

ASIA PACIFIC
FOUNDATION
OF CANADA

FONDATION
ASIE PACIFIQUE
DU CANADA



INDIA-CANADA DIALOGUE:

Fostering Deeper and Resilient Partnerships

SUMMARY REPORT

*A joint initiative of the Asia Pacific Foundation
of Canada and the Ananta Centre*

SUMMARY REPORT

India and Canada share a long-standing relationship built on robust economic ties, educational exchanges, and strong people-to-people connections. However, recent diplomatic tensions have highlighted the need for a structured approach to rebuilding trust and strengthening bilateral co-operation. This summary report is based on the India-Canada Track II Dialogue, convened jointly by Ananta Aspen Centre and Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, which brought together high-level representatives from academia, business, think-tanks, and the media. Gathering in New Delhi, participants set out to identify the main obstacles to co-operation and to chart pragmatic, forward-looking paths for revitalizing the bilateral relationship.

India-Canada in 2025: Building Bridges for a New Era in Bilateral Ties

- The dialogue began with welcoming remarks emphasizing the importance of stability in India-Canada relations.
- The political turbulence between the two nations was acknowledged, and the need for a structured reset was highlighted.
- Civil society was recognized as crucial in fostering trust and co-operation.
- The significance of strong people-to-people ties was emphasized.
- The historical foundation of India-Canada relations was discussed.
- The necessity of moving beyond political differences to build sustainable collaborations was noted.
- The importance of mutual respect in diplomacy was reiterated.
- Potential avenues for policy collaboration were introduced.
- The role of non-governmental organizations in strengthening bilateral ties was acknowledged.

- The need for pragmatic solutions over ideological conflicts was underlined.

Promises and Perils of New and Emerging Technologies: Fostering Innovation and Combating Cyber Threats

- The importance of resuming FTA negotiations was underscored.
- Trade, investment, and innovation were identified as key drivers of mutual benefits.
- Technology, energy, and infrastructure were highlighted as priority sectors.
- Canada's role as a major trading partner for India was analyzed.
- The importance of sectoral co-operation in digital transformation and renewable energy was noted.
- Potential investment in AI, health care, and logistics was explored.
- The need for structured engagement between business communities was emphasized.
- Challenges such as trade barriers and protectionist policies were discussed.

- Bilateral trade mechanisms to reduce dependency on third-party markets were considered.
- Enhancing supply chain resilience through collaborative ventures was proposed.

Indo-Pacific: Exploring Convergences in an Evolving Geopolitical Space

- Security concerns over extremism and intelligence-sharing were discussed.
- The challenges of extremism, transnational crime, and foreign interference were examined, with a call for stricter measures to address these issues.
- The need for a bilateral security framework to address mutual concerns was highlighted.
- Counterterrorism collaboration between security agencies was recommended.
- Intelligence-sharing mechanisms were proposed to counter organized crime.
- A proposal to hold regular Track 1.5 and Track 2 dialogues was discussed.
- Strengthening cybersecurity measures in collaboration was considered.
- The role of diaspora communities in influencing security policies was examined.
- The necessity of maintaining diplomatic balance while addressing security threats was emphasized.
- Confidence-building measures to improve trust in security co-operation were proposed.

Unlocking New Horizons in the Bilateral Economic Relationship

- The role of educational institutions in strengthening bilateral ties was discussed.
- Balanced visa policies for Indian students and

professionals were recommended.

- The importance of student exchange programs in fostering long-term engagement was emphasized.
- Cultural diplomacy was identified as a tool for enhancing bilateral understanding.
- Addressing misinformation and shaping constructive media narratives were key discussion points.
- The role of academic partnerships in knowledge sharing was highlighted.
- A need for increased government support for educational collaborations was mentioned.
- The growing number of Indian students in Canada and their impact on bilateral relations were analyzed.
- Strengthening Indo-Canadian alumni networks for knowledge exchange was proposed.
- Public outreach initiatives to improve mutual perceptions were recommended.

Key Challenges

- **Political Strains:** The political relationship has suffered due to allegations of foreign interference, diplomatic expulsions, and concerns over national security.
- **Trade and Economic Barriers:** The suspension of the free trade agreement (FTA) negotiations has stalled potential economic benefits for both nations.
- **Public Perception:** Misinformation and media narratives have contributed to declining public trust in both nations.

Opportunities for Engagement

- **Economic Co-operation:** Resuming FTA discussions and expanding trade in critical sectors such as technology, pharmaceuticals, and green energy.

- **Educational and Research Partnerships:** Strengthening collaboration between universities, promoting student exchanges, research collaborations, and enhancing visa policies.
- **Security and Strategic Dialogue:** Establishing formal mechanisms for security co-operation to address concerns over extremism and organized crime.
- **Multilateral Engagement:** Leveraging platforms such as the G20, Indo-Pacific strategies, and development banks to foster collaboration.

Policy Recommendations

REBUILDING POLITICAL TRUST

- Initiate high-level diplomatic engagements post-elections in both countries.
- Resume ambassadorial appointments to restore full diplomatic representation.
- Establish a bilateral working group to address concerns on foreign interference.

STRENGTHENING ECONOMIC TIES

- Resume negotiations on a partial trade agreement to ensure gradual progress.
- Encourage sector-specific investments, particularly in AI, renewable energy, and critical minerals.
- Promote business-to-business dialogues to navigate trade barriers.

ENHANCING SECURITY CO-OPERATION

- Develop a joint framework for countering extremist financing and activities.
- Strengthen intelligence-sharing mechanisms between law enforcement agencies.
- Conduct regular Track 1.5 and Track 2 dialogues to manage geopolitical risks.

PROMOTING PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE ENGAGEMENT

- Expand student mobility programs and streamline visa processes for Indian students.
- Support initiatives that foster cultural exchanges and academic collaborations.
- Encourage media transparency to counter misinformation and improve narratives around the bilateral relationship.

Conclusion

India and Canada have deep-rooted connections that transcend political tensions. While challenges persist, strategic interventions in trade, security, and education can pave the way for a stronger, more resilient partnership. Both nations can work towards a stable and prosperous relationship by focusing on mutual interests and pragmatic solutions.

Drafted by Suvolaxmi Dutta Choudhury, Program Manager, South Asia, and Vina Nadjibulla, Vice-President Research & Strategy, APF Canada



ASIA PACIFIC
FOUNDATION
OF CANADA

FONDATION
ASIE PACIFIQUE
DU CANADA

The Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada (APF Canada) is an independent, not-for-profit organization focused on Canada's relations with Asia. Our mission is to be Canada's catalyst for engagement with Asia and Asia's bridge to Canada.

APF Canada is dedicated to strengthening ties between Canada and Asia through its research, education, and convening activities, such as the Canada-in-Asia Conference series, our Women's Business Missions to Asia, and the APEC-Canada Growing Business Partnership project fostering sustainable inclusive growth and poverty reduction. APF Canada also works with business, government, and academic stakeholders to provide Asia Competency training for Canadian organizations and students.

Our research provides high-quality, relevant, and timely information, insights, and perspectives on Canada-Asia relations for Canadians and stakeholders across the Asia Pacific. Our research work also includes regular Insights, Dispatches, Reports & Policy Briefs, Strategic Reflections, Case Studies, Explainers, and a weekly Asia Watch tracking the latest news on Asia that matters to Canada.

[Visit our Website](#)



ANNEX

PROGRAM

Venue: Ginger Hotel, Chanakyapuri.13A-16D, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu and Lakshadweep Bhawan, Tikendrajit Marg, Chanakyapuri, Delhi 110021, India.

ALL TIMES IN IST

Session 1

10:00 A.M. – 11:00 A.M.

India-Canada in 2025: Building Bridges for a New Era in Bilateral Ties

- Identify and acknowledge immediate challenges in the bilateral relationship and provide recommendations for redressal and confidence building measures.
- Identify areas of co-operation for both short- and long-term growth in the relationship. Recommend concrete steps for moving forward.
- Assess the impact of rising geopolitical uncertainties; identify and outline shared strategic goals and priorities at bilateral, regional, and global levels.

Session 2

11:00 A.M. –12:00 P.M.

Promises and Perils of New and Emerging Technologies: Fostering Innovation and Combating Cyber Threats

- Explore avenues for co-operation on new and emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI), space technology, and digital public infrastructure.
- Address mistrust and mutual threat perceptions; recommend confidence building measures on cyber security.
- India and Canada face numerous shared threats in the cyber realm; identify steps for closer co-operation on cyber security issues.

Session 3

12:00 P.M. – 1:00 P.M.

Indo-Pacific: Exploring Convergences in an Evolving Geopolitical Space

- Identify threats and challenges in the Indo-Pacific region and outline strategic priorities.
- Identify and highlight shared interests and values to promote a free and open Indo-Pacific.
- Recommend steps for closer co-operation in maritime security, sustainability, climate adaptation, and the promotion of a rules-based international order.

1:00 P.M. – 2:00 P.M.

LUNCH

Session 4

2:00 P.M. – 3:00 P.M.

Unlocking New Horizons in the Bilateral Economic Relationship

- Explore the path ahead for trade and investment ties, including the potential resumption of negotiations on a bilateral free trade agreement.
 - Outline economic security challenges and identify steps for building supply chain resilience amid escalating geopolitical rivalries; discuss ways to promote partnerships, such as on critical minerals.
 - Identify challenges in the sectors of higher education, immigration, and institutional and research collaboration; recommend steps for moving forward.
-

3:00 P.M. – 3:15 P.M.

Closing Remarks



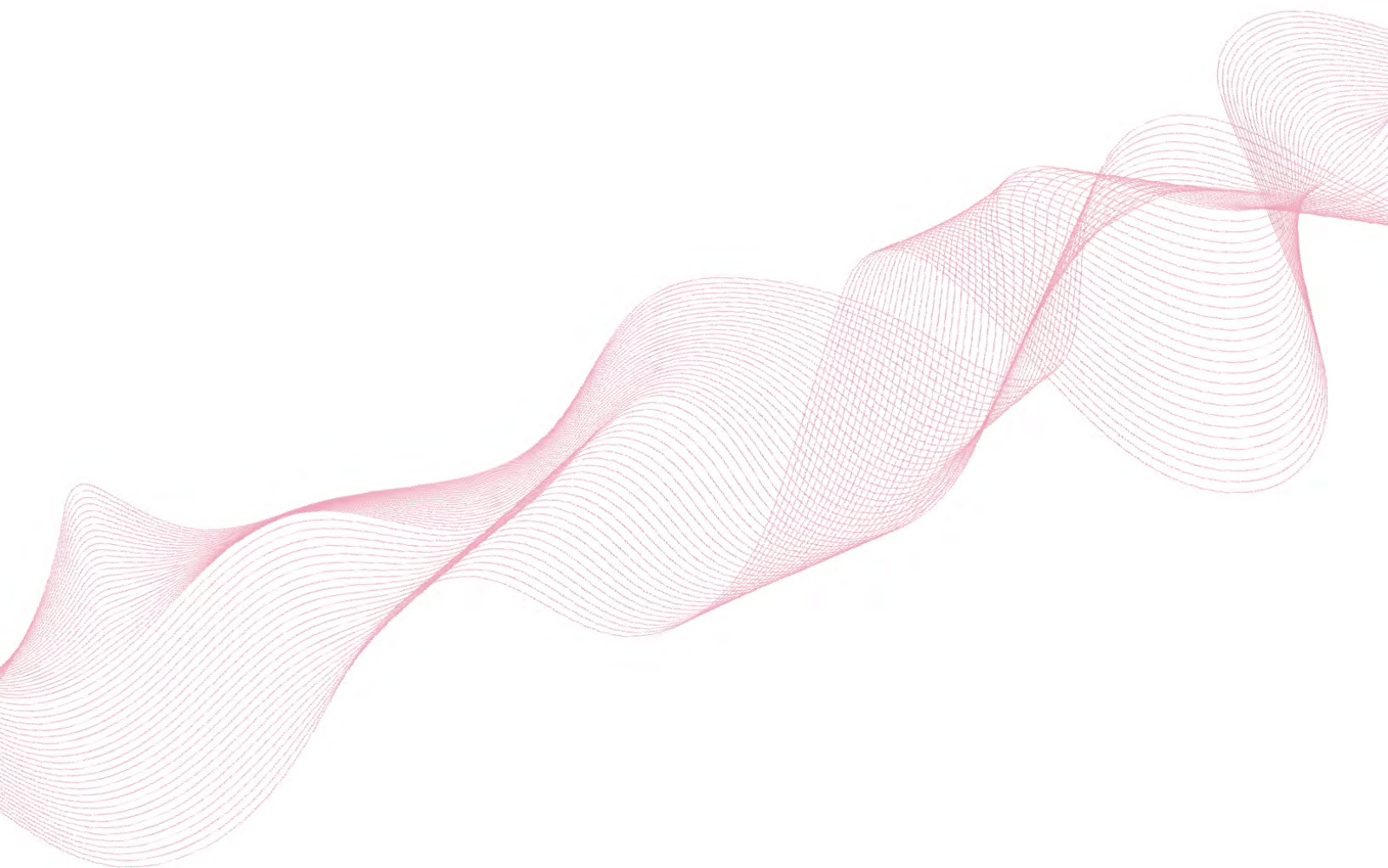
Indrani Bagchi

Chief Executive Officer, Ananta Centre



Vina Nadjibulla

Vice-President Research & Strategy, Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada





CANADIAN PARTICIPANTS



Suvolaxmi Dutta Choudhury

*South Asia Program Manager,
Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada*



Nadira Hamid

*CEO, Indo-Canadian Business
Chamber*



Shachi Kurl

President, Angus Reid Institute



Dr. Rhonda Lenton

President, York University



David McKinnon

*Former Canadian High
Commissioner to Sri Lanka and
Ambassador to Maldives; Senior
Fellow, Asia Pacific Foundation
of Canada*



Dr. Rohinton Medhora

*Distinguished Fellow, Centre
for International Governance
Innovation & Professor of Practice,
McGill University*



Jonathan Berkshire Miller

*Senior Fellow and Director
of Foreign Affairs, National
Defence and National Security,
Macdonald-Laurier Institute*



Dr. Karthik Nachiappan

*Research Fellow, National
University of Singapore; Senior
Fellow, Asia Pacific Foundation
of Canada*



Vina Nadjibulla

*Vice-President Research &
Strategy, Asia Pacific Foundation
of Canada*





Nadir Patel

*Senior Strategic Advisor
at Norton Rose Fulbright;
Chancellor, Wilfred Laurier
University & former Canadian
High Commissioner to India*



Dr. T.V. Paul

*Distinguished James McGill
Professor, McGill University;
Distinguished Fellow, Asia Pacific
Foundation*



Kasi Rao

*Managing Director, Fairfax
Consulting Services*



INDIAN PARTICIPANTS



James Abraham

Founder MynzoCarbon



Ajay Bisaria

*Former High Commissioner of
India to Canada*



Pramit Pal Chaudhuri

India Head, Eurasia Group



Rudra Chaudhuri

*Director, Carnegie Endowment for
International Peace*



Vanshica Kant

*Human and Social Development
Expert, Asian Development Bank*



Dr. C Raja Mohan

*Professor at the Institute of
South Asian Studies, National
University of Singapore*





Dr. Arpita Mukherjee

*Professor, Indian Council for
Research on International
Economic Relations (ICRIER)*



Smita Prakash

Journalist, ANI



Dr. C Rajkumar

*Vice Chancellor, OP Jindal Global
University*



Shubhajit Roy

Diplomatic Editor, Indian Express



Pranay Sinha

*Lead for Global Growth &
Opportunity Policy Advocacy and
South-South Co-operation, Bill &
Melinda Gates Foundation*

