

Our Immediate Agenda For Strengthening Ties

In pursuit of its objective of deepening relations between India and Canada, the CIF has identified a number of issues to be addressed in the immediate future. In the lines of the historic Strategic Partnership Agreement between the United States and India, the CIF considers a similar agreement between Canada and India as a priority goal. A Free Trade Agreement between the two countries is another immediate objective that the CIF seeks to lobby with governments in Ottawa and New Delhi. In order to facilitate better consular access to people traveling between India and Canada, the CIF will work toward the opening of additional visa processing offices in India.

01. Free Trade Agreement with India

The idea of a Free Trade Agreement was mentioned in a speech by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade in March. It was noted that this is part of Canada's long term objective following the signing of a Foreign Investment Protection Agreement (FIPA). The CIF seeks to accelerate this process so that India and Canada can realize their bilateral trade potential.

02. Canada-India Strategic Partnership Agreement

The idea of a strategic partnership agreement was advanced by the Australians, Japanese and Americans recently. Canada and India are democracies with much in common, yet Canada has not articulated a clear policy of engagement on the political, social, cultural, educational and trade levels with India. The CIF seeks to lobby with Ottawa and New Delhi for signing a Canada-India Strategic Partnership Agreement.

03. Establishing two new visa offices in India - (Chennai and Mumbai)

Canada currently has two visa offices in India (one in Chandigarh and another in Delhi). To meet the needs of the business community and a population of over a billion, it is imperative that Canada opens two additional visa processing offices, one in Chennai and another in Mumbai. The CIF will work with both governments in enabling better consular facilities in order to strengthen business and cultural interaction between the two countries.

04. Change the current policy of the government which has excluded Gujarat

Canada has a formal policy of not engaging on any senior level with the Government of Gujarat. This policy dates back to the torching of the train in Godhra which killed 58 Hindu pilgrims and the subsequent riots in the state which saw 790 Muslims and 254 Hindus killed. Canada's official position is that the Government of Gujarat is responsible for the riots by either failing to prevent it or by wilfully encouraging the riots. Canada's position has not been proven in court or in the public inquiries. (see wikipedia for a background on this issues - <http://www.answers.com/topic/2002-gujarat-violence>). The CIF seeks to end this boycott and restore ties with India