

Must reconsider FTA talks with US: GTRI

India should reconsider negotiating a comprehensive free trade agreement (FTA) with the US as it could pose challenges to domestic sectors like agriculture, automobiles and pharmaceuticals, think tank Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said on Thursday.

It cautioned that under trade pact with the US, many of Washington's demands such as weakening India's minimum price support system for farmers, allowing genetically modified food imports, lowering agricultural tariffs, changing patent laws to extend drug monopolies, and let-

ting American e-commerce giants sell directly to consumers pose major risks.

The risks include harm to farmer incomes, food security, biodiversity, public health, and the survival of small retailers, the GTRI said.

"Reducing tariffs on farm goods could affect the

livelihoods of hundreds of millions, while slashing duties on cars could undercut a sector that accounts for nearly a third of India's manufacturing output. The collapse of Australia's car industry after deep tariff cuts in the 1990s offers a cautionary example," it added.

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