



UK Secretary of State for Business and Trade Jonathan Reynolds meets Indian Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal on April 28, 2025. Reuters

BILATERAL ENGAGEMENTS

India's commerce minister heads to UK to fast-track free trade deal

- FTA talks started in 2022 and stalled over tariffs, mobility for services professionals
- Deal-in-principle was announced by Indian, British PMs last month

Sanjay Kumar New Delhi

India's Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal has embarked on a two-day visit to the UK to accelerate talks on a long-pending bilateral free trade agreement, his office said on Wednesday.

Launched in January 2022, the FTA negotiations between India and the UK were set to conclude the same year, but despite more than a dozen formal rounds, talks have stalled over issues like tariffs, rules of origin and mobility for services professionals.

A deal-in-principle was announced in May by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his British counterpart, Keir Starmer.

Goyal's UK visit comes in the "backdrop of the announcement" and "aims to accelerate bilateral engagements and harness emerging opportunities," the Ministry of Commerce and Industry said in a statement.

The minister is scheduled to meet UK Business and Trade Secretary Jonathan Reynolds to "review the progress made in the ongoing FTA negotiations and chart out a clear, time-bound

road map for its finalization and implementation."

If Goyal's visit succeeds in producing an implementation road map with timelines, he would be able to start negotiations on a bilateral investment treaty with the UK, Anupam Manur, professor of economics at the Takshashila Institution in Bangalore, told Arab News.

"A working FTA for India is extremely important, especially in a scenario where global trade uncertainty is at an all-time high due to the trade war and tariffs imposed by President Trump," Manur said.

"In this scenario, an FTA with

the UK delivers greater certainty to India, provides market access to an important large economy, and will also act as a leverage point for trade negotiations with the US."

India has so far signed 14 free trade agreements with 25 countries, along with several regional and preferential trade pacts covering additional nations. These include agreements with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Japan, South Korea, Australia and the UAE.

Talks are also ongoing with the Gulf Cooperation Council and the EU — with commitments to conclude talks in 2025.