



NEWS RELEASE

The Honorable Asha Seth, Senator

CONSERVATIVE SENATOR ASHA SETH CELEBRATES INDIA'S NATIONAL DAY WITH PRIME MINISTER STEPHEN HARPER

TORONTO, August 12, 2014 – Senator Asha Seth and the Rt. Hon. Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada, celebrated 67 years of Indian independence at the second annual India's National Day Gala. The evening made history by gathering 1500 high-level Indo-Canadian stakeholders to commemorate the relationship that Canada and India have shared since India's independence on August 15, 1947.

Following the success of last year's inaugural gala, Senator Asha Seth partnered with the Canada-India Friendship Group (CIFG) and a GTA Parliamentary Advisory Board to better engage community partners. Housed in the Pearson Convention Centre in Brampton, the evening featured a prestigious lineup of guest speakers including the Hon. Jason Kenny, Minister of Multiculturalism and Minister of Employment and Social Development; the Hon. Chris Alexander, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration; and the Hon. Bal Gosal, Minister of State (Sport).

Senator Asha Seth, hostess, outlined the fundamental values that bind the two countries, "Like Canada, India shares an institutional legacy that places democracy, equality, and human dignity at the core of its nationhood. These shared values grow stronger every day thanks to our willingness to engage the world with an open hand; ready to work together for a better future for our citizens."

Prime Minister Stephen Harper, the evening's keynote speaker, conveyed the tangible contributions that the Indo-Canadian communities have given to Canada's wellbeing, "Wherever Indian immigrants settle, wherever they choose to put down roots, to start businesses, to raise families [...] not by coincidence, those places thrive. I believe this is because Indo-Canadians possess a strong ethic of work and education, and an unwavering commitment to faith and to family [...] and these are the things that underlie not only the Indo-Canadian community's success, but Canada's success as a country as well."

Minister Bal Gosal echoed this sentiment with his remarks, "Fortunately, we have a Prime Minister who understands those values and who also understands the need to further strengthen our countries' business, academic, cultural and people-to-people ties."

The government reaffirmed its commitment to providing an effective and timely system of immigration for the millions of highly qualified individuals wishing to contribute to Canada's development. "Our government is committed to increasing the number of legitimate travelers to Canada from India, as businesspeople, students and visitors all make Canada stronger economically as well as culturally," said Minister Chris Alexander.



NEWS RELEASE

The Honorable Asha Seth, Senator

Mr. Akhilesh Mishra, Toronto's Consul General of India, eloquently congratulated Prime Minister Harper and Senator Seth for cementing a space to promote shared values and closer ties, "We will remember Senator Asha Seth with profound gratitude for her very special and extraordinary gesture to India in hosting the National Gala to celebrate India-Canada relations. I would also like to particularly applaud and salute our great friend and the architect of India-Canada strategic partnership, Prime Minister Harper."

Minister Jason Kenney added that, "While Canada and India are separated by thousands of kilometers of ocean, we share similar values. Canada prides itself on being the most pluralistic country in the world, but it is important to remember that India, the world's largest democracy, has been pluralistic for hundreds of years. It is noteworthy that in a country that is majority Hindu, India has recently had a Muslim President, a Sikh Prime Minister, and a Catholic leader of a major political party – what an amazing example to the world."

Senator Asha Seth founded India's National Day Gala as the first-of-its-kind official celebration of Canada-India relations centered on the Independence Day of India.

As Canada's first Indo-Canadian female to sit in the Senate, Senator Asha Seth closed the night with an expression of gratitude and hope, "The Independence of India taught us that whenever you are confronted with an opponent, you can conquer him with love, rather than violence [...] In these times of great uncertainty, we peace-loving people, Indians and Canadians, must come together to defend the values we have celebrated here tonight; Freedom, equality, and the rule of law."

-30-

For more information, please contact:

Senator Asha Seth's Office

Tel: 613-996-7162

Fax: 613-996-7235

asha.seth@sen.parl.gc.ca