

# Final Report

## Mission to India and Hong Kong

### January 11-21, 2004

#### Overview:

In January 2004, Premier Ralph Klein led the first mission to India by an Alberta Premier. It was also the first official Alberta ministerial visit to India in 20 years.

Over the past decade India has undergone a remarkable transformation that could eventually see it rivaling China as an economic powerhouse. The annual growth of India's economy has consistently ranked in the world's top ten during the past decade. India is a leader on the world stage in bodies like the WTO and the Commonwealth.

Two-way trade between India and Alberta exceeds \$150 million annually, but this is far below its potential. There are opportunities to expand trade and investment between Alberta and India, particularly in oil and gas. Alberta companies are active in the Indian energy sector, providing expertise and services, as well as direct investment. India has also set a goal of investing \$1 billion annually in overseas energy projects and Alberta could offer some excellent opportunities.

Premier Klein's mission to India focused on exploring, with Indian business and government leaders, initiatives of mutual benefit. Premier Klein spoke at the opening of the 2004 Indian Oil and Gas Conference and renewed acquaintances with India's Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas to promote Alberta's world-class expertise in oil and gas production, development, and supply and services.

The Premier met with Indian business executives, including a major corporation involved in securing work for a variety of Alberta companies on projects in India. The purpose of the Premier's meeting was to interest the companies in future investment in Alberta, as well as develop cooperation in future business ventures.

Community Development Minister Gene Zwozdesky and Calgary-McCall MLA Shiraz Shariff, chair of the International Cooperation and Governance Advisory Committee, arrived in India several days before Premier Klein to undertake initiatives to augment the Premier's intensive schedule. Zwozdesky focused on strengthening community, cultural, sport, and film ties between Alberta and India. He also visited two development projects for which the Alberta Wild Rose Foundation, in his ministry, provided matched funding. Shariff joined the Minister in most of these endeavours and also focused on international governance cooperation initiatives with India.

While in Hong Kong, the Premier met with high-level Hong Kong business leaders, and participated in a business signing ceremony by TRILabs. The Government of Alberta is a partner in TRILabs, Canada's largest not-for-profit information and communications technology research consortium.

The mission was successful in meeting its objectives as outlined below.

### **Mission Objectives:**

#### India:

- Raise the level of Alberta's relations with India to a new plane, given India's rapidly rising economic importance:
  - 250 million person middle class
  - world's 4<sup>th</sup> largest economy
  - slated to surpass China's population before 2030
  - recognized by Canada as one of the four key non-G8 partners.
- Build upon the success of Alberta oil and gas companies to explore additional business opportunities for Alberta in India.
- Reciprocate three visits to Alberta since 2000 by Shri Ram Naik, India's Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas.
- Recognize the important contribution that Alberta's Indo-Canadian community makes to the province, and its role in strengthening Alberta-India relations.

#### Hong Kong:

- Promote the *Alberta Advantage*.
- Assist in the development of strong business contacts in Hong Kong to help facilitate business initiatives by Alberta companies in the region.
- Support the technical collaboration between TRILabs, in which the Government of Alberta partners, and two development centres at the Hong Kong Cyberport.

### **Results:**

#### India:

*January 12*

The first day of the mission to India began with the Premier promoting Alberta's world-leading status in oil and gas production to the chairman of the oil and gas committee of the Confederation of Indian Industries, India's leading business association. Premier Klein invited the organization to send representatives to the upcoming Global Petroleum Show in Calgary to further explore the products and services available in Alberta.

During a reception for 60 representatives of Alberta businesses and the Alberta Indo-Canadian community who had traveled to India to informally participate in the mission, Premier Klein acknowledged their contribution and interest. For many Indo-Albertans the mission was an auspicious occasion representing an opportunity to begin building stronger bridges between Alberta and India.

*January 13*

The day began with the Premier delivering a major address at the opening of the 2004 Indian Oil and Gas Conference in New Delhi. The conference was attended by several hundred representatives of the Indian oil and gas industry, along with energy representatives from other countries. The Premier's address provided information to the delegates on Alberta's energy reserves, and expertise in oil and gas development, production and services. The speech also promoted Alberta's strengths and pro-business attitude, and encouraged Indian investment in Alberta.

Premier Klein then met with Shri Ram Naik, India's Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas, who had also been a keynote speaker at the conference. The Premier reinforced the interest and ability of Alberta firms to continue to work with India as it redoubles its domestic oil and gas exploration and production efforts. The Premier also promoted Alberta's expertise in the area of coal bed methane extraction. Minister Naik then hosted a luncheon for the Premier's delegation, which included key business and government representatives involved in India's energy sector.

Premier Klein also took the opportunity to meet with executives of Niko Resources Ltd. of Calgary and to congratulate them on making one of the world's largest natural gas discoveries in India in 2002. The Premier was interested in hearing of their experiences as Alberta's largest corporate investor in India. In doing so, they have helped to increase Alberta exports to India by actively encouraging other Alberta firms to work there. In a show of respect to the people of India, the Alberta delegation, led by Premier Klein, laid a wreath at the Gandhi memorial. Called the *Raj Ghat*, it is the site of the Mahatma's cremation and is a strong symbol of India's independence and nationhood.

The Premier hosted a reception at the Canadian High Commissioner's residence attended by 175 representatives of the Indian corporate and government sectors; Alberta businesses with activities in India; Indo-Canadian community members; and prominent Indians with links to Alberta.

*January 14*

To reciprocate visits to significant sites in Alberta by representatives of the Government of India, the Alberta delegation traveled to Agra to make official visits to the Agra Red Fort and the Taj Mahal.

*January 15*

After travelling from New Delhi to Mumbai in the Indian state of Maharashtra, Premier Klein met with Shri Sushil Kumar Sambhaji Rao Shinde, the Chief Minister of Maharashtra, to promote Alberta as a business partner. Mumbai is the centre of India's oil and gas industry, home to India's stock exchange, film industry ("Bollywood"), a significant portion of the country's manufacturing sector, and is where most Alberta firms with offices in India are located.

*January 16*

On the final full day of his mission to India, Premier Klein met with representatives from India's leading engineering and construction company to promote the expertise of Alberta companies in oil and gas service and supply, and information technology; and to promote Alberta as a place for the company to consider doing even more business. At the same time, Minister Zwozdesky and MLA Shariff visited Mumbai's "film city", met with their film commissioner and some prominent filmmakers, and promoted Alberta as a prime location for Indian film production.

Following an interview with India's leading business newspaper, the day concluded with a reception hosted by the Canadian Consulate and attended by over 100 Mumbai business and community leaders. The Premier promoted Alberta's strengths and encouraged them to explore Alberta-India business opportunities, focusing particularly on oil and gas developments.

Hong Kong:

*January 19*

En route back to Alberta, Premier Klein stopped in Hong Kong to renew contacts with several leading Hong Kong corporations to apprise them of recent developments and opportunities in Alberta. The Premier toured the headquarters of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC) and met with David Eldon, the bank's Chairman.

The Premier also attended the signing ceremony between TRILabs and two development centres at the Hong Kong Cyberport. The Alberta government is a partner in TRILabs, Canada's largest not-for-profit information and communications technology research consortium. The event provided the opportunity to promote Alberta's wireless technology expertise and encourage further collaboration for mutual benefit.