yonge St  
Thornhill, ON L3T 1Z5



**Prashant Rai**  
Barrister, Solicitor, Notary Public  
Managing Partner

REAL ESTATE LAW

BUSINESS LAW

FAMILY LAW

CRIMINAL LAW

**THAPLIYAL & RAI**  
A PROFESSIONAL LAW CORP.

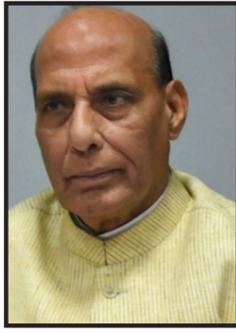
TEL 905-463-2088 | FAX 905-463-2089

INFO@PMLAWYERS.CA | WWW.PMLAWYERS.CA

# Cabinet of India



**Hon. Narendra Modi,**  
Prime Minister of India



**Rajnath Singh,**  
Defence Minister



**Amit Shah,**  
Home Minister



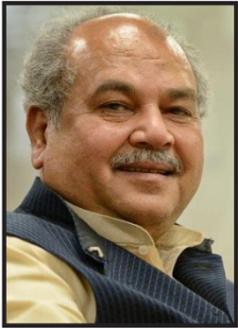
**Nitin Gadkari,** Minister of Road  
Transport & Highways + Micro,  
Small and Medium Enterprises



**D.V.Sadananda Gowda,**  
Minister of Chemicals  
and Fertilizers



**Nirmala Sitharaman,**  
Minister of Finance and  
Corporate Affairs



**Narendra Singh Tomar,** Minister of  
Agriculture and Farmers Welfare +  
Rural Development, Panchayati Raj  
and Food Processing Industries



**Ravi Shankar Prasad,** Minister of  
Law & Justice + Communications,  
Electronics and Information  
Technology.



**Thaawar Chand Gehlot,**  
Minister of Social Justice  
and Empowerment.



**Dr. Subrahmanyam  
Jaishankar,** Minister  
of External Affairs



**Ramesh Pokhriyal  
"Nishank",** Minister  
of Education



**Arjun Munda,**  
Minister of Tribal  
Affairs



**Smriti Zubin Irani,** Minister of  
Women and Child Development  
+ Textiles



**Dr. Harsh Vardhan,** Minister  
of Health & Family Welfare +  
Science & Technology and Earth  
Sciences



**Prakash Javadekar,** Minister of  
Environment, Forest & Climate  
Change + Information and  
Broadcasting + Heavy Industries  
and Public Enterprises



**Piyush Goyal,** Minister of  
Railways + Commerce and  
Industry + Consumer Affairs +  
Food and Public Distribution



**Dharmendra Pradhan,**  
Minister of Petroleum  
and Natural Gas + Steel



**Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi,**  
Minister of Minority  
Affairs



**Prahlad Joshi,** Minister of  
Parliamentary Affairs + Coal  
and Mines



**Dr. Mahendra Nath Pandey,**  
Minister of Skill Develop-  
ment and Entrepreneurship



**Giriraj Singh,** Minister  
of Animal Husbandry,  
Dairying and Fisheries



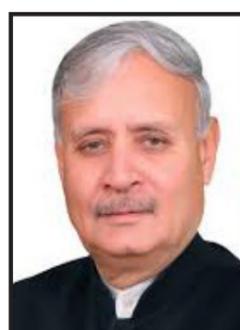
**Gajendra Singh  
Shekhawat,** Minister  
of Jal Shakti



## Ministers of State (Independent Charge)



**Santosh Kumar Gangwar,**  
Minister of  
Labour and Employment



**Rao Inderjit Singh,** Minister  
of Statistics and Programme  
Implementation, Planning



**Shripad Yesso Naik,** Minister of  
Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy,  
Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy  
(Ayush)



**Dr. Jitendra Singh,**  
Minister of Development  
of North Eastern Region



**Kiren Rijiju,** Minister  
of Youth Affairs and  
Sports



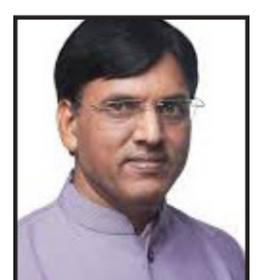
**Prahlad Singh Patel,**  
Minister of Culture  
and Tourism



**Raj Kumar Singh,**  
Minister of Power, New  
and Renewable Energy



**Hardeep Singh Puri,**  
Minister of Housing  
and Urban Affairs +  
Civil Aviation



**Mansukh Mandaviya,**  
Minister of Shipping

# Ministers of State (Cabinet of India)



**Shripad Yesso Naik,**  
Minister of Defence



**Dr. Jitendra Singh,** Prime  
Minister's Office +  
Ministry of Personnel +  
Public Grievances and  
Pensions + Department of  
Atomic Energy and Space



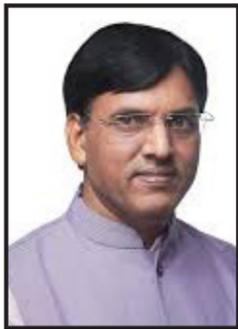
**Kiren Rijju,** Minister  
of Minority Affairs



**Raj Kumar Singh,**  
Minister of Skill  
Development and  
Entrepreneurship



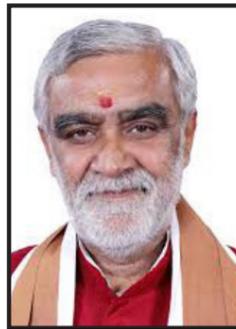
**Hardeep Singh Puri,**  
Minister of Commerce  
and Industry



**Mansukh Mandaviya,**  
Minister of Chemicals and  
Fertilizers



**Faggansingh Kulaste,**  
Minister of Steel



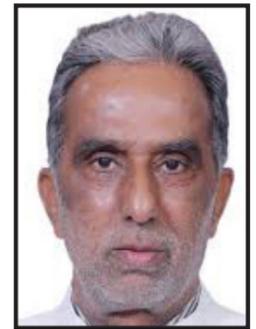
**Ashwini Kumar Choubey,**  
Minister of Health &  
Family Welfare



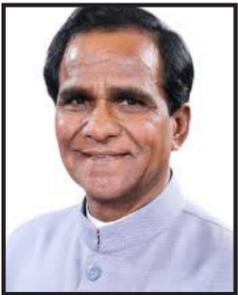
**Arjun Singh Meghwal,** Minister  
of Parliamentary Affairs +  
Heavy Industries and Public  
Enterprises



**General (Retd) V K Singh,**  
Minister of Road  
Transport and Highways



**Krishan Pal,** Minister of  
Social Justice and  
Empowerment



**Danve Raosaheb  
Dadarao,** Minister of  
Consumer Affairs + Food  
& Public Distribution



**G. Kishan Reddy,**  
Minister of Home  
Affairs



**Parsottam Rupala,**  
Minister of Agriculture  
and Farmers Welfare



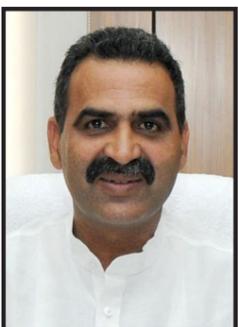
**Ramdas Athawale,**  
Minister of Social Justice  
and Empowerment



**Sadhvi Niranjana Jyoti,**  
Minister of Rural  
Development



**Babul Supriyo,** Minister  
of Environment, Forest  
and Climate Change



**Sanjeev Kumar Balyan,**  
Minister of Animal  
Husbandry, Dairying and  
Fisheries



**Dhotre Sanjay Shamrao,** Minister  
of Education + Communications,  
Electronics and Information  
Technology



**Anurag Singh Thakur,**  
Minister of Finance +  
Corporate Affairs



**Nityanand Rai,**  
Minister of Home  
Affairs



**Rattan Lal Kataria,**  
Minister of Jal Shakti  
+ Social Justice and  
Empowerment



**V. Muraleedharan,**  
Minister of External  
Affairs +  
Parliamentary Affairs



**Renuka Singh Saruta,**  
Minister of Tribal Affairs



**Som Parkash,** Minister of  
Commerce and Industry



**Rameswar Teli,** Minister of  
Food  
Processing Industries



**Pratap Chandra Sarangi,** Minister  
of Micro, Small and Medium  
Enterprises + Animal Husbandry,  
Dairying and Fisheries



**Kailash Choudhary,**  
Minister of Agriculture  
and Farmers Welfare



**Debasree Chaudhuri,**  
Minister of Women and  
Child Development.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi reached out to farmers in India in a nationally televised address on December 25. Here are the key points from his farmers outreach speech :

- Modi reminded people about the work his Govt has done for farmers, including reducing

- their input cost, issuing of Soil Health Cards, Neem Coating for Urea, distributing millions of Solar Pumps, Per Drop More Crop through Micro Irrigation, increasing the number of farm products getting MSP, connecting 1000 Mandis online, creating Cold Storage facilities near Villages,

- Issuing Kissan Credit Cards and more.

- Making lives easier for people living in Villages
- Creating alternative means of income for farmers
- Providing Housing, Toilets, Clean Water to farmers
- Annual Healthcare Coverage

- of up to 5 lakh rupees under Ayushman Bharat Scheme

- Monthly pension of 3000 rupees after the age of 60
- Farmers are now getting legal documents and maps for their land and home, against which they can even get bank loans now

**Continued on page 10**



## IMEC hosts Business Leaders Roundtable

Impact Media & Events Corporation (IMEC) is running a New Punjab, Pyara Punjab Project (see [www.imec.biz](http://www.imec.biz) for details) As part of this project, we have started Punjabi Business Leaders Roundtables. The first such roundtable was held on Nov. 21 with five prominent speakers. Pavi Binning (President, Wittington Investments) Surjit Babra (CEO, SkyLink Capital Corporation), Supreet Warna (COO, HSBC Bank Canada), Vaibhav Vohra (MD, Continental Group, India) and the High Commissioner of India H.E. Mr. Ajay Bisaria. The Theme was : Proud to be a Punjabi and how my roots have shaped my life and work. Here are the excerpts from this roundtable :



**H.C. Ajay Bisaria :** I

commend you for the Pyara Punjab Project. We have been doing things in bits and pieces, but it is great to have the focus on Punjab in such a structured way. Before coming to Canada, Chief Minister Amarinder Singh invited me for Dinner. I told him that I was posted in the old Punjab and I used to cross over at the Wagah border when I went to Pakistan. We see Punjab so well represented in the 1.6 million strong Canadian Diaspora here. I talked to Invest Punjab, who is conceptualizing how to engage with Canada, particularly the Diaspora here. In Punjab, they have tried to create a cluster method of Industrial Development, focusing on developing new parks to attract investment. Canada has a strong faith in India's long term story, be it Investment Firms or Pension Firms. From an investment of \$ 5 billion in 2014 to \$ 60 billion today.

The biggest investor in India today is not from the US, but Brookfield from Canada (\$ 19 billion) In terms of opportunities, we have Agriculture and Food

Canada India Insight



Processing Technologies, Which Canada has in abundance. There is Iron & Steel, but the new interest is in Education. Punjab has created an infrastructure in Mohali where educational institutions can come to India from Canada and we are discussing this with multiple universities in Canada, to consider opening a campus in Punjab. Out of the 230,000 students coming to Canada from India every year, many come from Punjab, so the idea is to create some downstream engagement and create campuses in India. The other area of interest is Media & Entertainment.

**Pavi Binning :** (President



and Director of Wittington Investment Ltd and a Director on the Board of George Weston Ltd and Loblaw Companies Ltd) I was born in Punjab and was six months old when my parents moved to UK. I went to school at five, not knowing a word of English. There was a lot of tension in UK in the 1960's from a racial perspective. My parents couldn't afford to send me to University, a firm sponsored me to do my C.A. I then joined Diageo, a global consumer goods company. I grew from Junior positions to deputy CFO, did a lot of work with them in India, came to Canada in 2007 to Nortel. I led the company, restructured and then sold off different pieces of the global entity. I then joined the Weston family and am currently the President and CEO of their holding company.

We are the biggest grocer in Canada, biggest Pharmacy operator and biggest Real Estate company in

Canada. We have food operations in North America with 50 major facilities and we are a major player in the luxury retail industry, primarily in Europe. Our revenue is \$ 60 billion with 250,000 people in the company. There are cultural issues when you are trying to develop a career when you come from an Asian background, but I have been true to those values and roots and they have served me well.

**Supreet Warna :**



(Chief Operating Officer, HSBC Bank Canada) I think I am a personification of so many Punjabis who have come to Canada and are hoping to see what the next generation will look like in Canada. I came to Canada when I was 3 years old. I didn't really know what being Punjabi meant until I went back to India when I was about 15.

My father took me to a small village near Gurdaspur where he grew up. The entire village came to greet us, everybody knew everybody else. We went to the Gurdwara that my father helped build there. That was a real awakening for me and my brothers. Initiatives like yours remind us that we share roots that bind us, to give back and pay it forward.



**Vaibhav Vohra :** (MD, Continental Group, Delhi, a

Global Supply Chain Management Provider) Our journey started when my grandfather moved from Gujranwala (Pakistan) to Delhi in 1947. He got an opportunity to go to the US, but chose to stay in India. When you hear stories about people from Punjab who have travelled all over the world and succeeded, it gives you the courage to take risks.

Although I was born with a silver spoon, there is no way of learning business from outside. You have to get in there and get your hands dirty. Being in a global business, I am able to travel and connect to everyone globally, source new opportunities, bring them back to India and vice versa. Although I was born in Delhi and live in Mumbai, I am still very much connected to Punjab.

**Surjit Babra :** (Chairman and CEO, SkyLink Capital



Corporation and Vice Chairman, Highbury Canco Corporation) Punjabis are really hard working, extrovert people. Punjabi culture is all about bonding and relationships and loyalty. Religion has helped me overcome any obstacle in life. The fundamental principles taught to us are Naam Japna, remember God, be thankful for what we have and earn an honest living. Share your earnings with the less fortunate, to avoid lust, anger, greed and ego. Turban is a Uniform that reminds me of discipline in my life everyday. The greatest thing I think in Punjabi culture is Chardi Kala, the most precious gift in my life, to always remain in a positive state of mind. When you are a CEO of a big Corporation, it is a very lonely position. Most people do not realize that. That's why Chardi Kala becomes all the more important.

**Vipul :** The Sikh Population in India is about 21 million, less than 2 % of India's total population and yet they are a major force in Agriculture, Business, Politics, Art

**Continued on page 8**

[www.imec.biz](http://www.imec.biz)



# IMEC hosts Political Leaders Roundtable

Impact Media & Events Corporation (IMEC) is running an 18-month long New Punjab, Pyara Punjab Project that includes bilateral Conferences, Webinars, Business and Political Leaders Roundtables among many other things (see [www.imec.biz](http://www.imec.biz) for more)

As part of this project, we hosted the first Punjabi Origin Political Leaders Roundtable on Saturday, December 05. Theme for the roundtable was : Proud to be a Punjabi and how my roots have shaped my life and work. Deepak Anand, PC party MPP for Mississauga Malton (Ontario) and Ramesh Sangha, Liberal party MP for Brampton Centre participated. Here are the excerpts :



## **MPP Deepak Anand**

(Special Advisor to Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation & Trade, Vic Fedeli on Ontario-India trade file) Vipul ji, what you are doing is important, not just for people in Punjab, but for the Punjabi Diaspora all over the world. I was born in Patiala,

did my schooling in Mohali and engineering in Chandigarh. Came to Canada in year 2000. One day when I was working as a Lab technician, someone gave me a ride home and that gentleman was one of the candidates for MP from Malton. Others have done that for me too, teaching me a valuable lesson that when someone needs your help, don't wait for them to ask you for it. Like me, there are so many people here from Punjab who want to give back, to do what we can and I must acknowledge you for taking up the Pyara Punjab Project when you are not even from Punjab. We could not take this initiative. You are helping us make our dreams come true.

Punjabis are brave, helpful, food loving, enjoy lavish festivals and celebrations. Basic principles of being a Punjabi are : Kirat Karo (work hard), Naam Japo (never forget God) and Vand Chaako (give back when you make money) I also believe when we say Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam (world is one family) we really need to treat everyone as part of one family. We do a lot of work virtually now, however, the joy we get by meeting people in person is not there in meeting people virtually. Just 2 days back, we had a virtual meeting with Plastic component manufacturers in Punjab and they have agreed to expand into Brampton.

**MP Ramesh Sangha :** My



birthplace is now in Pakistan. I have seen Punjab being divided, however, the Punjabis still remains. Of course, we are proud to be Punjabis. I have lived in the Maha-Punjab which included a major part of Pakistan, then the smaller Punjab also when Haryana came out of it and now we see efforts to divide it again. It doesn't make me happy at all.

Anyway, I was 18 1/2 when I went to Madras to train for Indian Airforce as an Aeronautical Engineer. I worked for 16 years for the Air Force, all over India. I still get a pension from the Indian Air Force. Came here in 1994 and ran my own Law Office, Sangha Law Office for many years. So, I have changed careers and countries (Air Force, Lawyer, Politician) I have enjoyed all of it, except this Politics. It has not been good, however, I am satisfied with the work I am doing. I believe when you work hard, work from your heart, you should just forget the other things, internal politics and all.

**Vipul :** You must have heard before

that you are a Canadian Politician and must represent everyone, not just a particular ethnic group, but with Punjabis in such large numbers in your constituencies, the pressure must be immense to represent the community more. Does it feel like a bane or a boon or both at the same time ?

**MPP Deepak Anand :** Who has given me the most ? Canada has and I truly believe in Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam. I represent everyone in my riding and would love to help anyone beyond that too.

**MP Ramesh Sangha :** My riding is very very diverse. When you become an MP here, you represent everyone. I was elected not just by the Punjabis, but also by Gujaratis, Muslims, Italians, Philipinos, Portugese.. everyone.

## **Continued from page 7**

& Entertainment, Music etc. Why is it so ?

**Surjit :** We had continuous invasions in India and we faced the brunt of that. So, they have become fighters. We have learned through University of hard knocks in that region.

**Pavi Binning :** It has a lot to do with history, background and religion. Honesty and Integrity absolutely matters. You see Gurdwaras everywhere in the world, that shows the power and the collaboration of the community to come together.

**Supreet :** Faith is very important to me, we are also very identifiable, through our physical appearances. My parents told me that people will identify you as a Sikh when you walk on a street, so, how you carry yourself, what you achieve is not only for you, but a representation for the community.

**Vaibhav :** I will echo the sentiment that it's got a lot to do with history all the way back to 16th century. Whether it's the Mughal or the British empire. 1947 partition and a lot of uncertainty, not knowing how tomorrow is going to

turn out. Punjabis didn't take defeat as an option.

**HC Bisaria :** It is certainly the history, culture and religion. The hardwork, the risk-taking ability and the appetite for adventure are the Punjabi values, along with the feeling of Sewa.

**Pavi to HC Bisaria :** How can the diaspora make a difference to the development of Punjab ?

**HC Bisaria :** India is changing dramatically, moving from rhetoric to action on the ground. There have been a lot of reforms even during a pandemic

as well as a competition among states. I will give this feedback to Invest Punjab and ask Vipul to host a session with Invest Punjab to take these conversations forward.

For more, see Canada India Insight Episode # 11 on You Tube and on our website [www.imec.biz](http://www.imec.biz)



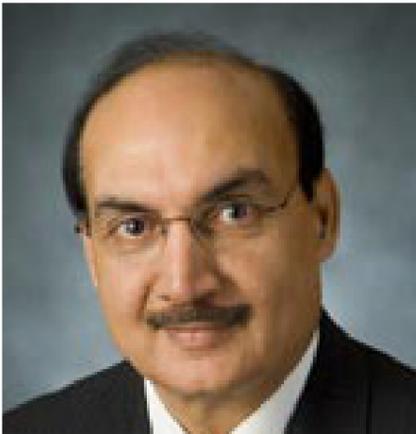
# Happenings

• Canada's national deficit is projected to hit \$ 381 billion this fiscal year, with debt touching



\$ 1.4 trillion, for the first time crossing the trillion dollar mark ever. Finance minister Chrystia Freeland has also talked about spending another \$ 100 billion over the next few years. On what, no one really knows.

• Raj Chouhan, a five term



MLA for Burnaby Edmonds has become the first Indo-Canadian Origin Speaker for British Columbia (B.C.) Legislature. Mr. Chouhan came to Canada from Punjab in 1973, first elected as an MLA in 2005 and then re-elected in 2009, 2013, 2017 and 2020, representing NDP. He also served as a Deputy Speaker in the previous legislature in B.C.

• Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone for a new Parliament building with a hindu religious ceremony on December 10. The triangular shaped building will be built next



to the current Parliament building. Both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha will be much bigger in size, compared to today.

# Farm Bills in India : Some facts worth knowing

There seems to be a lot of misinformation regarding the farmers protest in India these days. Here are some facts on the same :

- (1) MSP will not go away. Infact, after passing the farm bills, Govt announced an MSP increase,
- (2) APMC Mandis will continue to work and will not be closed, farmers can sell in APMC Mandis or outside, it's their choice,
- (3) farmers can fix prices for produce even before growing it,
- (4)

- buyers can not cheat farmers, must pay on time or face legal action and can not make any changes to farmers land,
- (5) farmers can end agreements anytime they wish, however, contractors can not end agreement without full payment,
- (6) the new laws are expected to bring in more investment and infrastructure (source : Official Twitter account of the High Commission of India in Ottawa)

Before Reforms	After Reforms
Farmers can sell notified farm produce only in APMC Mandis, creating the monopoly of a few. Cartels of traders could keep prices artificially low.	Freedom of choice to sell in APMC mandi or choose any other seller. Farmers now have multiple options to sell.
Once produce was brought to a Mandi, farmers had to accept whatever price was offered.	Farmers can now bargain for prices.
Mandi fees, Commission and other Charges were borne by producers and consumers	No Fee, No Commission now. Large savings to benefit producers and consumers.
Large price spread and long chain of intermediaries	Minimum or no intermediary now, resulting in a higher share for farmers in consumers payments.
There was no opportunity for farm youth to trade agri commodities.	Rural farm youth will now get an opportunity to trade and run supply chains.
Farmers can not sell directly to consumers.	They can now sell directly to anyone and earn higher prices.
Freedom to sell fruits and vegetables outside of APMC Mandis existed in some states.	This freedom is now extended to all Agri produce all over the country.
Small Land Owners did not have scale and bargaining power in input and output markets.	Now empowered to access modern input, services and protection against price risk. Farmer producer organizations help small farmers organize for better bargaining power.
Contract farming restricted only to some pockets.	Contract farming now enabled nationally and on terms favourable to farmers.
Farmers were not part of value chains	They will now be partners in value chain
Exports were uncompetitive due to a long chain of intermediaries and poor logistics	Export competitiveness will increase and benefit the farmers

• Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a televised address on December 25 said Rs. 18,000 crore has been released under the Pm Kisan Scheme, to 9 crore farmer families.

• He said since this Scheme started, more than 110,000 crore rupees have been deposited into farmers accounts.

• He lambasted the left



parties, saying they are protesting for APMC Mandirs in Punjab, but then why are there no Mandis in Kerala, a state ruled by the left ? Why don't they start Mandis there ?

• Modi said small farmers have suffered the most under previous govt as they did not have bank accounts earlier, so could not get bank loans, did not get the benefits under Fasal Bima Yojana (Produce Insurance Scheme). Small farmer was struggling even to get water and electricity and even after that, he had to struggle to even sell his produce. He asked, isn't it imperative that we change all this ?

• He said Agriculture has to be modernized in the 21 st century and urged the opposition leaders not to play with the lives of innocent farmers.

• Not a single Mandi has closed down anywhere in the country, although the farm laws came out months ago.

**Seneca**

TORONTO CANADA

# Open to the World.

Choose from more than 170 programs. Each one designed with input from business and industry leaders and will prepare you for success.

- 4-year bachelor's degrees
- 2- and 3- year workplace-ready diplomas
- 1-year career focused post-graduate certificates\*



**APPLY TODAY.**

[senecacollege.ca/international](http://senecacollege.ca/international)

Seneca is a government approved and recognized Designated Learning Institution (DLI).

\*Also known as graduate certificates.

# Trudeau's hypocrisy on India protests speaks volumes

By : Tarek Fatah

Back in the 1970s, Irish American support for the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and Irish terrorism came in many forms. According to Anne Applebaum, writing in the Washington Post, "there were Irish Americans who waved the Irish flag once a year on St. Patrick's Day and admired the IRA's cause, but felt queasy about the methods. These were Irish Americans who collected money for Catholic Charities in Northern Ireland without condoning the IRA at all. There were also Irish Americans who, while claiming to be "aiding the families of Political prisoners" were, in fact, helping to arm IRA terrorists.

Along similar lines, it's noteworthy to consider those Sikhs in Canada who want a breakup of India into an independent Sikh State of Khalistan, a movement alleged to have covert backing of Pakistan. It's also important to discuss the influence some members of Canada's Sikh Community appear to have over our current government, the Liberal Party Caucus and most importantly, on Prime Minister Justin Trudeau as well as on NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh.

While the IRA at its best managed to influence only a handful of lawmakers in the US, most notably Republican Rep. Peter King of Long Island, who stayed with IRA supporters on visits to Northern Ireland, Khalistani Sikhs in Canada have been able to use this country's PM to interfere in the domestic politics of the world's largest democracy – India.

As a background to the current downturn in the Indo-Canadian relations, it should be known that the first shot was fired



by Trudeau, while addressing Canada's Sikh Community on the occasion of the 551st birth anniversary of Sikhism's founder and one of India's towering, historic figures, Guru Nanak.

Speaking virtually at a religious occasion that should have been a reminder of the values of Guru Nanak's Universal teachings, the Canadian Prime Minister instead took an unnecessary swipe at New Delhi, saying he found reports of Indian farmers clashing with police "concerning" and that Canada would "always be there to defend the rights of peaceful protests."

When India summoned the Canadian High Commissioner in New Delhi to express their anger at Trudeau interfering in the internal affairs of a fellow democracy, an act that could "damage" relations between the two commonwealth countries, Trudeau arrogantly dismissed the Indian stand.

Trudeau told reporters that "Canada will always stand up for the right of peaceful protest anywhere around the world."

When asked if his statements will damage Indo-Canadian relations, Trudeau simply parroted his earlier response with a smugness that only he can wear with the arrogance of a medieval knight on horseback.

Except, Trudeau was not telling the truth with his remarks on standing up for peaceful protests.

Right next door to India lies the Islamic State of Pakistan, ruled by a corrupt, authoritarian military and a puppet Prime Minister. Millions have taken to the streets in Karachi, Peshawar and Multan, demanding the end of military rule and freedom for tens of thousands of activists who are referred to as victims of "enforced disappearances."

I've never heard Trudeau or any of his minions speak a single word about "standing up for peaceful protests" in Pakistan. In fact, the military authorities recently flooded the vast venue of a planned anti-government protest in the city of Lahore in an effort to stop the peaceful rally and protest. Will Trudeau speak up or does his "anywhere around the world" pledge exclude Islamic dictatorships from carrying out human rights violations and crimes against humanity?

(Tarek Fatah is a well-known Toronto based writer and columnist. This column first appeared in the Toronto Sun and is republished here with his permission)

## Happenings

• Impact Media and Events Corporation (IMEC), the parent



company of this publication, in association with Canada India USA Development Forum (CIUDF), a Canadian Not for Profit Organization, is hosting a Punjab-Ontario Virtual Conference in late January. Details will be announced via Social Media and on [www.imec.biz](http://www.imec.biz) in a few days. Interested companies from Canada and India, e-mail : [vipul@imec.biz](mailto:vipul@imec.biz)

• Canada India USA Development Forum (CIUDF), a Canadian Not for Profit Organization, is working on Canada-India, Canada-US and India-US bilateral Canada India Insight

and trilateral relations, through Conferences, Webinars and Networking events etc. The Forum is now accepting new members. Find out more from our website : [www.canadaindiausadevelopmentforum.com](http://www.canadaindiausadevelopmentforum.com) / E-mail us at : [canadaindiausadevelopmentforum@gmail.com](mailto:canadaindiausadevelopmentforum@gmail.com)

• External Affairs Minister of India Dr. S. Jaishankar launched an Economic Diplomacy Website [www.indbiz.gov.in](http://www.indbiz.gov.in) on December 16.



• The province of Ontario participated in a virtual mission to India earlier this month, with

a focus on ICT and Advanced manufacturing. This resulted in Pack Universe International investing \$ 6 million in Ontario as well as PCI, an Indian Auto Parts company opening up their first international facility in Ontario.

### Continued from page 6

• Giving farmer an option to sell his produce to where he wants, who ever he wants, to who ever can give him a better price, sell it online, sell it to other states, sell it at MSP, sell it at the Mandi, export it... they have all the options available now.

• Agreement farming has been around for years, in many states, including Punjab. In those earlier agreements, farmers had to pay a penalty for breaking those agreements and all the risk was on the farmer. Now, under these

new laws, companies that get into those agreements will bear all the risk, farmers will not be penalised or fined and can also break the agreement if they wish.

• He gave an example of Dairy and Poultry sector in India, where private companies and co-operative societies buy from the producers and no one has been able to build monopolies or control the entire sector. He said same opportunities should be provided to the farmers also now.

