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# India-New Zealand FTA 2026 — 100% Duty-Free Access, AYUSH Annex, 5,000 Work Visas

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# India-New Zealand FTA 2026 — 100% Duty-Free Access, AYUSH Annex, 5,000 Work Visas

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## WHY IN NEWS

India and New Zealand signed a landmark **Free Trade Agreement (FTA)** on April 27, 2026 — a 20-chapter comprehensive agreement that grants **100% duty-free access for India’s exports across all tariff lines** in New Zealand, secures **5,000 annual work visas** for Indian professionals, includes a pioneering **AYUSH annex**, and targets doubling bilateral trade to **\$5 billion in 5 years**. The agreement was signed in the presence of Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal and his New Zealand counterpart.

## TRADE PROVISIONS — WHAT INDIA GETS

PROVISION	DETAIL
Market access	<b>100% duty-free</b> on all tariff lines — India’s exports across all categories get zero-duty entry
Targeted sectors	Textiles, apparel, leather, footwear, gems & jewellery, engineering goods, processed food
FDI commitment	New Zealand commits <b>\$20 billion</b> in FDI to India over 15 years
Trade target	Double bilateral trade to <b>\$5 billion in 5 years</b> (from ~\$2.5 billion in FY26)
MSME benefit	Special provisions for MSME access — simplified rules of origin, reduced compliance costs
Agriculture	India’s farm exports (fruits, rice, spices) get zero-duty access to NZ market

## Sectors India Protects

India refused to give duty concessions in **politically sensitive categories**:

- **Dairy** — milk, cream, whey, yoghurt, cheese entirely excluded (protecting Indian milk producers)
- **Vegetable products** — onions, chana, peas, corn, almonds
- **Sugar and artificial honey**
- **Gems and jewellery** (imports into India)
- **Copper, aluminium products**

## LABOUR MOBILITY — THE MIGRATION PACKAGE

The FTA’s labour mobility provisions are the most comprehensive India has secured in any bilateral trade agreement to date:

PROVISION	DETAIL
Temporary work visas	<b>5,000 annually</b> — IT, engineering, healthcare, AYUSH practitioners, Indian chefs, music teachers
Stay duration	Up to 3 years per visa
Working holiday visas	<b>1,000 annually</b> — young Indians, up to 1 year in New Zealand
Post-study rights	Extended post-study work rights for Indian students in New Zealand
Professions included	AYUSH practitioners, yoga instructors, Indian chefs, music teachers — first time NZ recognises Indian traditional health professions

## THE AYUSH ANNEX — A HISTORIC FIRST

The FTA includes a **dedicated annex on Health and Traditional Medicine** — the first time New Zealand has included such a provision in any trade agreement. It opens New Zealand’s regulated healthcare market to:

- **Ayurveda practitioners**
- **Yoga instructors** (recognised as a wellness profession)
- **Indian traditional chefs** (positioned as culinary wellness)

This creates a regulatory pathway for AYUSH services in a developed English-speaking country with strict healthcare licensing — a precedent that India can cite in future FTA negotiations with the UK, EU, and Canada.

## STRUCTURE OF THE AGREEMENT — 20 CHAPTERS

CHAPTER AREA	SIGNIFICANCE
Trade in Goods	Zero duty schedule for India on all NZ tariff lines
Rules of Origin	Simplified for MSME exporters
Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS)	NZ to recognise India's food safety standards
Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT)	Mutual recognition for engineering goods
Services	IT/ITES, education, financial services, tourism, construction
Investment	\$20 billion commitment; investor protections
Labour Mobility	5,000 work visas + 1,000 working holiday
Dispute Settlement	Panel-based arbitration mechanism
Health & Traditional Medicine	AYUSH annex — historic first

## INDIA-NEW ZEALAND BILATERAL CONTEXT

INDICATOR	DETAIL
Current bilateral trade	~\$2.5 billion (FY2025-26)
India's exports to NZ	Pharmaceuticals, engineering goods, textiles, IT services
NZ exports to India	Education services, dairy (not covered under FTA), wool, meat
Indian diaspora in NZ	~250,000 (one of the fastest-growing communities)
Indian students in NZ	~40,000 (largest international student group)
NZ GDP	~\$260 billion; India's ~\$3.7 trillion

## UPSC RELEVANCE

PAPER	ANGLE
GS2 — IR	India's FTA strategy; bilateral trade relations; AYUSH diplomacy
GS3 — Economy	FTA provisions; trade in goods vs services; MSME exports; dairy protection
GS2 — Governance	Labour mobility; visa frameworks in trade agreements

**Mains Keywords:** India-New Zealand FTA, free trade agreement, 100% duty-free, AYUSH annex, work visas, FDI commitment, dairy exclusion, trade in services, rules of origin, MSME exports

### Facts Corner

ITEM	FACT
FTA signed	April 27, 2026
Chapters	20
India export access to NZ	100% tariff lines — zero duty
Work visas	5,000 annually (up to 3 years)
Working holiday visas	1,000 annually
FDI commitment	\$20 billion over 15 years
Trade target	\$5 billion in 5 years
Dairy	Completely excluded from India's concessions
AYUSH annex	First ever in a NZ FTA
Sectors benefiting India	Textiles, leather, footwear, gems, engineering, processed food

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