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A new destination for Indian students

Staff Reporter



Paul Vaughan

KOCHI: New Zealand is fast turning out to be a favourite educational destination for the Indian youth.

The country's annual educational earnings from India alone have touched 60 million New Zealand dollars (one NZ dollar = Rs. 30), said Paul Vaughan, New Zealand's Trade Commissioner for South Asia.

Besides India, the country is focussing on China, Vietnam and Korea to boost its revenues from education, he said.

In Kochi to attend the New Zealand education fair, Mr. Vaughan shared his views on education and life in New Zealand in a chat with *The Hindu*.

"We have now around 4,000 Indian students in New Zealand. The number is growing. For the academic year beginning February, we have issued about 3,800 visas," he said.

Explaining that a country with a population of only four million required more skilled professionals, Mr. Vaughan said that New Zealand was facing skill shortage in areas

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like tourism, catering, information technology and nursing. "We also lack skilled professionals in horticulture," he said.

Pointing out that finding a job in New Zealand was not difficult, Mr. Vaughan said the cost of living in the country was very low. "The salary level compared to a country like Australia might be less but the cost of living is significantly lower. The job market in New Zealand is still hot. It is a good place to find work with good salary levels," he said. Highlighting the fact that an educational qualification from a university or a polytechnic in New Zealand was an added advantage for getting a job there, Mr. Vaughan said the country does not have stringent immigration rules. "There is a point system for immigration; permanent residence visa is given on the basis of this system," he said.

New Zealand is the only country that provides a one-year job search visa, regardless of the course pursued by a student.

"Once you get a job, you can apply for two years of work permit, following which you can apply for permanent residency," Mr. Vaughan said.

Describing that job opportunities in New Zealand were excellent, he said the unemployment rate there was a mere 2 or 3 per cent. "Eligible students can now apply to work up to 20 hours in any given week during the academic year and may apply to work full time during the summer vacation," he said.

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