

KiaOra INDIA



THE NEW ZEALAND-INDIA TRADE MAGAZINE

SPOTLIGHT ON
NZ India Diplomacy

NZ's ambition to lift the bilateral relationship is clear : Patrick Rata

Recent High level delegations, a significant milestone: Neeta Bhushan



Meet the New NZ High Commissioner to India, Patrick Rata

Indian Exhibitors Make Their Mark at Two Expos in NZ

India's NEP presents challenges and opportunities for NZ: Penny Simmonds

NZ companies can help build a skilled workforce that can drive India's tech ambitions: Chandan Dhri

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NAVIGATING INDIA'S TECH LANDSCAPE

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FROM THE CHAIR

KIA ORA INDIA | JUNE 2024

Kia ora and Namaste from INZBC.

Welcome to the first issue of Kia Ora India magazine for 2024.

Over the past 18 months, we've made significant strides in strengthening ties between our two nations. As the New Zealand government continues to increase its engagement and focus on India, INZBC has been working closely with officials, business leaders, members and key partners to create opportunities for New Zealand and Indian businesses and we're really encouraged by the progress and the opportunities we're seeing open up.

Already since the start of the year, we have hosted 13 events and webinars highlighting trade relations with India, such is the level of interest and the range of things to talk about. We've hosted India's Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal, the Indian High Commissioner Neeta Bhushan, and facilitated events with the Minister for Tertiary Education and Skills Penny Simmonds, as well as the Trade Minister Todd McClay.

Delivering on our ambition to create commercial opportunities for our stakeholders, we collaborated with our partners, the Federation of Indian Exporters (FIEO), to host a buyer-seller meet with a delegation of 50 exporters from India. This was followed by the India Pavilion at EMEX 2024, where 30 Indian companies showcased their products and services and explored partnerships with New Zealand businesses in the manufacturing and engineering industries.

And we continue to work with our partners across the board to support the interests of our members and our ambition to create opportunities for you.

These events and collaborations have benefited businesses across both countries. Feedback from the government and business community indicates that New Zealand is visible in India and presenting good opportunities – and there's a lot more on the horizon.

This success is a credit to everyone already doing business in India, representing New Zealand in India, or involved in promoting New Zealand.

It has also been encouraging to see more and more new members, across New Zealand and India, joining INZBC to support our purpose and efforts to deliver more value for you.

We expect events and engagement to increase significantly over the year. Keep an eye out for news on our annual summit, which brings together business, community, and political leaders and is a great opportunity to discuss ideas for closer collaboration.

We are also in the early stages of planning our next delegation to India. And the second edition of our influential report on the India-New Zealand relationship and the consolidated thoughts of key leaders on how to take it forward it well underway ahead of a release later this year.

As we celebrate these achievements, I invite you to delve into this issue which shows just how broad and active the relationship is.

The magazine features a range of interviews including with New Zealand's new High Commissioner to India, Patrick Rata outlining his focus and insights. It's great to see Patrick also acknowledging the contribution and knowledge of INZBC and our members too.

You can hear from Indian High Commissioner to New Zealand Neeta Bhushan who continues to show outstanding leadership and to put forward ideas to build ties and to help New Zealand business understand India, Trade Commissioner Graham Rouse, Minister of Tertiary Education and Skills Penny Simmonds, and many more – this issue has some great insights from some of the key figures in the India-New Zealand relationship and emphasises the opportunities which are opening up in so many areas and some of the lessons from people who are already there. I hope you enjoy reading it.

As always, we are here to support you, so if you have any questions or suggestions, please get in touch.

Warm regards ,
Michael Fox
Chair, INZBC



Michael Fox
Chair, INZBC

Michael Fox is Zespri's Head of Global Public Affairs whose team has responsibility for Zespri's global communications, government and international relations, trade, advocacy, policy and regulatory portfolios as well as the community investment and tours and events programmes. Michael holds a number of other advisory roles including Chair of the India New Zealand Business Council and sitting on the New Zealand International Business Forum and Export New Zealand Advisory Board.

NZ's ambition to lift the bilateral relationship is clear: Patrick Rata

In one of his first interviews since becoming the New Zealand High Commissioner to India, Patrick Rata discusses with INZBC's Priti Garude-Kasture, growth in bilateral relations through trade, cultural exchange, and high-level engagement, connecting with NZ businesses, industry partnerships, and his love for the Indian cuisine.

What are your plans, focus for your tenure, and has work already begun in any of the areas?

India is vast and important. It's the world's most populated country, world's largest democracy, world's fifth largest economy, and its economy is one of the fastest growing on the planet. India is a global player, increasingly active in world affairs. It's a country of incredible history, contrast, and diversity. It's always been important to New Zealand.

My focus is clear. In meetings with President Murmu, External Affairs Minister Jaishankar, other Ministers, senior Indian officials, and businesspeople, I'm conveying the Prime Minister and Government's ambition to achieve a significant lift in bilateral ties. I'm repeating Foreign Minister Peters' determination that New Zealand and India are two countries that can, should, and will be doing more together.

The really exciting part is that India shares our ambition. Like us, they want to achieve a relationship that is broad-based and brings benefits for both our countries.

Realising this shared ambition means work. The High Commission and NZ Inc agencies are pursuing opportunities in India to strengthen ties. With guidance from home, we're supporting New Zealand's desire for increased high-level contacts, deeper dialogues on defence and security issues and peace and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region, and greater trade, economic and business connections. We're also working in traditional areas like people links, air connectivity, education, tourism, and cultural and sporting linkages.

New Zealand has the work underway already. Take high-level engagement for example. Both Foreign Minister Peters and Trade Minister McClay have visited India recently and both want to return. The Prime Minister intends to visit and other Ministers also want to build rapport with Indian counterparts. In the other direction, New Zealand is keen to host Indian leaders and there have been senior officials' trade consultations held in Wellington. These contacts show New Zealand's commitment, relevance, and value-add to India.

Your appointment comes at a time where there is heightened trade and political engagement between our two countries. How do you plan to engage with the NZ business community to increase areas of opportunities and reduce trade barriers between the two countries?

I'm pleased I have contacts in the New Zealand business



community already and the engagement is ongoing. Prior to leaving New Zealand, I had the opportunity to meet with individual businesses with links to India, as well as important associations such as the INZBC. I've continued this engagement from New Delhi, including through contacts with the India Oceania Business Association. If New Zealand businesspeople are here or passing through, I'll try to meet them together with my NZTE colleagues.

The contacts are important. They're a way to support businesses - by keeping them informed, building their knowledge of the Indian economy, and encouraging their efforts to trade with India and establish mutually beneficial collaborations with Indian partners. Also, to the extent the Government wants to grow the economic and trade links with India, including through our continuing aspiration for an FTA, it's vital we understand New Zealand businesses' interests and ambitions in this country, and challenges and market access issues faced.

There are several education partnerships that have been previously established - NZ Centre at IIT Delhi, the New Zealand Excellence Award scholarships - will you be looking at other industries to build such partnerships as well?

Let's start with education. The partnership with New Zealand Centre at IIT Delhi is a flagship initiative. The Centre serves as a forum for India-New Zealand dialogue in different sectors (government, academia, and business) and across many areas of mutual interest such as education, cultural exchange and cooperation, economic transformation, innovation and national growth strategies.

As well, earlier this year Education New Zealand signed two Education Cooperation Arrangements (ECAs) and one Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Higher Education Department, Government of Karnataka; Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad (IIMA); and Gujarat International Finance Tech City (GIFT City) respectively. These ECAs and MOU provide high-level umbrella arrangements for New Zealand universities to explore potential collaborations with each of the partners.

Another sector is aviation. In March, an enhanced Air Services Agreement between New Zealand and India came into force - making code sharing on services between our two countries easier. Across a range of other sectors - horticulture, F&B, tech services, health services and others - New Zealand is looking to lay foundations for enhanced trade and economic engagement and partnerships.

And don't forget New Zealand businesses are already leading the way through engagement and partnerships. New Zealand technology helped India's successful Chandrayan 3 lunar landing. Kiwi digital innovation is supporting India's housing and property ecosystem. Our kiwifruit sector is exploring opportunities to support Indian farmers by growing better fruit.

Immigration, trade barriers lie in the way of smooth business relationships with India. What's your message to NZ businesses that are facing these issues, and more?

The Indian market can be challenging as well as rewarding. One piece of advice is to make use of the resources provided by the INZBC. And in addition to the helpful publications the Council generates, I mean the huge depth of knowledge provided by the Council's membership. You have some of the most experienced New Zealand businesses with understanding of the Indian market in your membership, which is an absolute asset that should be made use of. If there are barriers you are facing, most likely others have faced them in the past.

Colleagues at NZTE can be helpful with guidance to their clients and publications about the Indian market. They have hugely talented staff in India and a network of diverse and experienced senior Beachhead Advisers that can be useful in this respect. Other NZ Inc colleagues at NZ Customs and MPI work to address regulatory challenges and smooth the transactions costs for New Zealand businesses in India. If you are facing particular challenges please alert us to them through



the government's Exporter Helpdesk which is specifically set up to help New Zealand businesses with these challenges: <https://www.tradebarriers.govt.nz/>

Having spent several years in South Asia, now in India and as someone who's grown up in South Auckland, what can you say about the importance of understanding the culture of a place, and how can we build people-to-people connections between NZ and India?

The more you know about a culture, the closer you get to understanding it and identifying respectful ways to engage with it.

During my time in India, I hope to focus on cultural exchange as a way of furthering people-to-people connections. This can include interactions between our two countries' cultural groups, authors, artists and musicians, and participation in each other's events. Sport is another great unifier. The influence of cricket is undeniable, as is the respect that the Black Caps receive in India. But other sports - I'm thinking of rugby and kabaddi for starters - are becoming increasingly popular in our mutual countries.

Indian-origin Kiwis make up 6 per cent of our population and the Indian diaspora in New Zealand is a significant contributor to our economy and cultural diversity. They are a wonderful platform for strengthening the ties.

What are you most looking forward to in your new role?

New Zealand's ambition to lift the bilateral relationship is clear. It's a real privilege to be here in India serving as part of a team effort to realise this ambition. And I believe the team needs to include all our stakeholders - government, New Zealand Inc, the business community, the diaspora, and our artists and sportspeople.

And lastly, outside of work, what are you most looking forward to in your time in India?

I'm looking forward to exploring and learning about this absolutely incredible country, its diverse cultures and people. I'm a huge fan of Indian cuisine; I anticipate there will be quite a lot of eating.



Recent high-level delegation significant milestones in advancing the relationship: H.E. Neeta Bhushan

India and New Zealand are forging a dynamic partnership, as high-level visits and proactive engagements spark new opportunities for trade and cooperation. H.E. Neeta Bhushan shares insights on this exciting journey toward mutual growth and collaboration.



As India and New Zealand's engagements continue to gain momentum, INZBC writer, Priti Garude-Kasture sat down for an interview with Her Excellency, Neeta Bhushan, High Commissioner of India to New Zealand who talked about the significance of the increased ministerial visits, calling this proactive approach

"a shared commitment to work together to reach the full potential of our partnership"

Following a recent visit by India's Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal, what insights can you share with NZ businesses, from the discussions of the Joint Trade Committee, with regards to market access issues, economic cooperation projects or any new initiatives?

Commerce Secretary Shri Sunil Barthwal had very productive interactions with Hon Todd McClay, Trade Minister and other senior officials in MFAT. He also addressed members of the INZBC.

This was the very first visit of India's Commerce Secretary to New Zealand in many years. This itself is indicative of the commitment from our side to engage with New Zealand at very high levels on a wide range of issues. Of course, issues related to market access, sectoral collaboration and ease of doing business in each other's countries were explored. Both sides agreed to continue discussions for mutually beneficial partnerships. Areas like food processing, storage, transportation,

pharmaceuticals and digitisation hold a lot of potential for enhancing our commercial ties.

During the Commerce Secretary's visit, a collaboration on pharmaceuticals and medical devices in the health sector was raised. Can you share some more information on this?

Yes this was an important subject. There is interest on both sides to work together in pharma as well as medical devices sector. India as you know is called the "pharmacy of the world" as we are a significant supplier of medicines and vaccines to the world.

A large number of startups and innovations are taking place in both the countries. This is a good time to explore joint research initiatives, technology tie ups etc. and learn about each other's systems and requirements.

We have had one of the largest delegations of Indian exporters visiting NZ as a part of the FIEO delegation, how did this come about and why now? Is this a part of India's larger strategy to engage more often with NZ and will we see more such delegations?

We have been consistently working on deepening our economic engagements with New Zealand. A number of organisations have been visiting to interact directly with the buyers and sellers.

The recent participation of Indian exporters in major events like the 'Super Sourcing Oceania Expo' in March 2024 and EMEX in May 2024 in Auckland indicates the renewed interest in increasing business between India and New Zealand.

In addition, at the TRENZ (travel fair) over 22 Indian tour operators participated. They mentioned that tourism had emerged as a sector with phenomenal growth prospects. Platforms like trade expos and B2B events are excellent in bringing the interested parties to together.



The High Commission has also been organising various B2B and business events from time to time. I would also like to thank INZBC for their support in making these events successful. INZBC has been a fantastic bridge for the buyers and sellers. I must put on record my appreciation for both Michael Fox as a Chair of INZBC and Garry Gupta who provides necessary assistance.

With several high-profile delegation visits to India and NZ, can we say that this bilateral relationship has taken a step forward?

Absolutely, the recent visits of high-level delegation between India and New Zealand can be seen as significant milestones in advancing the India-New Zealand relationship, paving the way for continued cooperation and shared success in the future.

The visits have provided platforms for discussions on key issues such as trade facilitation, market access, investment opportunities, and sector-specific partnerships.

This proactive approach demonstrates a shared commitment to work together to reach the full potential of our partnership. Face-to-face discussions are often quite productive as they help the businesses to see the products and gauge the possibilities for future ties.

Can you share with us any announcement about upcoming visit by any Indian Minister?

While it is not appropriate to make any public announcements about upcoming Ministerial visits before they are formalised, I can assure you that we are

committed to enhanced engagement with New Zealand across a wide range of sectors.

I can only say that "stay tuned" to "IndiainNZ" accounts for regular updates.

Any further thoughts.

You may be aware that India is the country of Honour at the Education Conference scheduled to be held in Wellington in the first week of August 2024. Indian students are the second largest group in NZ classrooms. Besides this, we have several research partnerships and MoUs between our various universities. In addition, the Indian diaspora in New Zealand is a catalyst which accelerates our business, cultural, sports and people to people ties.

I would like to convey my gratitude to our diaspora for their continued encouragement and work towards enhancing India-New Zealand partnership.



Indian Exhibitors Make Their Mark at Two Expos in NZ

The Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) made a significant impact at this year's EMEX. Showcasing India's engineering, machinery, and electronics prowess, the FIEO delegation of 27 Indian companies marked a new step in strengthening relations between New Zealand and India.

The Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) made a notable debut at the Engineering, Machinery, and Electronics Exhibition (EMEX) in Auckland, EMEX, New Zealand's leading trade show for engineering, machinery and electronics, offered a premier platform for Indian companies to highlight their strengths.

FIEO Represents 27 Indian Companies

For the first time, FIEO represented 27 Indian companies at the event. Featuring over 200 exhibitors, this year's EMEX had a dedicated international pavilion, wherein Indian exhibitors showcased their capabilities, products and talked about partnerships with local businesses.

Dr Ajay Sahai, Director General and CEO of FIEO, expressed his enthusiasm about the event. "Our participation in EMEX 2024 has been a remarkable success. Indian exhibitors have showcased an impressive array of advanced engineering products, state-of-the-art machinery, and innovative electronic solutions. The response from the global audience has been overwhelmingly positive, reflecting the high quality and competitiveness of Indian manufacturing and technological capabilities," he said.

Strong Trade and Economic Relations

Vikas Mittal, Joint Director of FIEO, echoed this sentiment. "Indian participants were pleased with the genuine interest and footfall at the exhibition. Notably, India was the only country represented in the International Pavilion," he said.

The India Pavilion was inaugurated by Mr Manoj Kumar Sahu, Second Secretary of the High Commission of India in Wellington, on 28 May 2024. He expressed his satisfaction with the large Indian delegation and emphasised the strong trade and economic relations between India and New Zealand.

He highlighted that the Indian participants not only strengthened trade ties but also created new



opportunities for economic cooperation and technological exchange.

Strategic Approach and Business Opportunities

The event saw a high turnout, with over 4,200 visitors. Several Indian exhibitors reported significant business deals and leads, indicating promising future business opportunities.

Mittal highlighted FIEO's strategic approach when participating in EMEX.

He said that having previously participated and received positive responses in Super Sourcing Oceania and New Zealand Gift & Home fairs, as well as with feedback from the Indian government, trade community, and High Commission, FIEO actively pursued the opportunity to participate in EMEX to explore the potential that exists in New Zealand and the Oceania region.

Robust Bilateral Trade

Bilateral trade between India and New Zealand reached

US\$ 873.47 million in 2023-24. Indian exports to NZ were valued at US\$538.33 million, reflecting a 9% annual growth rate over the past five years. Imports from New Zealand stood at US\$ 335.14 million, showing promising trade growth.

India primarily imports logs and forestry products, wood pulp, wool, and edible fruits and nuts from New Zealand while its exports include pharmaceuticals, precious metals and gems, textiles, motor vehicles, and non-knitted apparel and accessories.

Significant growth has been reported in exports in 22- 23 and 23 - 24 in certain sectors. Wool, fine or coarse animal hair, horsehair yarn and woven fabric has seen a rise of 325.49%. Paper and paperboard has also seen a growth of over 116%. Other sectors like glass and cereals has experienced 60% growth.

Established sectors like pharmaceuticals and apparel have also seen positive growth.

Future Prospects and Commitments

Talking about the future of this relationship, Mittal lauded New Zealand's reliable and committed business community. He said, "We have identified key sectors to focus on for further exploration and growth."

In a post-event report to its members, FIEO highlighted that in New Zealand, several categories of products, machinery, building materials, furniture, plumbing tools, and hydraulic machines for mining were in high demand.

The report noted, "These trends reflect a broader movement towards sustainability, convenience, and contemporary design preferences in New Zealand's market, as well as the ongoing needs of essential industries such as construction and mining."

"New Zealand's commitment to trade liberalisation and its active participation in international trade agreements support its export sectors, enhancing its global trade

partnerships and opening up new markets for its products."

One of the exhibitors, Prabhakaran Shanmugam, Director of Marketing and Finance from Cloudnine Machining, noted New Zealand's high growth potential. "Overall, EMEX 2024 was a good marketing space in the New Zealand landscape and a very good avenue for networking and business," he said.

Mark Lazarus, Regional head- International Business at Birla Precision Technologies said the India Pavilion showcased a broad spectrum of engineering solutions, highlighting India's advancements in the sector.

Mittal confirmed that this engineering delegation was part of a broader strategy.

"We definitely plan to participate in future exhibitions with the support of the Government of India and the High Commission in Wellington," he concluded.





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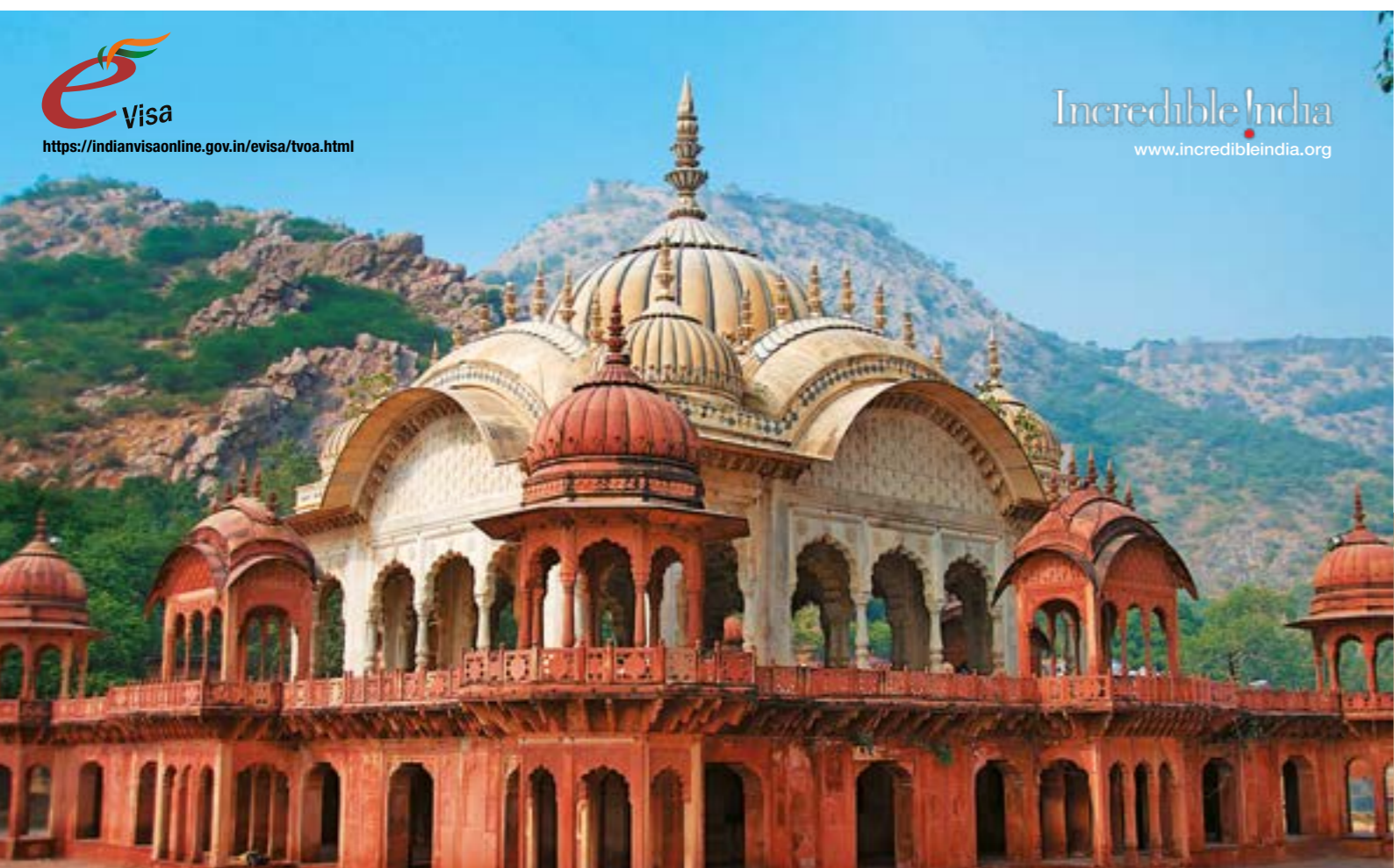
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Spotlight: Duco Consultancy

NZ companies can help build a skilled workforce that can drive India's tech ambitions: Chandan Ohri

INZBC interviewed Duco Consultancy CEO on the company's growth plans, its generative AI solutions and the changing tech scene in India.

It's been five years since Duco Consultancy opened doors in New Zealand. A globally focused IT solutions provider, Duco is innovating technology across three continents with offices in Australia, Fiji, India and United States of America.

INZBC interviewed CEO Chandan Ohri on the company's growth plans, its generative AI solutions and the changing tech scene in India.

What is the secret to the business' rapid growth?

Our rapid growth is the result of a strategic blend of client focus, innovation, a skilled team, adaptability, strategic partnerships, and unwavering ethical standards. These elements together have created a robust foundation for our ongoing success and expansion.

Client-Centric Approach: From day one, we have placed our clients at the heart of everything we do. By deeply understanding their unique needs and challenges, we have been able to offer tailored solutions that drive tangible results. This client-first mentality has fostered strong, lasting relationships and a high level of trust.

Innovative Solutions: We continuously invest in research and development to stay ahead of industry trends and deliver cutting-edge solutions. By leveraging the latest technologies and methodologies, we ensure our clients receive the most effective and efficient services available.

Talented Team: Our growth is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our talented team. We have assembled a group of professionals who are not only experts in their fields but also passionate about delivering excellence. Their commitment to continuous learning and improvement has been instrumental in our success.

Agility and Adaptability: The business environment is constantly evolving, and we pride ourselves on our ability

to adapt quickly to changes. Whether it's shifting market conditions or new regulatory requirements, we remain agile, allowing us to respond effectively and keep our clients ahead of the curve.

Strategic Partnerships: Forming strategic alliances with other leading firms and industry experts has enabled us to expand our service offerings and enter new markets. These partnerships have been crucial in extending our reach and enhancing our capabilities.

Strong Ethical Values: At Duco Consultancy, we adhere to the highest standards of integrity and professionalism. Our ethical approach to business has not only built our reputation but also earned us the loyalty of our clients and partners.

What does this growth indicate about the evolving world of business and technology, particularly in the context of New Zealand and India?

The growth of Duco Consultancy in New Zealand and India indicates a broader trend of globalisation, technological advancement, and a demand for specialised expertise. It highlights the importance of innovation, agility, and sustainability in today's business world, while also showcasing the potential of emerging markets and the value of cultural collaboration.

Globalisation and Connectivity: The success of Duco Consultancy in diverse markets like New Zealand and India underscores the increasing interconnectedness of the global economy. Businesses today can operate and thrive across multiple geographies, leveraging technology to bridge distances and create seamless interactions.

Technology Adoption: Our growth reflects the accelerating pace at which businesses in New Zealand and India are adopting new technologies. From cloud computing and artificial intelligence to data analytics and cybersecurity,



companies are increasingly investing in digital transformation to remain competitive and meet evolving customer expectations.

Demand for Expertise: There is a growing demand for specialised consultancy services as businesses navigate complex technological landscapes. Our expertise in providing tailored solutions has been crucial in helping clients tackle challenges and seize opportunities in rapidly changing environments.

Innovation and Agility: The business landscape in both New Zealand and India is becoming more innovation-driven. Companies are prioritising agility and innovation to stay ahead of the curve, and consultancies like Duco Consultancy are essential partners in fostering this culture of continuous improvement and adaptation.

Rise of Emerging Markets: The significant growth in India highlights the rising prominence of emerging markets in the global economy. With a large and dynamic workforce, increasing digital penetration, and a robust entrepreneurial ecosystem, India offers immense potential for businesses looking to expand and innovate.

Focus on Sustainability: Businesses in New Zealand, known for its strong environmental ethos, and India, which is increasingly prioritising sustainable growth, are placing greater emphasis on sustainability. Our consultancy services often include strategies for achieving sustainable business practices, reflecting a broader global shift towards environmentally responsible operations.

Cultural Exchange and Collaboration: The ability to operate successfully in diverse markets also speaks to the importance of cultural understanding and collaboration. Duco Consultancy's growth in these regions demonstrates our capability to navigate cultural nuances and build meaningful relationships with local stakeholders.

Duco Consultancy is taking innovative technology such as your latest launch Auxibot to the streets of India, can you comment on the growth of generative AI solutions in the Indian market?

The growth of generative AI solutions in the Indian market is fuelled by supportive government initiatives, rapid digital transformation, diverse use cases, investment in AI research, strategic partnerships, and a readiness among consumers and businesses to embrace AI technologies. Duco Consultancy, with Auxibot, is proud to be a part of this exciting journey, contributing to the AI revolution and helping shape the future of technology globally.

Government Support and Initiatives: The Indian government's proactive stance on AI through initiatives like the IndiaAI mission has created a conducive environment for the adoption and growth of AI technologies. Policies that encourage research, development, and deployment of AI are paving the way for Duco Consultancy's AI innovation like Auxibot to thrive.

Rapid Digital Transformation: India is undergoing a rapid digital transformation, with businesses across various sectors embracing digital solutions to enhance their operations. Generative AI tools like Auxibot can be adopted to automate processes, personalize customer interactions, and generate insightful data, driving efficiency and innovation.

Diverse Use Cases: The versatility of generative AI solutions is a significant driver of their growth in the Indian market. Auxibot, for instance, offers applications ranging from content creation and customer service automation to data analysis and predictive modelling. This wide range of use cases is helping businesses across industries leverage AI to solve specific challenges and improve outcomes.

Investment in AI Research and Talent: India boasts a rich pool of tech talent and a growing ecosystem of AI research and development. Companies are investing heavily in AI capabilities, fostering a culture of innovation and experimentation. This investment is accelerating the development and deployment of generative AI solutions.

Strategic Partnerships: Collaborations between tech companies, academic institutions, and government bodies are driving the growth of AI in India. These partnerships facilitate knowledge exchange, resource sharing, and the development of cutting-edge AI technologies like Auxibot.

Consumer and Business Readiness: There is a growing awareness and acceptance of AI technologies among consumers and businesses in India. As organisations recognise the potential of AI to drive competitive advantage, they are increasingly open to adopting generative AI solutions.



The feeling that anything is possible, is everywhere in India, and it's almost tangible: Graham Rouse

NZ Trade Commissioner to India Graham Rouse reflects on his first year in India and share his insights and experiences on the evolving Indian market.

Graham Rouse recently completed his first year as the New Zealand Trade Commissioner and Consul General to India and South Asia. In an interview with Priti Garude-Kasture for INZBC's Kia Ora India magazine, Rouse shared his insights and experiences on the evolving Indian market.

A Year of Growth and Opportunity

Reflecting on his first year, Rouse observed a significant increase in interest from New Zealand businesses keen to diversify and tap into India's vast potential.

"We have fielded a significant number of enquiries in the past 12 months and the number of companies with whom NZTE is working with intensively in this market has increased by 20% over that time," he noted.

Understanding the Indian Market

For New Zealand businesses interested in connecting with the India, Rouse emphasised the importance of recognising the country's immense diversity.

"India is vast – it's not just a country, it's a sub-continent. It has 28 states (and a further 8 union territories). Each of the 28 states has its own state government and this means that the regulatory and business environment can change markedly from one to the next," he said.

This diversity extends beyond regulations to include linguistic and cultural differences. With 22 official languages and a plethora of regional languages, Rouse said understanding and communicating effectively with local partners is crucial.

According to a recently released report by IAMAI – Kantar, despite English being the language of business, 57% of Indians prefer to access the internet in their native languages. Rouse stressed the importance of localised strategies to succeed in this complex market.

Entering the Indian market

It's said entering the Indian market is often a marathon, not a sprint. Rouse said, "We often talk about the need for '3 Ps' – patience, perseverance and persistence."

He said exporters must be prepared for a protracted entry process and should have sufficient financial runway



to sustain their operations until returns on investment begin to materialise. Managing expectations and budgets effectively was vital for long-term success in this market.

Understanding the Indian Consumer

The Indian consumer landscape is undergoing significant transformation.

Rouse highlighted the emergence of a 'neo-middle class,' a term coined by Prime Minister Modi to describe the 250 million citizens who have recently transitioned out of poverty. This group, along with the broader middle class expected to encompass 40% of the population by 2025, is driving a surge in disposable income and consumption.

Moreover, India's demographic dividend, with 65% of its population under the age of 35, is reshaping consumer behaviour. "This has led to a distinct shift in generational consumer priorities, with Indian millennials now spending more on 'frivolous' things like travel," he observed. Rouse said that this can be seen in Indian tourists to New Zealand who tend to spend more on average than tourists from other countries.

Increased access to credit and a growing comfort with debt were further fuelling consumer spending. "It seems a certainty that Indians will continue to buy more and buy better for the foreseeable future," he added.

Indian consumer's digital evolution

India's digital landscape is evolving rapidly, presenting both opportunities and challenges for New Zealand businesses.

Currently, India boasts the second-largest internet user base in the world, with over 880 million users. Indians have the highest data consumption per smartphone globally, driving the growth of cashless payments and the widespread use of the Unified Payment Interface (UPI), which has over 800 million users.

“E-commerce is now very much the norm, and Indians have earned a reputation as the most impatient online shoppers, with 38% expecting their deliveries in under two hours,” Rouse cited from a Wunderman Thompson report.

He noted that over 40% of the country’s population are social media users.

“The sheer scale of India’s digital engagement is hard for New Zealanders to comprehend,” he said.

New Zealand businesses should underestimate India’s digital sophistication at their own peril, he added.

NZTE’s ‘Illuminate India’ Initiative: A New Strategic Approach

To support New Zealand exporters in navigating the Indian market, NZTE is set to launch the ‘Illuminate India’ program. This initiative aims to accelerate market discovery and entry through a phased approach, starting with education.

“It’s become increasingly evident when talking to New Zealand companies new to this market that that knowledge levels of India are either low or quite outdated,” Rouse said.

“Through the provision of Illuminate India we aim to better prepare our businesses for the realities, opportunities and challenges of India’s business environment.”

In line with the program, businesses have access to a set of toolkits that provide a baseline of knowledge for those wanting to find out more about doing business with India. These resources cover various aspects, including business culture, marketing, distribution, and regulatory requirements. The resources are available for free on the

NZTE website.

Further, NZTE has commissioned research into the tech and food and beverage sectors, which will be shared through webinars and available online, starting July 2024.

“Each research project covers a number of different verticals and subsectors, all focussing on the opportunities for New Zealand,” Rouse said.

The program also plans to offer market immersion visits to provide exporters with hands-on experience in India, slated to begin in early 2025.

Rouse said this new approach has been driven by an uplift in interest in India from New Zealand exporters.

Reflections on the India-New Zealand Relationship

Reflecting on his tenure, Rouse is always struck by the deep affection that Indians have for New Zealand, whether through tourism, education, food, or movies like the Lord of the Rings films and Bollywood movies like Kaho Naa Pyaar Hai.

And of course, sometimes though our mutual love and respect for cricket.

“Whatever the driver,” Rouse said, “the sentiment is always the same: “You have the most wonderful country! We are very fortunate to have a country brand that elicits such a powerful response.”

Rouse said the public jubilation following the Chandrayaan-3 lunar landing and the hosting of the G20 Summit were a testament to India’s rising global stature.

“This buoyancy – the feeling that anything is possible – is everywhere in India and is almost tangible.

“India is an exciting place, and this is an exciting time. I feel exceptionally privileged to be here witnessing it,” he concluded.



Spotlight: India’s Digital Growth

Navigating India’s Tech Landscape: Insights for New Zealand’s Tech Exporters

As India rapidly transforms into a digitised economy, the prospects for collaboration and expansion are immense. However, success in market requires a deep understanding of its unique ecosystem. NZ Trade Commissioner to India Graham Rouse chats with industry leaders at this year’s NZ Tech Week.

At this year’s NZ Tech Week event, Graham Rouse, New Zealand Trade Commissioner and Consul General for India and South Asia, facilitated a discussion on the expanding opportunities for New Zealand tech companies in India.

As India rapidly transforms into a digitised economy, the prospects for collaboration and expansion are immense. However, success in this dynamic market requires a deep understanding of its unique ecosystem.

This event brought together industry experts to share their insights and success stories, highlighting how New Zealand businesses can effectively tap into India’s tech potential.

INZBC writer Priti Garude-Kasture gathered several insights from the discussion.

The Digital Surge in India

Graham Rouse set the stage by emphasising India’s remarkable digital transformation.

“India has the second-largest internet user base in the world with over 880 million users,” he said. “Indians have the highest data consumption for smartphones on the planet, thanks to excellent quality and low-cost connectivity across the subcontinent.”

This vast digital engagement, Rouse noted, is a testament to India’s rapid technological advancement, transitioning from a predominantly agrarian economy to a powerhouse driven by technology and services.

This digital revolution has significantly shifted the economic landscape.

“The services sector now contributes three times more to India’s GDP than agriculture,” Rouse said, highlighting the opportunities for tech companies to thrive in this evolving market.



Leveraging New Zealand's Competitive Edge

Priti Ambani, Country Head of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) in New Zealand, highlighted the competitive advantages that New Zealand tech companies bring to the table.

"New Zealand startups operate in a unique ecosystem that fosters scrappy, innovative solutions," she said.

"This mindset, combined with our progressive approach to regulation and policy, provides a conducive environment for deep tech and high-tech companies."

Ambani pointed out the importance of thinking from a first principles perspective, adapting solutions to meet the unique challenges of the Indian market.

"New Zealand's ability to innovate from a fresh perspective and our progressive environment for ideas are our unique advantages," she added. "However, scaling quickly to address a market as vast as India is crucial for success."

Bridging the R&D Gap

Darshan Doshi, Director of Adeption in India, explored how New Zealand's higher R&D spend—17% compared to India's 9% in the tech sector—created opportunities for collaboration.

"At Adeption, we've leveraged R&D from around the world, including New Zealand, to develop innovative solutions using machine learning algorithms within the learning and development space," Doshi explained.

He highlighted the potential for business model innovations in India, where affordability is key.

"India's strength lies in solving problems at scale but at significantly lower costs," he said. "Partnering with New Zealand can help fast-track the development phase and create scalable, cost-effective solutions."

Bi-Directional Opportunities

Ian Meadows, General Manager for IMEA at Gallagher Security, shared his insights from Gallagher's 30-year experience in India.

He emphasised the importance of bi-directional opportunities. "We initially entered the Indian market to sell our products, but quickly realised the potential for manufacturing and collaboration within India," he said.

Meadows echoed Ambani's sentiment and highlighted the synergy between New Zealand's innovative mindset and India's adaptability. "Both countries have a lot to offer each other, and by leveraging our shared strengths, we can achieve combined success," he added.

The Rise of Global Capability Centres (GCCs)

Smitha Suryaprakash, Vice President at UST, discussed the growing trend of Global Capability Centres (GCCs) in India. With over 2,000 GCCs operating in India today, the work they do is becoming increasingly specialised and high value.

"India is no longer seen merely as a BPO or delivery centre," she explained. "Many GCCs are now driving research, innovation, and product engineering."

Suryaprakash also pointed out that the ease of setting up businesses in India has significantly improved, making it an attractive destination for international companies.

"The supportive government policies and the abundance of highly skilled talent make India an ideal location for GCCs," she said.

Characteristics of Successful International Tech Companies in India

When asked to list the characteristics that define successful international tech companies in India, the panellists provided a range of insights unique to the Indian market.

Meadows stressed the importance of understanding the Indian market's nuances and being prepared to adapt. "Success requires a deep understanding of the market and a willingness to adapt your products or services to meet local needs," he advised.

Doshi highlighted the significance of building strong, trusted partnerships. "Developing a team you trust and aligning incentives for the long term is crucial," he said. "Patience and persistence are key."

Suryaprakash pointed out that India's consumers are highly digital and expect services to be delivered digitally. "Businesses need to figure out how to reach and engage with the diverse and digitally literate consumer base," she advised.

Ambani emphasised the importance of cultural adaptability and understanding local consumer preferences. "India is a union of states with diverse cultures, languages, and consumer behaviours," she noted. "Tailoring your approach to each region is essential."

Leveraging New Zealand's Brand

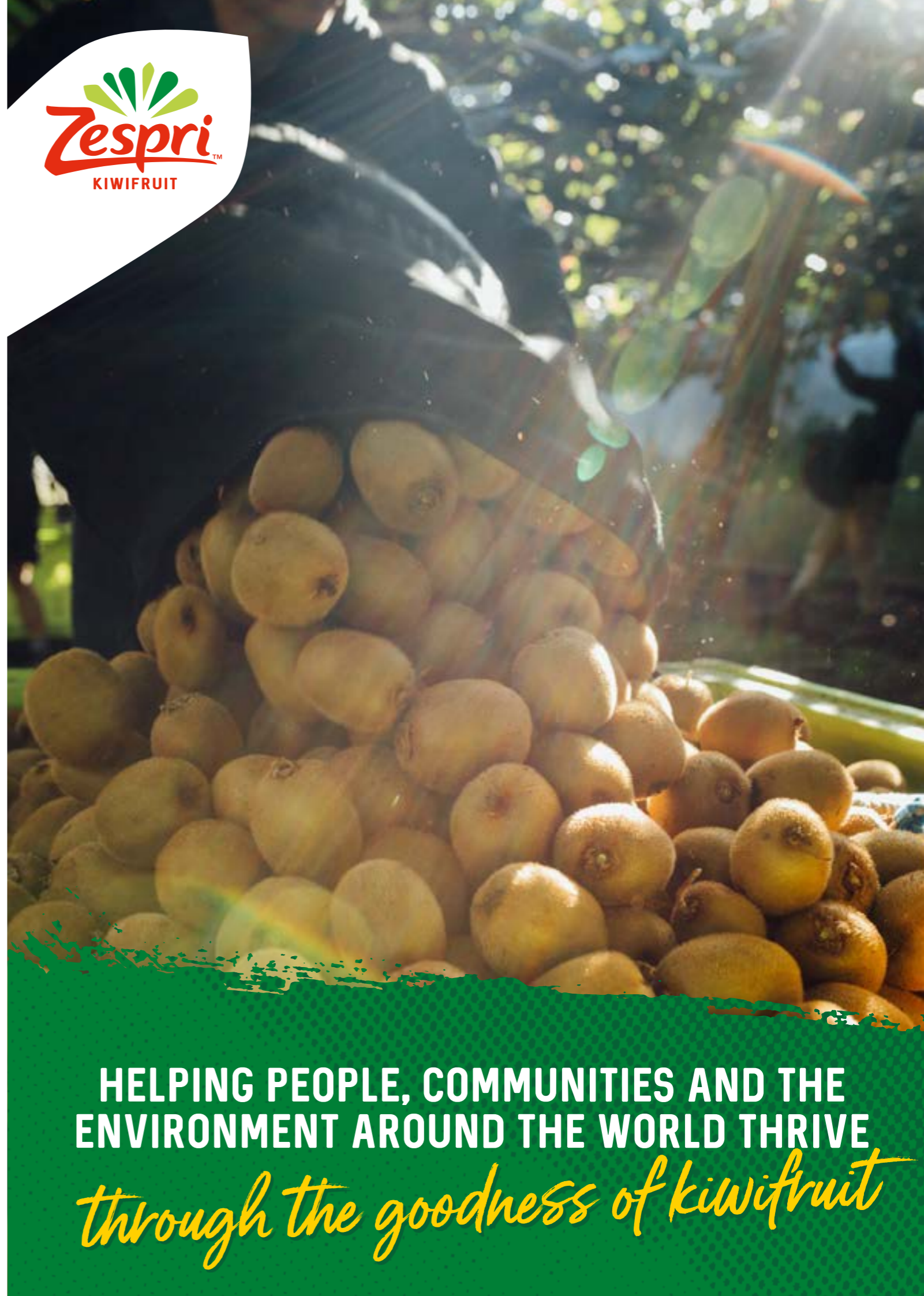
The panel also discussed how New Zealand's country brand can be leveraged in the Indian market.

Meadows highlighted the trustworthiness and innovative spirit associated with New Zealand. "New Zealand's can-do attitude and reputation for honesty and quality resonate well in India," he said.

Ambani drew parallels between New Zealand's sporting excellence and its business potential.

"New Zealand's strong brand presence in sports and innovation can be leveraged to build relationships and trust in the Indian market," she suggested.

For more detailed insights and the full research findings on the opportunities in India's tech sector, stay tuned for the upcoming report from New Zealand Trade and Enterprise (NZTE).



HELPING PEOPLE, COMMUNITIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT AROUND THE WORLD THRIVE

through the goodness of kiwifruit

We are watching the rise of India and its perceived importance to NZ: Suzannah Jessep

In its 27th year, the annual Perceptions of Asia survey highlights the growing awareness of India to NZers. INZBC writer Priti Garude-Kasture interviewed Asia New Zealand Foundation CE to get more insights from the survey.

How do New Zealanders perceive India? How important do New Zealanders consider India's relationship with NZ? How much trust do New Zealanders have in major powers to act responsibly in the world?

These were just a handful of the questions asked in the Asia New Zealand Foundation's New Zealanders' Perceptions of Asia and Asian Peoples annual survey. A comprehensive study of 2,300 New Zealanders, it provides New Zealand's research and international affairs community, media, government officials and public with insights into New Zealanders' connections to and perceptions of Asia.

Insights from this year's survey highlights New Zealanders' perceptions of Asia, particularly India, are evolving significantly, driven by increased awareness and deepening cultural connections.

Asia New Zealand Foundation chief executive Suzannah Jessep said India's place is coming up in terms of global influence which was reflected in the survey. "India is now above Singapore as a country considered important to New Zealand's future," she pointed out.

"Yes, it's the size of India's economy that is of first and foremost interest to New Zealanders in terms of India's perceived economic weighting. But New Zealanders are also saying it's because of India's size and influence as a large country as well as a tech and innovation hub," she added.

Jessep highlighted that the survey indicated over half of respondents view India favourably as a friend, bolstered by historic ties, shared democratic values, and growing people-to-people connections.

"Culture and people-to-people connections have obviously been key to New Zealand India relations; as our domestic population of New Zealanders of Indian heritage have grown and as we have welcomed more Indian immigrants recently," she elaborated.

Furthermore, the report highlighted a growing interest among New Zealanders in visiting and learning more about India. Jessep said, "Of the 58% of New Zealanders who have travelled to Asia, one in five have been to India and 26% of New Zealanders said they'd like to visit India in the future."

Despite these positive trends, challenges remain, particularly in enhancing educational opportunities about South Asia. The Asia New Zealand Foundation, in

collaboration with organisations like INZBC, is actively promoting deeper understanding and engagement with India. Jessep emphasised, "our research tells us that New Zealanders still don't quite know enough about India, so this is an area we are prioritising."

She said the ongoing collaboration with INZBC on the release of its upcoming research report, India 2.0, was aimed at helping New Zealand businesses view India beyond a monolithic perspective and understand entry points at sectoral and state levels.

Looking ahead, Jessep outlined plans to strengthen bilateral ties through initiatives like the India Fund, designed to foster young leadership and entrepreneurship exchanges between New Zealand and India.

Reflecting on her experience in India, she said, "One of the things that really struck me was just how dynamic certain pockets of India are, particularly in areas of young entrepreneurship or entrepreneurship in general." Jessep said the foundation was working on two-way entrepreneurship programme between the two countries.

She said, "The programme will focus on bringing out top entrepreneurs from India and introducing them to their counterparts here and taking New Zealand's entrepreneurs to India and showing them the dynamism of their relevant sectors."

She said the initiative aimed to facilitate value co-creation, share best practices, build cultural understanding, and expand networks to support sectoral growth.



India's NEP presents challenges and opportunities for NZ: Hon. Penny Simmonds

What does the surge in international student numbers mean for NZ's education sector? How does India's NEP affect NZ? In a speech to a group of vocational and tertiary education leaders, Hon Penny Simmonds covered these questions and more.



On 13 June at an event hosted at the Auckland Institute of Studies, the Hon. Penny Simmonds, New Zealand's Minister for Tertiary Education and Skills, highlighted the critical role played by international education in strengthening the relationship between New Zealand and India.

Speaking to a group of vocational and tertiary education leaders and supported by other panellist Dr. Erik Lithander, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Strategic Engagement, The University of Auckland, Dr. Lehan Stemmet, President, Auckland Institute of Studies, the minister talked about the significant presence of Indian students in New Zealand, and the strategic opportunities presented by India's evolving educational landscape.

Surge in International Students

New Zealand has seen a robust increase in the number of international students, marking a significant recovery post-pandemic.

The minister said from January to August last year, there were 59,306 international student enrolments, a notable 43% increase compared to the previous year.

Sharing her observations from her tenure as the chief

executive of the Southern Institute of Technology, she said, "I've witnessed on numerous occasions the benefits of international students studying in New Zealand."

Indian students play a pivotal role in New Zealand's international education sector, being the second-largest group of international students in the country.

The minister said the significance of Indian students goes beyond numbers.

She said, "India is a critical and multi sector market for New Zealand international industry across schools, polytechnics, universities and private providers."

She said such strong presence highlights the deep-rooted educational ties and the mutual respect between the two nations.

"They contribute to the diversity and vibrancy of New Zealand's campuses, fostering an environment of global learning and cross-cultural understanding," she added.

India's Growing Middle Class and Educational Shift

Talking about the change in the educational landscape in India, the minister said India's burgeoning middle class is driving a shift in the country's educational focus.

Traditionally known for sending students abroad, the minister eluded that India was now equally invested in enhancing its domestic educational infrastructure and opportunities.

She said, "India's focus is shifting from sending students offshore to study to also developing strong relationships and policy to enhance the delivery of education and research from within India."

This shift is aligned with India's National Education Policy 2020, which aims to overhaul the country's education system by promoting greater accessibility, equity, and quality of education across all levels.

The Modi government's, National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) is a transformative framework that aims to revamp India's educational landscape by 2040. It emphasizes the importance of internationalisation and aims to attract top global universities to India while promoting Indian institutions abroad.



relaunched last year, have been instrumental in bringing over 200 Indian students to study in New Zealand since 2016.

She said these scholarships, jointly funded by Education New Zealand and all eight New Zealand universities, reflected a shared commitment to educational excellence and mutual benefit.

India's designation as the Country of Honour at the upcoming New Zealand International Education Conference further underlined the deepening ties and collaborative spirit between the two nations.

Minister Simmonds said this honour celebrated the strong connections and shared values that have been cultivated through years of partnership.

Government's Commitment to the Education Sector

Minister Simmonds said the government was steadfast in its commitment to fostering a thriving international education sector.

She said the government recognises the need for a robust and high-performing tertiary sector, not only for economic growth but also for enriching social and cultural life.

"A high performing tertiary sector is also a vital part of the government's plan to rebuild the economy," Simmonds emphasised.

"As New Zealand continues to rebuild and innovate in the wake of the pandemic, the focus remains on strengthening partnerships, attracting international students, and ensuring that New Zealand remains a preferred destination for world-class education," she concluded.



Simmonds noted, "India's NEP 2020 makes it clear that developing new and nurturing current bilateral relationships will be paramount to ensuring that both our countries realise our shared goals."

She said this shift presented both challenges and opportunities for New Zealand, as it looked to maintain its appeal to Indian students while exploring deeper bilateral collaborations.

"For New Zealand, this means that collaboration across government and the sector will be the key to long term success in India," she said.

Implications for the New Zealand Government

This evolving educational landscape in India has significant implications for New Zealand's strategic approach to international education.

She said the government's focus was on creating a supportive environment that attracted international students while fostering partnerships that benefit both countries. This included leveraging programs and initiatives that promoted bilateral collaboration and knowledge exchange.

New Zealand and India: Case Studies of Collaborative Success

She further talked about several initiatives that showcased successful collaborations between New Zealand and India in the field of education.

"The New Zealand Centre promotes joint research between New Zealand universities and IIT Delhi in areas of research that's important to both our countries," Simmonds pointed out.

Additionally, the New Zealand Excellence Awards,

India to feature as Country of Honour at NZIEC KI TUA

India takes centre stage as the Country of Honour at NZ International Education Conference, celebrating and strengthening educational ties between New Zealand and India.

Education New Zealand Manapou ki te Ao is pleased to announce that India will headline as Country of Honour at NZIEC KI TUA 2024.

The New Zealand International Education Conference KI TUA (NZIEC KI TUA) is the annual conference for New Zealand's international education sector.

Education New Zealand Manapou ki te Ao (ENZ) joined with the High Commission of India in Wellington to bring to life this partnership, which celebrates the growing education connections between New Zealand and India.

The announcement comes close on the heels of significant bilateral engagements between New Zealand and India over the last year.

The Country of Honour designation at NZIEC KI TUA celebrates New Zealand's international education connections with partner countries and reflects one of the conference's key values – hononga (connections).

ENZ's Acting Chief Executive, Dr Linda Sissons, said ENZ is delighted to headline India at NZIEC KI TUA and build on the strong foundation of international education connections with partners in the country.

"Students from India are the second-largest group studying with New Zealand. We are enriched by the skills and research know-how that Indian students bring to our country. New Zealand has a number of valuable institutional and government-level partnerships that make for a strong, bilateral education relationship with India.

"We look forward to showcasing and celebrating these

connections at NZIEC KI TUA 2024."

ENZ's Regional Director Asia (excluding China), Ben Burrowes, said having India feature as Country of Honour is a valuable opportunity for the international education sector to contribute to the conference programme with sessions that surface insights and learnings focused on India.

"New Zealand and India have such a broad education relationship, from student recruitment and student experience to partnerships on an institutional and governmental level. There's much to surface and share by way of insights to continue forging our strong education ties.

"We look forward to collaborating with our sector colleagues to deliver a conference programme that showcases these connections and explores new partnerships moving forward."

Established in 1991, NZIEC KI TUA brings together practitioners and leaders from across New Zealand's international education sector to share good practice and explore strategies for future growth and development. It provides an opportunity to discuss, strategise and connect with expert speakers and delegates.

NZIEC KI TUA 2024 will be held on Tuesday 6 to Thursday 8 August 2024 at Tākina Wellington Convention & Exhibition Centre in Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington.

NZIEC KI TUA delegates can look forward to programme elements that explore and surface insights from New Zealand's international education connections with India and also experience a few cultural delights during conference.



The Business of Education: INZBC Report on International Education

As New Zealand gears up for the NZ International Education Conference, with India as its Country of Honour, INZBC has released a report on the evolving international education landscape in India and New Zealand.

Based on insights from the International Education Roundtable at the University of Auckland last year, the report was authored by Rahul Sen, Trade Policy Economist and Senior Lecturer, and Ankeeta Karmakar, International Student Ambassador pursuing a Master's in Earthquake Engineering. Sandeep Sharma, INZBC Board member, curated the report with support from Bharat Chawla, INZBC Board Member.

INZBC writer Priti Garude-Kasture dives into the report, explores India's New Education Policy, collaborative opportunities, and strategies to strengthen the interconnected education sectors of both nations.

India's New Education Policy: A Gateway for International Collaboration

India's New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a significant shift towards internationalising its education system. Designed to open doors for global partnerships, the NEP aims to make India a hub for quality and cost-effective education.

INZBC board member Sandeep Sharma noted the strategic alignment between the educational strategies of both countries. "With New Zealand aiming to rebuild its international education market and India looking to internationalise its education system under the NEP, this creates an opportune moment for collaboration," he said.

For New Zealand, this presents a unique opportunity to forge partnerships with Indian institutions.

Enhancing Research and Academic Collaborations

Addressing the strategic importance of NEP, INZBC board member Bharat Chawla said, "The NEP opens a plethora of opportunities for New Zealand's educational institutions to engage in India's education market."

The report highlighted the potential for deepening research collaborations between NZ and Indian universities. Establishing joint PhD programmes and collaborative research projects in areas such as advanced materials, cybersecurity, and precision-driven medicine can foster innovation and shared knowledge.

New Zealand's top university and the only one amongst the top 100 in the world, the University of Auckland, has already set a precedent by partnering with some of the top institutions in India. The University, supported by the Ministry of Education in New Zealand, has led the formation of a New Zealand Centre in partnership with all eight universities of the country and IIT Delhi. The Centre has seen some leading work in joint research between academics and is now working on building

academic-industry partnerships.

However, there is immense untapped potential beyond the IITs, particularly with state universities and other leading institutions in India. The report said New Zealand's focus should expand to include a wider array of academic partners to fully realise these opportunities.

Addressing Student Mobility and Migration Challenges

A significant barrier to expanding educational ties between India and New Zealand is the complex landscape of student mobility and migration. Issues like visa processing delays, uncertainties around post-study work rights, and the high cost of international education are major deterrents for Indian students, the report noted.

Sharma emphasised the need for a more structured approach to mobility agreements.

The report highlights that overcoming these challenges requires a coordinated approach involving education providers, immigration authorities, and government agencies.

"A cultural awareness for the immigration and university systems on how Indians operate financially, what is the grading system, etc, will go a long way in enabling a smooth inflow of students from India", says Deepa Chaturvedi, University of Auckland's International Partnerships Advisor.

A Path Forward for India and New Zealand

The insights from the INZBC International Education Roundtable highlight a clear path forward for India and New Zealand in the realm of international education.

Sandeep Sharma summarised the importance of this report. "The report holds significance as it encompasses feedback from commercial stakeholders in the international education sector. In the post-COVID era, it highlights the emphasis on recovery and reconnection, aiding in the revitalisation of the sector. Furthermore, it points out the strategic alignment between the two countries, proposing policy recommendations to foster a more robust and continuous dialogue," he said.

Deepa also commented on the report's significance. "This report is a testament to the collaborative spirit between India and New Zealand. It not only highlights the existing synergies but also provides a roadmap for future engagements," she said.

Corporate Sector Invited to Join Research Efforts at NZ Centre at IIT Delhi

In a recent speech, Dr Erik Lithander of the University of Auckland talked about the pivotal role of the NZ Centre at IIT Delhi in NZ-India relations.



Established in 2020, the New Zealand Centre at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi is one of the cornerstones of NZ's educational ties with India. A consortium of all eight New Zealand universities, in collaboration with Education New Zealand and IIT Delhi, the centre serves as a forum for India-New Zealand dialogue among different sectors in education, cultural exchange and cooperation, economic transformation, innovation and national growth strategies.

In a recent speech at the INZBC event on People Diplomacy, Dr Erik Lithander, Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Strategic Engagement at the University of Auckland and Chair of the Advisory Board of the Centre, talked about its pivotal role in New Zealand-India relations.

New Zealand Centre at IIT Delhi

"The Centre provides a platform for bringing together researchers from all New Zealand universities and IIT Delhi," said Dr. Lithander.

With initiatives that are already showing promising results, 10 research projects with seed funding were initiated in 2020. Dr. Lithander said, "There is huge potential to accelerate scientific discovery and innovation by working together." He added, "The research that we have funded so far with our seed funding has demonstrated, without question, that there is huge potential to accelerate scientific discovery and innovation and commercial application by working together. He also said that New Zealand and India had complementary strengths and interests in research and innovation. We are aiming to mirror these in the focal areas of the New Zealand Centre, environmental sustainability, Space Technology materials, agri food, energy medical devices, the blue economy."

Engaging the Corporate Sector

Dr. Lithander emphasised the need to deepen corporate engagement with the New Zealand Centre at IIT Delhi. He extended an invitation to businesses to partner with the Centre, stressing the mutual benefits of such collaboration. "We are looking for businesses to consider the New Zealand Centre as a potential partner when you think of how research and innovation can play a part in the success of your activities in the New Zealand and Indian markets."

Elaborating on the practical benefits for businesses engaging with the Centre, Dr. Lithander said, "The synergy between commercial needs and academic research holds the promise of significant innovation and practical benefits for both New Zealand and Indian businesses."

He noted that with academia-commercial partnership, the goal was to create an ecosystem where businesses and researchers can explore opportunities for collaboration and innovation, but also where businesses can come together with shared interests. He explained that Indian businesses looking to understand New Zealand in their particular fields can also work with business-experienced researchers. "And then you never know the synergies where, in fact, two businesses come in to have a conversation, and then realize that the most efficient conversation is between them and us, but between the two of them," he added.

The Future of International Education

The collaboration between New Zealand and India in education is not just about immediate gains but also about long-term strategic benefits. Dr. Lithander praised the development of India's higher education system and pointed out that New Zealand, viewed as welcoming, safe, high-quality, and sustainable, is an attractive destination for international students. In uncertain times, New Zealand is more than ever seen as welcoming, safe, high quality, and sustainable," he noted. Increasing the number of Indian students in New Zealand can lay the foundations for a robust and enduring partnership. He said these students, familiar with New Zealand's culture and values, will become future leaders who can further strengthen bilateral ties.

Dr. Lithander concluded his speech by expressing confidence in the potential of this partnership.

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Column: Jack Marshall

Wake up and smell the chai: A NZ journalist's take on India

I was disappointed when I arrived in Bengaluru. The streets were clean, electric buses roamed the streets, and the city was peppered with microbreweries and restaurants a food critic might describe as bistro. Half the people I spoke to worked for Microsoft, Google or a tech start-up. This was not the India I knew.

I fell in love with India in the streets of Varanasi a decade ago. An ancient city where cows had the right of way down cramped alleyways, and where men carried the bodies through the streets on their way to be cremated.

My disappointment at the lack of culture shock disappeared after quenching my thirst at a microbrewery. Confidence restored, I began my internship as a journalist for The Deccan Herald. Now I'm at the end of my time here, I've gleaned a few lessons anyone doing work in India should know.

Takeaway 1: Get boots on the ground.

You cannot know India from a desk in Wynyard Quarter. More people live in the state of Uttar Pradesh than Brazil. If you want to know India you have to wake up and smell the chai. For example, reading the New Zealand news, you might think a comprehensive free trade agreement (FTA) with India is on the horizon. That's not what I hear on the ground.

Bizarrely, my first interview as a reporter at an Indian newspaper was with a New Zealander called Winston Peters, the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Despite his combative public image, we had an amicable and interesting chat about the New Zealand-India relationship and heard little about an FTA. I learned the most in conversations at dinner tables and bar tops with New Zealand officials, India experts, bartenders, auto drivers, and business consultants. The consensus was New Zealand would not secure an FTA— At least not one that includes dairy, produce and meat.

What I heard was India wants direct investment. Roughly six million people enter the Indian workforce annually, and the Indian government is laser-focused on creating six million jobs every 12 months.

Lesson 2: Start with a state

You shouldn't eat endangered animals, but if you're going to eat an elephant you do it one bite at a time. With states the size of large countries, it's best to take

a bite of them first. Each state is a country in itself, setting many laws, policies and incentives for doing business, all with their own languages and culture.

Founder and managing director of Security Lit Ankita Dhakar says you've got to have a physical presence in India "or the opportunities slip away". Security Lit, one of New Zealand's most exciting startups chose to operate in the Indian state Haryana. The state is home to Gurgaon, a major business and economic hub, located near the capital, Delhi.

"Gurgaon's proximity to Delhi provides easy access to the large customer base, as well as excellent connectivity to other parts of India," Dhakar told me. After some research she said it was a strategic move that suited her business. The city has excellent infrastructure and a large pool of skilled and talented workforce."

Security Lit is a cybersecurity consultancy that identifies, mitigates, and responds to cyber threats. Cybercrime is expected to surge to cost \$40 trillion by 2027, bad for the world but good for Dhakar.

She said India's booming tech scene means there is growing demand for cybersecurity solutions. It also helps that labour is plentiful and affordable.

Lesson 3: NZ needs to learn from India

The term "developing country" is often used disparagingly, but we should rethink that notion, especially when it comes to India's digital transformation. India's thriving startup ecosystem should serve as a blueprint for New Zealand. The government's "Startup India Scheme" provides grants, tax rebates, mentorship, and support for tech companies. This policy has helped to create of over 120,000 new tech companies over the last decade.

When it comes to technology, India is audacious, visionary and has had some wildly successful innovations. The Unified Payments Interface (UPI), a national payment system, has revolutionised transactions. With just the equivalent of an IRD number, every Indian citizen can access this payment system. From nightclubs to dusty villages, payments are almost exclusively made via the system's QR codes, even by beggars on the street use them.

Technology rules the world, and if New Zealand wants to remain competitive, it needs to learn from India's example and provide strong leadership and support for its tech sector.



Jack Marshall

Journalist,
The Deccan Herald

Journalist Jack Marshall writes from his desk at The Deccan Herald in Bengaluru. In India as part of Asia New Zealand Foundation's internship programme, Jack has met dozens of diplomats, business leaders and bartenders.

A round up of recent changes to AEWV

In the intricate world of immigration, ensuring that work visa applications are decision-ready upon submission to Immigration New Zealand (INZ) is paramount for both employers and migrants. The stakes are high, and the process is nuanced. Understanding the specific requirements for roles and visa applications can be the difference between a smooth transition and a costly, time-consuming decline and recourse.

Here is a quick roundup of the recent changes to the Accredited Employer Work Visa (AEWV) policy by Immigration New Zealand.

Changes Announced on April 7, 2024

The New Zealand government announced immediate changes to the AEWV, which continue to impact AEWV holders, new applicants, and their employers.

For Employers

New Zealand employers looking to hire migrant workers face a critical first step: correctly identifying the skill level of the role they wish to fill. This classification not only affects the immediate hiring process but also determines compliance with INZ standards.

Skill Level Classification Matters

Roles classified as Skill Level 4-5 carry different requirements from those classified as Skill Level 1-3. Misclassification or failure to adhere to the eligibility requirements can lead to application decline. Therefore, understanding and correctly applying these classifications is critical.

The Imperatives for Skill Levels 4-5

Before inviting a candidate to apply for an AEWV, employers must ensure that the individual satisfies the skill requirements stipulated by INZ, including a minimum of three years' relevant work experience, and possesses the skills and experience outlined in the Job Check. This condition is applicable to all future Job Checks.

INZ mandates that employers keep precise records of this verification process and holds them accountable for its accuracy, whether they perform these checks personally or delegate them to a third party, such as a recruitment agency. Non-compliance could result in the suspension of the employer's accreditation.

Starting from April 7, 2024, individuals applying for a

new AEWV for a role categorized under ANZSCO skill level 4 or 5 in New Zealand, and earning at or above the median wage, will be eligible for a visa with a maximum duration of two years. An additional year may be requested through a new Job Check. Upon reaching the maximum permitted stay in New Zealand without qualifying for residency, employees must exit New Zealand for a 12-month period before they are eligible to apply for another AEWV.

Employers aiming to recruit for positions at ANZSCO level 4 and 5 must now advertise these roles for 21 days, instead of the previously required 14 days. They must also liaise with Work and Income and justify within the Job Check the reasons for not employing any New Zealand citizens or residents who applied. INZ requires evidence that significant effort has been made to fill the role domestically before looking towards migrants.

Actionable Insights for Employers and HR Professionals

Regularly Review and Update Your Understanding: Stay compliant with the latest changes to the AEWV policy by consistently reviewing and updating your knowledge.

Prioritise Thorough and Accurate Role Classification: Mitigate the risk of application decline and ensure a smooth hiring process by accurately classifying roles.

Consult with Immigration Experts: Navigate the complexities of AEWV applications by seeking guidance from immigration experts or legal professionals.

Establish Clear Communication Channels: Ensure potential migrant workers understand the requirements and can provide necessary documentation through clear communication.

Build a Robust Recruitment Strategy: Dedicate resources to developing a recruitment and retention strategy that includes both local and international talent.

Employers and HR professionals in New Zealand must remain proactive and well-informed to effectively address the challenges presented by the updated AEWV policy and capitalise on the benefits of a diverse and skilled workforce. If you have any questions or require clarification, don't hesitate to contact Immigration Advisers New Zealand Ltd at contact@nzimmigration.info.

Modi 3.0: A New Era for India-New Zealand Relations

The re-election of Prime Minister Narendra Modi for a third term has significant implications for India-New Zealand relations, marking both opportunities and challenges for the bilateral ties between the two nations. As Modi continues to steer India's foreign policy towards greater global integration and strategic partnerships, understanding the potential trajectory of India-New Zealand relations becomes crucial.

Modi's third term is poised to maintain momentum in driving comprehensive foreign policy reforms and strengthening strategic alliances. One of the key focuses will be on solidifying India's leadership role in the Global South, as evidenced by India's substantial progress in increased engagement with Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia. This strategic positioning not only enhances India's diplomatic influence but also fosters stronger economic and political ties with emerging economies.

Economically, India aims to become the world's third-largest economy by 2027, leveraging its current 8.5 percent GDP growth rate. Modi's administration is expected to emphasise market reforms, digital infrastructure, energy transition, and strengthening economic resilience against global financial shocks. These priorities align with Modi's vision of transforming India into a developed nation by 2047.

The relationship between India and New Zealand has seen its ups and downs. Historically, New Zealand has sought to strengthen ties with India through initiatives such as the "Investing in the Relationship" strategy launched in 2020. However, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted these efforts significantly.

Trade between the two nations has suffered, with New Zealand's exports to India plummeting from nearly NZ\$2 billion annually in 2017 to under NZ\$800 million. This decline underscores the need for renewed and robust economic engagement. Despite this, high-level engagement has been sparse, and issues such as visa renewals for Indian students remain contentious.

For New Zealand, aligning its economic and strategic interests with India's burgeoning market presents substantial opportunities. There is potential for collaboration in niche areas such as digital services and green businesses, which both nations have identified as priorities. However, overcoming bureaucratic hurdles and fostering more frequent high-level engagements will be critical.

India, under Modi's leadership, has shown an

inclination to engage with countries that share common strategic interests. The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) involving India, the United States, Japan, and Australia is an example of such multilateral cooperation aimed at addressing regional security concerns, particularly with China. New Zealand could potentially explore similar frameworks of collaboration with India to enhance security and economic cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region.

Despite the potential for collaboration, challenges persist. Differences in foreign policy approaches, such as New Zealand's stance on the Ukraine conflict compared to India's neutrality, highlight the complexities in aligning their strategic interests. Additionally, internal policies such as India's Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC) might affect bilateral dynamics, considering New Zealand's stance on human rights and immigration.

The re-election of Narendra Modi opens a new chapter for India-New Zealand relations. While challenges remain, particularly in economic and policy alignment, there are significant opportunities for deepening cooperation in strategic and niche economic sectors. Both nations must prioritise consistent high-level engagement and address existing barriers to fully realise the potential of their bilateral relationship.

The New Zealand business wait anxiously with the forthcoming visit of the New Zealand Prime Minister Hon Christopher Luxon to India later this year. It comes on the back of some high-level visits to India, first within the hundred days of taking office by the new government by Trade Minister Hon Todd McClay followed by the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Hon Winston Peters. These visits and other bilateral engagements are steps in the right direction by both countries. As Modi 3.0 advances, the focus will likely be on creating resilient partnerships that can adapt to the evolving global landscape.



Vandana Rai

Director,
Immigration Advisers

Vandana Rai is the Director and Senior Immigration Advisor at Immigration Advisers New Zealand Ltd. As a highly experienced and qualified Licensed Immigration Adviser, Vandana brings her wealth of expertise to the table. She is passionate about providing customised advice and assistance to individuals or businesses on all immigration-related matters.



Sunil Kaushal

Head, Strategic Relations,
INZBC

Sunil Kaushal is one of the leading commentators on Business, Commerce and International Trade particularly focusing on India. He has first-hand on the ground experience in guiding New Zealand firms expand into India.

Unlocking India: Keys to Success for NZ Exporters

With over 1.4 billion consumers and an economy poised for sustained growth, India represents an enticing yet complex market for New Zealand exporters. To unlock this potential, businesses must go beyond the numbers and tap into the mindset of Indian consumers.

At New Zealand Story, our latest Market Pulse research, conducted in partnership with fiftyfive5, reveals how Indian consumers perceive our nation. By combining Brand Finance's Global Soft Power Index data with qualitative insights from India, we have uncovered valuable perspectives to guide New Zealand exporters.

The findings are encouraging – Aotearoa New Zealand's reputation in India is on an upward trajectory. Our natural beauty and progressive values align us with attributes like community-mindedness and sustainability that resonate strongly with Indian audiences. Our indigenous partnerships, educational strengths, and work-life balance are also viewed positively.

However, there's still room to amplify our nation's leadership across science, innovation, and technology. Many Indians were blown away at the level of sophistication of New Zealand innovations, signalling openness to collaboration in fields like science and sustainability.

One area highlighted for improvement is the need for New Zealand to promote its capabilities more confidently on the world stage – something that India

does well.

From preserving their rich culture and embracing rapid economic development, to a growing global footprint propelled by a young workforce driving technological might – Indians believe they are fast stepping into a position of global pow

er and influence, particularly under Prime Minister Modi. Yet, alongside this surging confidence, critical issues like poverty, safety and pollution remain critical issues to solve.

But this convergence of tradition and transformation creates opportunities. By showcasing our strengths in science, technology and innovation – particularly those initiatives that demonstrate our commitment to sustainability for the good of people and place – we can boost perceptions of New Zealand and strengthen our nation's brand to grow the value of our products and services globally.

The complete Market Pulse findings are freely available to download through our online toolkit. These insights provide valuable guidance for strengthening your international marketing efforts and leveraging New Zealand's positive reputation. By understanding cultural mindsets, you can unlock new opportunities and realise greater global business potential.

To download the research findings, including other insights from Singapore, China, the USA, the UK and Australia, visit toolkit.nzstory.govt.nz

UNDERSTAND INDIAN PERCEPTIONS OF NEW ZEALAND



David Downs

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David Downs is the CEO of NZ Story. He has held a portfolio of interests across international trade, technology, economic development, and charitable causes. He has held a number of General Management roles in New Zealand Trade & Enterprise.



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