

## India-New Zealand Ties - Strengthening Defence, Trade, and Regional Security

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### India-New Zealand Relations Latest News

- **India signed a defence cooperation pact with New Zealand** – a partner of the Five Eyes intelligence alliance – and agreed to step up dialogue to **enhance maritime safety**.

- This comes after Prime Minister Narendra Modi met the visiting Prime Minister of New Zealand, Christopher Luxon.
- The article highlights the pacts signed by both countries to strengthen and institutionalise their ties in different sectors.

## Strengthening Defence and Security Cooperation

- **Joint statement:**
  - Recognition of **historical military cooperation** between India and New Zealand.
  - PM Modi and PM Luxon emphasized **a free, open, secure, and prosperous Indo-Pacific**.
  - New Zealand welcomed India joining the **Combined Maritime Forces**.
  - Reference to Indian Naval Sailing Vessel Tarini's port call at Lyttelton, Christchurch, in December 2024.
- **Decision to institutionalize defence and security collaboration:**
  - Signing of India-New Zealand **Memorandum of Understanding** for Defence Cooperation.
  - Development of **a roadmap** for bilateral defence industry collaboration.
  - **Joint military activities:** Exercises, training, and port visits.
- **Concerns:**
  - **China's expansionism** is indirectly addressed as India advocates development over expansionism.
  - Concerns over **Khalistani** separatists in Five Eyes intelligence-sharing nations. India raised concerns about anti-India activities in New Zealand, seeking full cooperation.

## Counter Terrorism and Global Security

- **Joint condemnation of terrorism**, referencing Christchurch (2019) and Mumbai (2008) attacks.
- **Commitment** to bilateral and multilateral cooperation against terrorism. Urged all nations to take concrete action against UN-proscribed terrorist organizations.
- **Agreement** to combat terrorist, separatist, and extremist elements.
- **Emphasis on disrupting terrorism financing** networks and dismantling terror infrastructure, including online.

## Trade, Investment, and Economic Cooperation

- **Bilateral trade statistics (2023-24):** Total trade value of US\$ 1.75 billion.
- New Zealand emphasized the significant role of **Indian-Kiwis** as the **third-largest ethnic group** and a major contributor to skilled migration and education.
- Commitment to enhance bilateral trade and investment through **Free Trade Agreement (FTA)**.
- **Announced the resumption of FTA negotiations (stalled in 2015) for a balanced and mutually beneficial trade agreement.**
  - **The initial negotiations** for the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (**CECA**) began in 2010 but stopped due to differences in sensitive areas like dairy and agriculture.
- **Focus sectors:** Dairy, food processing, pharmaceuticals, renewable energy, and critical minerals.
- **Agreement to facilitate** skilled worker mobility and address illegal migration issues.

## Indo-Pacific and Global Diplomacy

- New Zealand joined India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative.
- **Defence cooperation:** Military exercises, staff exchanges, and naval port calls (e.g., HMNZS Te Kaha's visit to Mumbai).
- **Affirmation of freedom of navigation** and overflight as per UNCLOS (1982).
- **Commitment** to peaceful resolution of disputes in maritime regions.
- **Support for India's permanent UNSC seat** reiterated by New Zealand.
- **Shared stance on Ukraine war**, advocating respect for international law.
- Support for a **two-state solution in Gaza** for lasting peace.

## A Brief About India-New Zealand Relations

- **Historical ties:**
  - India and New Zealand share a **longstanding and growing friendship** dating back to the 1800s. **For example**, early Indian settlers in Christchurch (1850s) and larger immigration waves from Punjab and Gujarat (1890s).
  - Indian troops fought alongside ANZACs in Gallipoli (1915) during **World War I**.
- **Political ties:**
  - Both countries share a **Commonwealth heritage, parliamentary democracy, and the English language**.
  - Diplomatic ties established in **1950** with the opening of a Trade Commission, later upgraded to a High Commission.
- **Trade and economic ties:**
  - New Zealand is **India's 11th largest two-way trading partner**.
  - **Key trade sectors:** Education, tourism, dairy, food processing, pharmaceuticals, renewable energy, and critical minerals.
  - **Indian exports to NZ:** Pharmaceuticals, precious metals & gems, textiles, motor vehicles, and non-knitted apparel.
  - **Indian imports from NZ:** Logs, forestry products, wool, edible fruit & nuts.
  - **Business alliances:** India NZ Business Council (INZBC) and India NZ Trade Alliance (INZTA) promote trade and investment ties.
- **Cultural and people-to-people relations:**
  - **Approximately 250,000 persons of Indian origin & NRIs** contribute significantly to New Zealand's society.
  - New Zealand Post issued Diwali stamps (2021), recognizing the cultural significance of the Indian diaspora.

## Conclusion

The meeting between PM Modi and PM Luxon **reinforced** India-New Zealand ties in defence, counterterrorism, trade, and global diplomacy, reflecting a **shared vision for a rules-based international order and regional**

stability.

## India-New Zealand Relations FAQs

**Q1.** What are the key historical linkages between India and New Zealand?

**Ans.** India and New Zealand share historical ties dating back to the 1800s, with early Indian settlers in Christchurch and Indian troops fighting alongside ANZAC forces in Gallipoli (1915).

**Q2.** How have India and New Zealand strengthened their defence cooperation recently?

**Ans.** Both nations signed a MoU on Defence Cooperation, enhancing bilateral military engagements, port visits, joint exercises, and maritime security collaboration.

**Q3.** What are the major trade sectors between India and New Zealand?

**Ans.** Key trade sectors include dairy, food processing, pharmaceuticals, renewable energy, and critical minerals.

**Q4.** How does India view New Zealand's role in the Indo-Pacific region?

**Ans.** India sees New Zealand as a partner in ensuring a free, open, and rules-based Indo-Pacific, with both countries advocating for maritime security, territorial integrity, and adherence to UNCLOS (1982).

**Q5.** What role does the Indian diaspora play in New Zealand's socio-economic framework?

**Ans.** The Indian diaspora (~250,000 people) significantly contributes to New Zealand's economy, skilled workforce, and cultural diversity.

**Source:** TH | IE | TOI

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