



**CONSULATE GENERAL OF INDIA**  
**VANCOUVER**

**PRESS RELEASE**

**CONSULATE CELEBRATES 77<sup>TH</sup> INDEPENDENCE DAY AND  
HONOURED VARISHTH YODDHA IN EDMONTON 2023**

As part of the culmination of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav celebrations, the Consulate General of India in Vancouver celebrated the 77<sup>th</sup> Independence Day of India and organized the “Varishth Yoddha” event to honour and felicitate veterans of Indian Armed Forces on 20 August 2023 in Edmonton, Alberta. Alberta Province is home to hundreds of veterans who have served in Indian Army, Navy and Air Force. The objective of the event was to recognize the veterans over 75 years of age for their service to India. The event was attended by over 350 guests, which included 34 veterans.

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi, Mayor of the City of Edmonton and Hon. Shane Getson, Member of Legislative Assembly and Chief Whip of the Government of Alberta were the Guests of Honour. Hon. Jasvir Deol, Hon. Rakhi Pancholi, Hon. Nathan Ip, Hon. Christina Gray, Members of Legislative Assembly of Alberta, and City Councillors were also in attendance. In addition, Leaders of various Indian diaspora Associations in Edmonton and Calgary, leaders of business community, members of Indian diaspora, friends of India, members of Indian Armed Forces veteran and media attended the felicitation event.

All the veterans were felicitated with plaques and shawls by Consul General Manish. In his address, Consul General highlighted the contribution of Armed Forces veterans in preserving the sovereignty and territorial integrity of India; the various initiatives of GOI for armed forces veterans; Indian Government initiative to engage with diaspora across the global; India’s achievements in various sectors; forthcoming G-20 Summit, commonalities between Indian and Canadian societies. He thanked the Indian diaspora for their great contribution to both India & Canada and acting as a bridge between our two countries and requested their partnership in India’s growth story and actively participate and contribute as India begins its journey in “Amrit Kaal”.

Guest of Honour Hon. Amarjeet Sohi, Mayor of Edmonton, addressed the audience on behalf of City of Edmonton. He paid tribute to the ex-servicemen, thanked the Consulate and Government of India’s initiative to recognize the contribution of Indian veterans living abroad. He remembered the earlier settlers from India who came to Canada and lauded the role of Indo-Canadian community working with each other contributing to the prosperity of Edmonton.

Hon. Shane Getson, MLA and Chief Whip of the Government of Alberta addressed the audience on behalf of the Government of Alberta. While congratulating the Consulate for organizing the event, he spoke about the role of Indian diaspora in democratic societies of India and Canada and reaffirmed to work together to achieve common goals towards progress and prosperity of both the countries

Hon. Jasvir Deol and Hon. Rakhi Pancholi, Members of Legislative Assembly, in their addresses congratulated India and Indian diaspora on the 77th Independence day and appreciated the efforts of the Consulate for organizing the event, first of its kind in Edmonton, to recognize the contribution of Indian Armed Forces veterans to set an example for the next generation. They also highlighted the role of Indo-Canadian community in the progress of Canada.

Mr. Balbir Singh Kullar, President of Millwood Culture Society of Retired and Semi Retired dwelt upon the contribution of veterans in India's freedom struggle and appreciated the Consulate for coming and supporting the veterans residing in Edmonton area.

A colourful and energetic cultural programme showcasing the richness of India's cultural heritage was also organized with the participation of local diaspora dance groups.

This was the first such programme organized in the city of Edmonton and was received with a lot of enthusiasm by every one. This was the third "Varishth Yoddha" event organized by the Consulate to celebrate Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav. The first "Varishth Yoddha" event was organized in Vancouver on 31 October 2021 and the second "Varishth Yoddha" event was organized on 23 September 2022 in Calgary.

Vancouver  
20 August 2023