

FDI with EFTA can catalyse \$500 bn investment: Goyal

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India and European Free Trade Association (EFTA) nations on Monday launched a 'dedicated desk' to provide structured support to European businesses looking to invest, expand, or establish operations in India.

This is set to catalyse \$100 billion foreign direct investment (FDI) commitment under the trade deal signed between both the sides.

The development comes against the backdrop of an investment commitment made by EFTA nations under the trade agreement — \$50 billion investment in India within 10 years of the agreement taking into

effect and an additional \$50 billion in the next five years.

The investment is expected to facilitate the creation of one million direct jobs in India within 15 years. The EFTA members include Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland. The pact, also known as Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement, was signed in March last year.

The deal is set to come into effect in the next four-six months after the four nations receive necessary Parliamentary approvals.

The dedicated platform will act as a centralised support mechanism for EFTA companies looking to expand in India. It aims to fast track processes to make it easier for companies to do business, ensure seamless flow of cap-



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ital and navigate areas of concern, thereby strengthening trade and investment ties between both sides.

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said the \$100 billion FDI commitment could help garner as much as \$400-500 billion investment

proposals to India. “With this \$100 billion FDI, we could be catalysing overall investments of \$400-\$500 billion in the Indian ecosystem,” Goyal said.

The minister said the one million direct jobs could help in creating 5-6 million jobs directly and indirectly.

India has offered EFTA nations an opportunity to have dedicated enclaves in either the 20 industrial smart cities, being developed by the National Industrial Corridor Development Corporation (NICDC), or in the 100 industrial hubs announced in the Budget.

“We are in dialogue with the countries to see if any of these (industrial parks) could be dedicated to companies from their respective countries,” the minister said. Helene Budliger Artieda, state secretary for economic affairs, Switzerland, said the opening of the EFTA desk by India and the impressive presence of EFTA companies in Delhi today show that the TEPA is more than just text and promises.