

# Next round of FTA talks with UK from Apr 24

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The ninth round of the India-United Kingdom free trade agreement (FTA) talks is scheduled from April 24 to 28, commerce department officials said on Thursday.

The officials' statement comes days after India dismissed reports that the FTA talks had been stalled over the recent attacks involving pro-Khalistan groups in London.

While negotiations cover 26 policy chapters, 13 chapters have been closed so far.

The eighth round of negotiation was completed last month in

New Delhi. Bilateral interaction between the two trade ministers was also held in March to take stock of the progress in the India-UK trade agreement-related negotiations.

Government officials said an investment treaty was also being

negotiated as a separate agreement—Bilateral Investment Treaty. It will be concluded simultaneously with the India-UK FTA.

Both nations had kick-started formal negotiations earlier January 2022 and had set an ambitious Diwali deadline towards the finalisation of the trade pact. India had then set an internal/unofficial deadline of March 2023. Both sides now continue to thrash out the thorny issues pertaining to the trade pact.

According to British media reports earlier this week, New Delhi had stalled negotia-

tions with the UK over an FTA as it wanted tougher action against these groups behind the attack on the Indian High Commission in London last month. "The report is baseless," an Indian government source had then said.



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