

## INDIA - NEW ZEALAND: BILATERAL BRIEF

### Political Relations:

India and New Zealand historically share close and cordial ties. Diplomatic relations between the two countries were established in 1952. Commonalities such as membership of the Commonwealth, upholding of common law practices and pursuing shared aspirations of achieving economic development and prosperity through democratic governance systems for diverse communities in both countries (NZ also has a sizeable Maori and Polynesian population) provide an excellent backdrop for deepening ongoing ties. Tourism and sporting links, particularly in cricket, hockey and mountaineering, have also played a significant role in fostering goodwill between the two countries. Both countries are fellow travellers in their commitment to disarmament, global peace, North-South Dialogue, human rights, ecological preservation and combating international terrorism. NZ has recently commissioned an India Strategy, aiming to make India a core trading, economic and political partner for NZ in the coming years.

In recent years there has been a significant increase in interest of leadership of both the countries to take the relationship to a higher level, reflected in high level exchange of visits including that of the Hon'ble President to New Zealand (30 April – 2 May, 2016) and the then NZ PM John Key (25-27 October, 2016). During the visit of PM John Key, agreements on food safety, double tax avoidance and cooperation in the field of youth affairs and sports were signed. It was also decided to establish a ministerial dialogue, annual Foreign Office Consultations and a dialogue on cyber security. During the visit of Hon'ble President to NZ, an Air Services Agreement and an MoU between ICCR and Victoria University to extend the Indian Chair in Wellington were signed. PM Shri Narendra Modi and PM Ardern met on the sidelines of East Asia Summit in Manila on 13 November 2017 and again on 25 September, 2019 on the side lines of UNGA, where they discussed the entire gamut of bilateral relations. PM Jacinda Ardern was also one of five world leaders chosen to speak at the special event at UNGA to commemorate 150<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary Celebration on 24 September, 2019. Other significant recent visits / meetings include that of Admiral Karambir Singh, Chief of Naval staff (4-7 September, 2019), visit of Leader of Opposition Simon Bridges (29 August – 5 September, 2019), meeting of Minister of Commerce & Industry Shri Piyush Goyal with NZ Minister of State for Trade and Export Growth Damien O'Connor on 10 September, 2019 on the sidelines of RCEP Ministerial meeting in Bangkok, meeting of EAM with NZ Foreign Minister Winston Peters on the sidelines of ASEAN in Bangkok on 1 August, 2019, visit of Ms. Helen Clark, former PM of New Zealand to attend Raisina Dialogue (13-17s January 2020), visit of Mr. Amitabh Kant, CEO of NITI Aayog for receiving the Prime Minister's Sir Edmund Hillary Fellowship for 2017 (30 April – 6 May, 2017), visit of NZ Chief of Defence Forces (19-23 Feb 2018), visit of MoS (VKS) (7-9 June, 2017), visit of Hon'ble Speaker of Lok Sabha (17-25 September, 2016) and visit of a multi-party Parliamentary Goodwill delegation from India(1-3 June, 2015).

**Bilateral institutional mechanisms:** India-NZ Foreign Office Consultations were held on 5 December 2017. Indian side was led by Secretary (East) while the NZ side was led by Foreign Secretary Mr. Brook Barrington. The first India-NZ Cyber

Dialogue was held on 27 November 2017 in New Delhi. The 6<sup>th</sup> India-NZ Economic Dialogue was held in Wellington from 20-21 July, 2017.

**INSV Tarini**, with its all women crew, arrived in New Zealand on 29 November, 2017 during its maiden voyage to circumnavigate the globe. It was welcomed by Deputy Mayor of Christchurch. INS Sumitra participated in the International Fleet Review to celebrate 75<sup>th</sup> Year of New Zealand Navy at Auckland from 16-22 November, 2016.

### **Commercial relations:**

In 2018, two-way trade between India and New Zealand stood at US \$ 2.12 bn, making India the 11<sup>th</sup> largest trading partner of New Zealand. NZ merchandise exports to India mostly consist of logs and forestry products, mineral fuels and oil, wood pulp, wood, edible fruit and nuts whereas Indian exports to New Zealand comprise of pharmaceuticals, precious metals and gems, textiles and motor vehicles. Education and tourism have emerged as main growth sectors in services. The number of tourists from India have more than doubled in the last 5 years and now exceeds 70,000 per annum.

	NZ Exports to India		NZ Imports from India		Total trade
	Goods	Services	Goods	Services	
2018	US\$507.85 m	US\$935.71	US\$506.42m	US\$177.14m	US\$2.12b
2017	US\$485.71 m	US\$805 m	US\$423.57 m	US\$189.28m	US\$1.91 b
2016	US\$456.42 m	US\$794.28 m	US\$404.28 m	US\$176.42 m	US\$1.83 b

**Cooperation in primary sector:** In August, 2018, NZ dairy giant Fonterra announced its partnership with India's Future Group to make a range of diary products for the Indian market. Ministry of Agriculture of India and the Ministry for Primary Industries of NZ signed an agreement in 2012 for export of Mangoes to New Zealand. Both countries are negotiating an MOU on cooperation in agriculture, dairying and fisheries.

**Cooperation in the field of S&T:** The 3<sup>rd</sup> India-NZ Joint Committee Meeting on Science & Technology Committee was held in New Delhi on 23 May, 2016. NZ

**Free Trade Agreement:** Negotiations for an FTA commenced in April, 2010 and the 10<sup>th</sup> round was held in New Delhi from 16-18 February 2015. Negotiations have continued on the side-lines of RCEP negotiations, where more focus has shifted recently.

**Air connectivity:** Given the size of Indian diaspora and the two way flow of travellers for business and tourism, having a direct scheduled flight between the two countries may be game changer in taking the bilateral relations to a new level. In this connection, a high level 9-member delegation headed by CEO of Auckland Airport and comprising of other stakeholders in aviation and tourism visited India in the first week of September, 2019 and met Civil Aviation and Tourism Secretaries.

### **Cultural relations:**

Given the vast diaspora exceeding 2,00,000, all Indian festivals like Diwali, Holi, Onam, etc are celebrated with much enthusiasm by various community associations across New Zealand. Since 2002, Diwali has been recognized as the representative festival of the Indian community in New Zealand and week-long celebrations are organized every year by the Asia-New Zealand Foundation in all the major cities of NZ under the aegis of the respective city councils. In October 2018, in a historic first the Auckland Harbour Bridge was lit up in colours of Diwali lights.

National Days such as Independence Day, Republic Day and Gandhi Jayanti are also celebrated with great pride by various community associations in addition to celebrations hosted by the High Commission in Wellington.

Many celebrations were held across New Zealand to mark the start of the 150<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi on 2 October, 2018. NZ Members of Parliament, Mayors, prominent Indians and members of the Kiwi and Kiwi-Indian community gathered at the Gandhi statue at the Wellington Railway station to pay homage. On the evening of 5 October, 2018, a special event was held at Bharat Bhawan in Wellington, which was attended by the former Governor General of NZ Sir Anand Satyanand, Finance Minister Grant Robertson, Members of Parliament, diplomatic corp, prominent Indians and members of the Kiwi and Kiwi-Indian community.

### **Indian community:**

As per the recently released figures of 2018 census, the number of Indian-origin people, including Fiji Indians, in New Zealand has crossed 2,30,000, contributing to 4.7% of New Zealand population. The Indian community mainly hails from Punjab and Gujarat and is concentrated in big cities like Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington and Christchurch. Most of the Indian community is engaged in grocery business and dairy farming but there are also a significant number of professionals like doctors, professors, engineers, chartered accountants and IT professionals. There are several Indian diaspora associations formed across pan-india, regional and religious lines. New Zealand India Central Association is the umbrella association of regional associations. Currently, there are three Indian origin MPs in New Zealand Parliament. There are more than 30,000 Indian students pursuing higher education in IT, hospitality and other areas in universities and private training institutes. This makes India the second largest source of students after China.

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