

# *Govt hopes to close India-UK FTA issues by month-end*

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India is hoping to resolve pending issues related to the free trade agreement (FTA) such as rules of origin, bilateral investment treaty and intellectual property rights, among others, by the end of the month, especially during the meeting with key UK officials next week.

“Now, there are only a few issues left. The UK team is coming to India during the Trade

and Investment Working Group (TIWG) meeting (in Jaipur) and we are hoping that we would be closing those remaining issues. So, our target is that we close the issues with the UK when the team visits us and we are hopeful that the issues will be sorted out,” a senior government official told reporters on Monday.

The official further said that there is a ‘huge’ progress in the talks between India and the UK on the proposed FTA.

Since the talks are moving, negotiations for the agreement could be concluded soon. The 12th round of talks between the countries are in progress here and is expected to continue till at least August 28. Out of the total 26 chapters in the proposed FTA, 19 have been closed.

“I think there is a good possibility of the UK FTA moving forward... there are a lot of steps before the FTA is signed... Lots of visits are happening, that is

why we are saying that we are very keen to close the remaining chapters during this visit,” the official said.

Both the nations had kick-started formal negotiations in January 2022 and had set an ambitious Diwali/October-end (the same year) deadline for the trade pact.

The deadline was missed as both sides were not able to iron out differences in providing greater market access for certain goods and services.

## **More curbs on electronic goods imports unlikely**

A senior government official on Monday said that a proposal to impose import restrictions on more electronic goods is not in the offing. “As and when we feel that, we will do it in consultation with the ministries. But currently, there is no such move,” the official said. The statement comes weeks after the government decided to impose import curbs on laptops, personal computers and certain electronic devices from November 1 on ‘security’ grounds. This is to reduce imports from nations such as China and boost domestic manufacturing.