

The trouble in India creates tension in Canada -- tension that can explode into violence even here. Canada as a nation reaches out to all cultures, all colours, all corners of this globe to draw people together in a free and diverse society. Canadians from India came here early -- particularly Sikh Canadians, who have been in Western Canada since the beginning of the century. They have brought their culture to Canada, and practiced it as Canadians.

But now the peace of the Sikh community in Canada is threatened by the violence in Punjab. The security of relatives is threatened. And, tragically, a tiny group of Canadians of Sikh origin abuses their rights, in Canada, by counselling or pursuing terrorism in India, or supporting separatism there. The majority of Canadians of Sikh origin work tirelessly and fearlessly to ensure that moderate views prevail in the Canadian community. This Government, encourages those moderates, and opposes extremists who abuse Canadian law and traditions.

But the connections between the Punjab and Canada are personal and profound. It is much more difficult to encourage moderation in Canada while violence continues in Amritsar and elsewhere. Among the urgent issues we share in common is the need to bring peace and justice to the Punjab, and we pray that occurs.

I need hardly remind an audience like this of India's importance in Asia, or Asia's importance in today's world. The words "Asia" and "future" are synonymous. Sixty percent of the world's population now lives in Asia. By the end of the century, it will be close to seventy percent - which means that four out of every six persons on earth will live in that region.

Their economic dynamism is shaping the whole world economy. The Asian nations, more than most, have embraced new technologies that transform our world. By the next century, the economies of the Asian countries will be more diversified than the economies of Europe, or those of North America.

The GATT now ranks trans-Pacific trade ahead of trade across the Atlantic. Five of the world's leading exporters were in Asia in 1985. In 1973, only one Asian country made the list -- that was Japan.

India is assuming an increasingly important role in the overall Asian economy. It ranks among the top industrialized nations of the world. It has the third largest reservoir of trained people in the fields of science and management and technology; it has abundant raw materials, a work force which includes a high percentage of skilled workers, and a large and growing domestic market, which can absorb the full range of consumer goods. In short, India is a country on the move, a country where Canada and Canadians can and should do a lot more business.