Speech by High Commissioner of India H.E. Muanpuii Saiawi on the entry into force of the India-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement
(22 October 2026, Auckland)

Hon Todd McClay, Minister for Trade and Investment;
Hon Damien O'Connor, Labour Party spokesperson for trade;
Mayor of Auckland Your Worship Wayne Brown; and
Business leaders, ladies and gentlemen

Namaskar, Tena Kotou Katoa

Today we are celebrating a momentous event. Under the leadership of Hon Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi and the Prime Minister of New Zealand the Right Hon Christopher Luxon, the unwavering determination to get a quality deal done by Hon Minister Piyush Goyal and Hon Minister Todd McClay and their brilliant negotiators, we have delivered on the historic India-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement which came into effect on 20th October, the auspicious day of Dusshera-Vijay Dashmi.

2. The India-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement is a commitment that we have made to the people of India and New Zealand for an economic partnership that lowers barriers, opens the door for innovation, synergy, productivity, competitiveness, creation of value and opportunities, ultimately leading to the prosperity of both the nations. It builds upon the India-New Zealand Strategic Partnership and the resolve to double bilateral trade to 7 billion New Zealand dollars by 2030 announced by our two Prime Ministers in July this year.

3. For India, 100% duty-free access to the New Zealand market opens significant new opportunities for our exporters, particularly MSMEs, artisans, farmers, and women entrepreneurs. The Agricultural Productivity Partnership extends cooperation beyond tariff concessions to bring global technology, training and best practices to Indian farmers. The FTA has enabling provisions that guarantee customs clearance within 48 hours for standard cargo and 24 hours for express and perishable goods. New Zealand has also committed to facilitate the registration of Indian Geographical Indications, opening avenues for protection of products associated with rural artisans and traditional industries. The FTA features provisions for skilled Indian workers and professionals across tech, engineering, and healthcare.

4. On the occasion of the entry into force of the FTA, India's Minister of Commerce and Industry flagged off the first-ever export to New Zealand of a JCB-18Z mini excavator designed and manufactured in Pune, India. Flag-offs of a range of products across the agriculture, gems and jewellery, engineering, sporting goods, footwear and leather sectors are also planned. These initiatives reflect the confidence of Indian manufacturers and the opportunities the Agreement opens up for exporters across the country.

5. Our two governments have done their utmost to provide the required legal framework to promote trade between our two countries. India's Department of Commerce, government agencies and media channels are doing vigorous

awareness campaigns on the entry into force of the FTA so that the message reaches every business throughout the length and breadth of India.

6. I invite Kiwi businesses to explore the incredible opportunities that have opened up with the FTA. Visit India- there are many trade events that you could attend on various subjects be it renewable energy, smart cities, focus on specific states such as Vibrant Gujarat, Vibrant Goa, Telangana Rising etc; get to know India in all its diversity, build relationships and partnerships, leverage India's scale and tremendous human resources and innovative capacity, invest, co-innovate and together let us create strong and resilient supply chains. You could explore cooperation in technology, agritech, education, renewable energy, advanced manufacturing, space, food processing, pharmaceuticals, nutraceuticals, traditional medicine and high performance sports. With the FTA, the world is literally your oyster. We are celebrating 100 Years of Unity Through Sports, in fact the first T20 game of Black Caps versus the Indian National team is underway in Christchurch as we speak. I'm cheering for both the Indian and Kiwi teams in sports and in business. View it from any lens. What we have before us is a truly "Winning Partnership."

Tena Tatou Katoa

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