

# Australia opens doors for techies, chefs, students, millennials

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NEW DELHI: From 1,800 chefs and yoga teachers, who can hope to get a quick entry, or students, who can now stay for up to four years on post-study work visas, and 1,000 millennials who can mix work and pleasure, thousands of Indians are set to get easy access to Australia with the signing of the bilateral trade agreement with India. This is in addition to opening the doors further for Indian IT professionals and managers who can get up to four-year visas, either as contractual workers on an onsite job or as part of intra-company transfers. Besides, mutual recognition agreements for professionals such as nurses and doctors will ensure that the qualifications of Indian medical professionals will be recognised in Australia. “We are planning to finalise these mutual recognition agreements in the next 12 months,” commerce

and industry minister Piyush Goyal said after the signing of the Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA) with Australia on Saturday.

## DELHI, CANBERRA SIGN TRADE PACT

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| <p>➤ Duty-free or concessional tariff access to 85-90% of products from Down Under, including coal, LNG, wine and certain varieties of cotton and almonds. Australia has agreed to keep dairy products, wheat, chickpeas and apple out of mix</p> | <p>➤ Australia will provide duty-free access for over 6,000 broad sectors of India, including textiles, leather, furniture, jewellery and machinery. The zero-duty access will be for about 96.4% of exports (by value) from Day 1</p> |
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“ This is a watershed moment for our bilateral relations... we will be able to increase the resilience of supply chains, and also contribute to the stability of the Indo-Pacific region

—PM Modi, who presided virtually over the signing with Aus PM Scott Morrison (pic)



Government officials described the visa concessions as a major gain for India, something that India has been seeking for years through its agreements with Asean, Japan and South Korea, but did not make sufficient headway. Now, the government intends to use the Australia ECTA as the basis during its trade treaty negotiations with the UK. On their part, the UK and Australia have agreed to a similar dispensation on visas. The agreement offers massive gains for Indian students in Australia with those pursuing diploma courses eligible for visas of up to 18 months after their programme ends. Similarly, those completing a bachelor’s degree can get up to two years as part of the post-study work visas. And those who complete a master’s programme and doctoral work will get up to three and four years, respectively. Besides, those in the 18-30 age group can get a “work and holiday” visa for Australia with 1,000 such visas promised annually. India, which doesn’t have such a regime at the moment, has also promised to allow such visas on a reciprocal basis in case it implements a similar programme in the future, a source said.

For corporate and contractual workers, the visa concessions go beyond IT to include engineering, consulting (excluding legal), architectural and accounting.