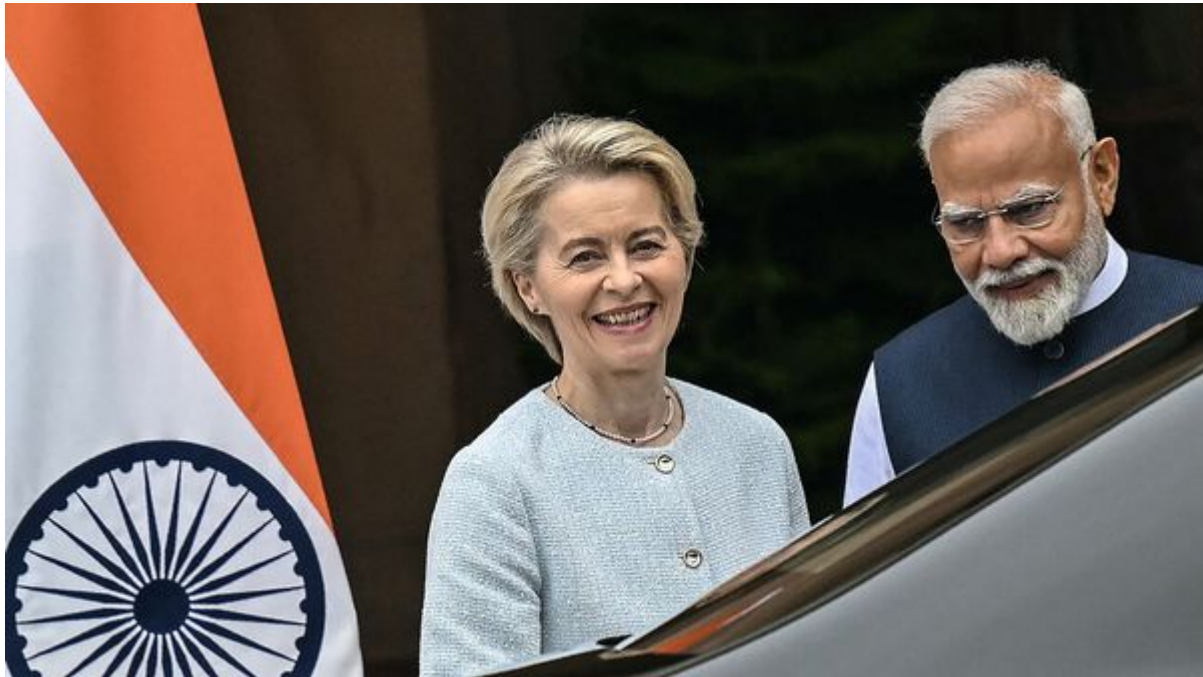


# Europe's long-awaited free-trade deal with India

*One way to show America and China that also-rans have options, too*

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**N**ARENDRA MODI'S guests of honour at Indian Republic Day on January 26th were treated to the usual military parade—helicopters overhead, hypersonic missiles on lorries. This year, however, they were joined by a small contingent of soldiers flying the European Union's banner. The bloc's two top officials were in attendance: Ursula von der Leyen, president of the European Commission, and António Costa, president of the European Council, which represents the EU's member states. At a summit the next day the two sides

announced a range of accords, among them a free-trade pact. Donald Trump deserves some credit: without his [predilection for levying tariffs](#) and alienating allies, the pair might not have struck a deal.

Europe and India face a similar problem. “They are trying to preserve their strategic autonomy as secondary players in their respective spheres, India v China in the Indo-Pacific and Europe v America in the Atlantic,” says Chietigj Bajpae of Chatham House, a British think-tank. India is increasingly looking west for trade relationships, while shunning Asian competitors. The EU looks for opportunities anywhere. On January 17th it signed a [pact with Latin America’s Mercosur trade zone](#).