

# Students: Most no-shows from India likely still in Canada, expert says

■ FROM A1

Indian law-enforcement officials said last month that they are investigating alleged links between dozens of colleges in Canada taking in international students and two “entities” in India alleged to be involved in illegally transporting people across the Canada-U.S. border. Instead of studying in Canada, the students allegedly crossed the border illegally into the United States.

The RCMP said in a statement that it has “reached out to India through its International Policing Liaison Officers to seek additional information on investigations.”

Mr. Lotin, founder of the consultancy firm Integrative Trade and Economics, said most of the Indian students who were no-shows at their schools had likely not slipped over the border into the U.S. but were probably still in Canada, working and aiming to settle here. There was a record increase in the number of international students claiming asylum in Canada last year.

Mr. Lotin said a “very small subset were going to the States. Most aspire to work and become permanent residents of Canada.”

Immigration Minister Marc Miller toughened rules for international students in November in an attempt to clamp down on abuse. Colleges and universities that fail to submit compliance reports could now be suspended from accepting international students for up to a year.

## Top 10 countries of student origin with the most “no-shows” in spring 2024, ranked by the total number of non-compliant students

	TOTAL NON-COMPLIANT STUDENTS	PERCENTAGE OF NON-COMPLIANT STUDENTS (IN %)
India	19,582.00	5.4
China	4,279.00	6.4
Nigeria	3,902.00	10.7
Ghana	2,712.00	31.1
Iran	1,848.00	11.6
Democratic Rep. of Congo	1,166.00	34.8
Bangladesh	984.00	7.5
Vietnam	912.00	8.5
Rwanda	802.00	48.1
Philippines	688.00	2.2

THE GLOBE AND MAIL, SOURCE: IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP CANADA

IRCC conducts further checks on students who appear to be non-compliant with the terms of their study permits that are issued to students who have been accepted at a Canadian college or university.

“Canada has seen an increase in exploitation of its temporary resident visas, including students. What was once a low-risk temporary resident program is now being assessed as higher-risk given changes to the global migration context, including the

growing number of conflicts and crises, increased abuse and fraud, and increased organized smuggling,” said Renée LeBlanc Proctor, spokesperson for Mr. Miller.

“Canada is also aware of the reports of individuals crossing irregularly into the U.S. from Canada, often with the help of facilitation or smuggling networks.”

In total, 49,676 international students enrolled in Canadian colleges and universities apparently failed to adhere to the terms of their visas and turn up



People pass ad banners promoting study options in Canada, other nations at a market in Amritsar, Punjab, October, 2024. PRABHJOT GILL/AP

to study, according to the IRCC figures. In addition to that, colleges and universities failed to report on the status of a further 23,514 international students – representing 3.3 per cent in the IRCC records.

“In broad terms this shows that at least 10 per cent of student visa holders are unaccounted for,” Mr. Lotin said. “For the first time, we have definitive data. There are still questions about where all student visa holders are.”

Another problem that Mr. Lotin pointed out is a difference between Statistics Canada and the immigration department in how numbers of international students are tracked.

“Statistics Canada, which has its own methodology of counting population, indicates there were over one million valid student holders in April. But the

IRCC data that looks at enrolment has a significantly smaller number of international students. This is a gap that suggests that an even larger number of students are not accounted for than the compliance data suggests.”

“There is an urgent need for better and more transparent data,” he added.

Tom Kmiec, Conservative immigration critic, blamed the government for mismanaging the immigration system.

Winnipeg immigration lawyer David Matas said foreign agents or consultants, rather than student applicants, were behind the abuse of study permits.

“One change, which would stand against this sort of fraud, is to allow applicants to use the services of only Canadian lawyers and consultants, both of whom are regulated,” he said.