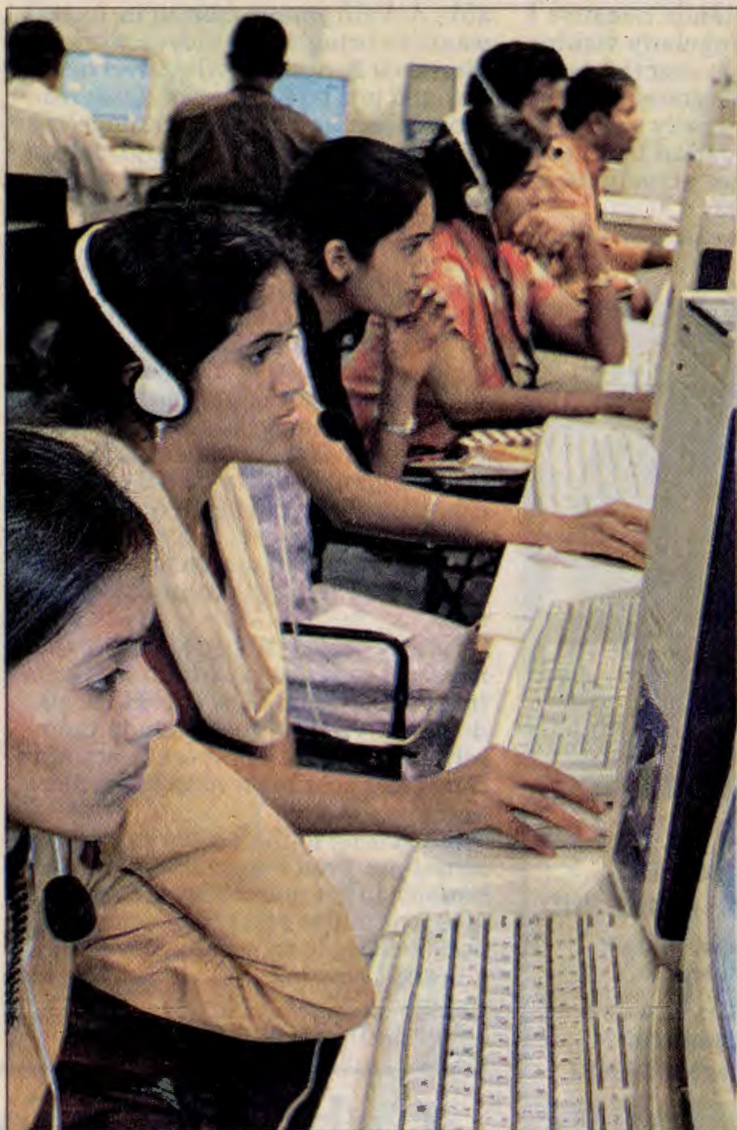




NAMAS BHOJANI/BOOMBERG NEWS

Visitors to the Bangalore IT.com fair test for call centre jobs. Such call centres already serve Canadian firms.



ELIZABETH DALZIEL/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Textiles could be a stumbling block to any free-trade agreement, as Canada would like to protect its industry.

Trade deal with India would provide access to huge market

NEGOTIATIONS | Long way to go before any agreement is signed

ASIA IN BUSINESSBC

BY JOANNE LEE-YOUNG
VANCOUVER SUN

When Tom Sundher, president of Surrey-based Coast Clear Wood, started exporting to India seven years ago, a container of his lumber for making doors, windows and cabinets would arrive in Mumbai and be stamped with a staggering duty of 37.5 per cent.

"For my customers, paying that much more on the invoice price was huge," said Sundher.

Over the years, that charge by the Indian government has slowly come down to about 17 per cent. Sundher estimates that this has, in part, allowed him to triple his business.

If the duty could be wiped

Indian red tape

While a Canada/India free trade agreement would ease commerce between the two countries, Canadians considering whether to start a business in the subcontinent or Asia's other rapidly growing economy, China, will want to consider this comparison of business procedures.

INDIA

Time to start a business	71 days
Difficulty of hiring index (0-100)	56
Difficulty of firing index (0-100)	90
Documents needed for export	10
Signatures required for export	22
Time to export goods	36 days
Overall rank	116/155

CHINA

Time to start a business	48 days
Difficulty of hiring index (0-100)	11
Difficulty of firing index (0-100)	40
Documents needed for export	6
Signatures required for export	7
Time to export goods	20 days
Overall rank	91/155

SOURCE: DOING BUSINESS IN 2006, WORLD BANK

out completely, Sundher thinks he could not only further increase orders with existing customers, but also add new ones beyond the port city.

"The savings would make it affordable for customers that

have to build in over-land transportation costs, like rail or truck, to consider us. We could explore farther inland," he said.

There has been much touting of the prospects ahead

since Ottawa announced a few weeks ago that it is officially pursuing a free-trade agreement with India.

In a nutshell, India's rising

See **B.C. COMPANIES** F2