

# India-Canada Ties Reach a Strategic Turning Point, says Rajan Sawhney Indian Origin Canadian Minister at Chandigarh University

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Known for internationalization of education across the globe, Chandigarh University hosted Rajan Sawhney, Minister of Indigenous Relations (Alberta) Canada at its campus and several offerings in the field of education and research were part of the discussion. The Indian origin Minister emphasized the growing better ties between India and Canada will lead a better time between the two nations. And while speaking with at the Chandigarh University campus, Rajan Sawhney said, *"Canada wants India to know that we are a reliable, trusted partner and the path ahead for our relationship is positive and productive,"* said **Rajan Sawhney, Minister of Indigenous Relations, Canada** during her visit at Chandigarh University, underlining a renewed push to strengthen India-Canada ties across trade, education, energy, research, critical minerals

and people-to-people engagement.



**Canadian Indigenous Minister, Rajan Sawhney along with Sr. Managing Director Chandigarh University Deepinder Singh Sandhu at Gharuan Campus**

The Canadian minister was speaking at the event 'Beyond Diplomacy: People, Knowledge and Youth as the Future of India-Canada Relations' held at Chandigarh University where she was part of a high-level Canadian delegation visiting India to explore deeper trade, academic, research and economic collaborations.

On Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney's visit to India in March this year, which comes at a time when India has recently concluded major trade agreements with the European Union and the United States, **Sawhney** said, *"The Prime Minister's visit presents an important opportunity to strengthen India-Canada trade ties and identify new areas of economic cooperation. As both countries look to diversify markets and deepen engagement, this visit can help translate shared intent into tangible trade outcomes. There is great potential for trade, cultural exchange and knowledge transfer and I expect the discussions between the two prime ministers to be fruitful and forward-looking."*

While speaking on research, energy and sustainability, the Canadian Minister highlighted the growing scope for institutional collaboration between Indian and Canadian universities, particularly in energy, de-carbonization, sustainability, AI, Quantum technology and agri-technology. She emphasized that establishing strong relationships between post-secondary institutions is the first step toward

meaningful research partnerships.

**Sawhney** further added, *“Once connections between universities are established, opportunities naturally arise. The seed funding for research often comes not only from governments but also from universities themselves, private sector players, non-profits and other agencies. Canadian institutions are actively looking for the right global partners and such collaborations have materialized organically in the past through academic introductions.”*

Meanwhile, Senior Managing Director, Chandigarh University, Deep Inder Singh Sandhu extended collaboration offers to the Canadian minister across academics, research and innovation, clean energy and sustainability.

Responding to the proposal, **Sawhney** said, *“We will take this forward through strong institution-to-institution connect and work closely with Chandigarh University to explore meaningful collaboration. CCUS is the future, and we already have universities in Canada actively working on Carbon Capture, Utilization and Storage technologies to address climate challenges. Beyond that, there is immense scope for joint work in clean energy, sustainability, artificial intelligence, agri-technology and advanced research, where our institutions can learn from each other and create real-world impact.”*

On international education, the **Canadian Minister** said, *“Canada’s quota for international students has not been fully utilized, and Indian students can still apply. Global student preferences are evolving, with countries like Australia seeing increased interest, but opportunities remain in Canada. The students from India receive high quality education in Canada and they can bring back that knowledge, technology and*

*learning to Punjab and India. At the same time, institutions like Chandigarh University play an equally important role by retaining talent within India.”*

On the suspension of in-person consular services in Indian cities like Chandigarh, Mumbai and Bengaluru and visa-related concerns, **Sawhney** said, *“Consular services are a federal matter, but we will take up the issue with our federal counterparts and advocate for the expansion of services to address the concerns of Indian students and professionals.”*

On racial discrimination, **Sawhney** said, *“It is challenge that exist globally, but the Canadian government follows a zero-tolerance policy against such discrimination.”*

Speaking about her Indian roots at Phagwara in Punjab, **Sawhney** said, *“Visiting my ancestral village near Phagwara after 25 years was an emotional experience, and I was deeply touched by the warmth and respect I received. In 2023, I also brought my children to Chandigarh to show them our family home.”*

In response to a question regarding Canada becoming second home to Punjabis, **Sawhney** said, *“Canada has not simply become a second home for Punjabis but Punjabis have earned that place through their hard work, resilience and contribution to Canada. The Indian diaspora, particularly from Punjab, has played a significant role in Canada’s growth and development. If you look at the talent pool across sectors in Canada, Punjabis form one of the strongest and most visible communities. In many ways, Punjab has become a second home to Canada, and that bond has been built through effort, trust and contribution.”*

## **About Chandigarh University**

Chandigarh University is a NAAC A+ Grade University and QS World Ranked University. This autonomous educational institution is approved by UGC and is located near Chandigarh in the state of Punjab. It is the youngest university in India and the only private university in Punjab to be honoured with A+ Grade by NAAC (National Assessment and Accreditation Council). CU offers more than 109 UG and PG programs in the field of engineering, management, pharmacy, law, architecture, journalism, animation, hotel management, commerce, and others. It has been awarded as The University with Best Placements by WCRC.

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