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Centre for International  
Governance Innovation

Event Report – Toronto, Ontario, January 19, 2026

# India-Canada AI Dialogue 2026

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## Introduction

This event report<sup>1</sup> summarizes key points and discussions from the India-Canada AI Dialogue 2026, organized by the Consulate General of India, Toronto; the University of Waterloo; the Canada India Tech Council; and Zoho Inc. The event was held at The Quay in Toronto, Canada, on January 19, 2026.

The gathering served as a pre-summit event for the AI Impact Summit, hosted by India on February 16–20, 2026. The objective of the event in Toronto was to explore what India and Canada can do to meaningfully deepen their cooperation on AI, help renew their bilateral relationship and unlock new opportunities to shape the future of AI together.

The event was opened by Shri Kapidhwaja Pratap Singh,<sup>2</sup> followed by a welcome address from His Excellency Dinesh K. Patnaik. The Honourable Evan Solomon then provided the evening’s keynote address, which set the stage for the panel conversations that followed.

The first panel explored how AI, digital trade and innovation corridors can help forge a durable, long-term India-Canada relationship. Chaired by Kundan Joshi, the panel featured rich discussion with H. E. Dinesh K. Patnaik, the Honourable Vic Fedeli, Paul Samson and Jeff Nankivell.

The program continued with a second panel hosted by Mary Wells, which offered a conversation on how to bridge Canada and India’s strengths in AI to build responsible, scalable and competitive AI ecosystems. This panel featured remarks by Julien Billot, Nick Frosst and Ramprakash Ramamoorthy.

The third and final panel, moderated by Sanjeev Gill, closed the event with an exploration of opportunities for India and Canada to build partnerships in AI-driven healthcare. Gill was joined by panelists Dr. Vivek Goel, Elissa Strome and Diane Gutiw.

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## Discussion

The India-Canada AI Dialogue 2026 was a critical forum for exploring how both nations can collaboratively shape the future of AI within a renewed bilateral relationship.

Opening remarks highlighted the profound transformations unfolding globally; not only are geopolitical norms and relationships undergoing immense change, but at the same time, technologies like AI are becoming increasingly ubiquitous, reshaping everyday life and redefining our economic and political systems. This inflection point, which could be described as a “Gutenberg moment,” compels us to ask fundamental questions about who will build these

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<sup>1</sup> Prepared by Grace Wright and Jonathan Isaak (CIGI).

<sup>2</sup> Panelist affiliations are included on page 8.

technologies in a rapidly changing world, which values will guide them and how they will be governed.

Speakers throughout the evening recognized that while these shifts introduce risks and uncertainties, they also create meaningful opportunities for India and Canada to forge deeper partnerships. A recurring theme was the importance of action over symbolic gestures, identifying concrete, pragmatic steps through which both countries can address shared challenges and build an AI-enabled future that benefits both nations, and humanity more broadly.

The opening panel explored these possibilities by examining how AI can anchor a durable and long-term India-Canada economic partnership. Panelists emphasized the complementary strengths each country brings: Canada's research excellence, robust digital infrastructure and highly skilled talent pool, alongside India's scale, rapidly growing economy, talent pipeline of AI engineers and ability to quickly develop and deploy new AI tools and applications. Together, these advantages position both countries to address key challenges, including productivity growth, the digital divide and technological sovereignty.

The conversation also highlighted the resilience of long-standing relationships between India and Canada's private sector, which have largely endured despite historical political dynamics. These connections were discussed as a strong foundation to support political momentum and leadership as India and Canada enter a renewed, strategic commitment to their diplomatic relationship.

Speakers outlined several priorities to support pragmatic collaboration, including data governance, interoperability standards and sectoral pilots in key industries such as energy and healthcare. They also discussed pathways for strengthening a sustained India-Canada economic cycle beyond state-level engagement, including firm-to-firm trade and investment and deeper institutional cooperation, particularly in strategic areas such as critical minerals. Ontario was identified as a key actor that is looking to strengthen its supply chains with Indian partners, expand global leadership and invest in infrastructure and talent.

Building on the economic discussion, the second panel emphasized the important role of AI ecosystems, and public trust as foundational to advancing AI adoption and innovation. Throughout the discussion, issues such as data privacy and sovereignty were a central theme, alongside shared concerns about protecting critical AI infrastructure from foreign influence.

Panelists emphasized how Canada's leadership in responsible AI, governance norms and research excellence, including through founding figures in the field and companies such as Cohere, can complement India's scale, digital public infrastructure and rapid deployment capacity. While only a small number of countries possess the research depth, talent and resources required to develop large language models, Canada's strengths in this area, combined with India's diverse and rapidly growing economy, and demand for multilingual, energy-efficient models, create a compelling opportunity for collaboration and co-creation. Together,

these strengths position both countries to build globally competitive and trustworthy AI ecosystems, shape emerging standards and play a meaningful role in global AI governance and innovation.

The panel also explored how inclusion, domestic innovation and cross-sector collaboration strengthen AI ecosystems. Canada's "bottom-up" approach, exemplified by initiatives such as Scale AI, was cited as a model for linking research excellence with commercialization and supporting Canadian-owned intellectual property. Emerging domains such as space were highlighted as opportunities where AI can advance innovation and reinforce sovereignty.

The third panel discussion focused on AI for healthcare, reinforcing the central role of public trust and strong data stewardship. Canada's experience with healthcare regulation and patient data protection was identified as an excellent foundation for responsible AI development, while India's scale and speed of AI adoption were highlighted as a critical asset for enabling rapid innovation in AI for healthcare.

The conversation explored ways in which AI tools and advanced analytics are already improving clinical decision support, diagnostics and personalized medicine, helping bring data closer to decision makers and delivering better patient care and outcomes. Shared healthcare challenges, including rural access, aging populations and other public health pressures, were discussed as key avenues for future collaboration to build on these existing successes.

Partnerships were continually underscored as essential to realizing the full potential of India and Canada's relative strengths in AI for healthcare. Near-term opportunities discussed included joint research initiatives, institutional collaboration and data approaches that enable innovators to deliver value across borders. By combining Canada's regulatory maturity and scientific excellence with India's execution capacity and scale, the panel highlighted health AI as a particularly promising area for bilateral cooperation, capable of delivering responsible, scalable and globally relevant AI innovation.

Overall, the India-Canada AI Dialogue 2026 underscored the value of shared problem-solving as a key pathway for strengthening the India-Canada relationship. As both countries navigate a world undergoing rapid technological and geopolitical change, a partnership grounded in complementary strengths, values and priorities can help both countries advance responsible AI innovation and governance, while generating shared growth, enhancing sovereignty and delivering tangible, transformative outcomes across all sectors.

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# Agenda

January 19, 2026

- 5:00 p.m.**                    **Networking and Appetizers**
- 5:45 p.m.**                    **Welcome:** Shri Kapidhwaja Pratap Singh; His Excellency Dinesh K. Patnaik
- 5:55 p.m.**                    **Keynote:** Honourable Evan Solomon
- 6:10 p.m.**                    **Reset to Resilience: Building a Durable India–Canada Economic Partnership**
- Moderated by:** Kundan Joshi  
**With:** H. E. Dinesh K. Patnaik, Hon. Vic Fedeli, Paul Samson and Jeff Nankivell
- 6:45 p.m.**                    **Canada–India AI Convergence: Designing Responsible and Scalable AI Ecosystems**
- Moderated by:** Mary Wells  
**With:** Julien Billot, Nick Frosst and Ramprakash Ramamoorthy
- 7:20 p.m.**                    **The HealthTech Bridge: Canadian Innovation x Indian Dynamism**
- Moderated by:** Sanjeev Gill  
**With:** Vivek Goel, Elissa Strome and Diane Gutiw
- 7:55 p.m.**                    **Closing Remarks & Vote of Thanks**
- 8:10 p.m.**                    **Networking**

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## Featured Speakers

**H. E. Dinesh K. Patnaik**, High Commissioner of India to Canada

**Elissa Strome**, Member of Canada's AI Advisory Council; Executive Director, Pan-Canadian AI Strategy, CIFAR

**Hon. Evan Solomon**, Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovation, Canada

**Jeff Nankivell**, President & CEO, Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada

**Julien Billot**, CEO, Scale AI

**Mary Wells**, Member of Canada's AI Taskforce; Dean of Engineering, University of Waterloo

**Nick Frosst**, Co-Founder, Cohere

**Paul Samson**, President, Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI)

**Dr. Vivek Goel**, President & Vice-Chancellor, University of Waterloo

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## Speakers

**Diane Gutiw**, Co-chair of Canada's Advisory Council on AI; Member of Canada's AI Taskforce; Vice President & Global AI Research Lead, CGI

**Kundan Joshi**, CEO, TheAppLabb, AI Labb, Canada India Tech Council and the Canada AI Alliance

**Ramprakash Ramamoorthy**, Director of AI Research, Zoho

**Sanjeev Gill**, Associate Vice President, Innovation, & Executive, University of Waterloo; Director, WatSPEED

**Shri Kapidhwaja Pratap Singh**, Acting Consul General of India in Toronto

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## Partners



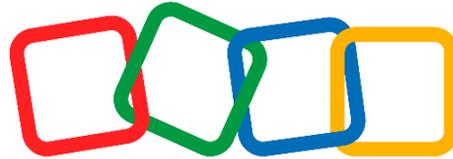
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67 Erb Street West  
Waterloo, ON, Canada N2L 6C2  
[www.cigionline.org](http://www.cigionline.org)

