

India to seek more inputs from industry as FTA talks with UK enter final stage

New Delhi hopes to make gains in textiles, leather products, food and beverages, rice

AMITI SEN

New Delhi, August 15

The Indian industry is set to provide more inputs to the government on the on-going India-UK Free Trade Agreement, which is expected to double bilateral trade to \$100 billion by 2030, as negotiations have now entered an advanced stage with October-end fixed as the deadline to conclude talks.

“After the fifth round of negotiations on the India-UK FTA

concluded recently, there is more clarity on what each side wants and what could be achieved. It is the right time to take more inputs from the industry to push for what it wants and also protect what needs to be shielded,” a person tracking the matter told *BusinessLine*.

Talks next week

Exporters’ body Federation of Indian Export Organisations has organised a discussion

with industry representatives and experts next week on the likely impact of the proposed India-UK FTA and invite further suggestions on the pact that the government could incorporate.

“In the area of goods, UK is keen on more market access for items such as transport equipment, electrical equipment, medical devices, chemicals, motor vehicles and parts as well as wines and spirits and some fruits and vegetables. While the government has held a lot of consultations with various industry sectors on crucial areas, more inputs



India is the 20th largest export destination for UK with a 1.3 per cent share GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

at this point of the negotiations could be helpful,” the source said. The Indian industry hopes to make big gains from the FTA with the UK

in areas such as textiles, food and beverages, tobacco, leather & footwear, and agriculture items including rice. Apart from manufactured

products, India also holds strong services trade relation with the UK and is the 10th largest service trade partner to the UK, according to a communication from FIEO to its members.

“India is the 20th largest export destination for UK with a 1.3 per cent share and for India, UK is the 7th largest export destination with 3.5 per cent share in the UK’s global services imports...It is expected that the FTA between India and the UK will significantly help to bring down the current trade barriers and restrictions on trading in goods and

services between the two countries and is likely to boost investments and exports across sectors,” it said.

Services trade

In the area of services, India is pushing for greater liberalisation of work visa norms and mutual recognition of professionals.

The India-UK FTA negotiation was formally launched in January 2022 by Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and UK Trade Secretary, Anne-Marie Trevelyan. India also launched FTA negotiations with the EU this year.