

Prioritise core trade issues in FTA talks: Commerce secy

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Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal on Wednesday said that to avoid prolonged discussions and enable quicker outcomes, there is a need to prioritise talks on core trade issues such as tariff and non-trade barriers during free trade agreement (FTA) talks.

Long-drawn negotiations often result in businesses losing interest in trade talks.

However, focusing on core trade issues can help India navigate the complex negotiations more efficiently.

“When we look at these free trade agreements, sometimes they take so much time that businesses lose interest. We are also reviewing

some of these issues in the department, and talking to partner nations that are doing FTAs with us on why can't we first look at the core trade issues. And, even if it is the first phase of that comprehensive agreement, let there be some kind of outcome which should come out of these negotiations,” Barthwal said during an industry event organised by the

Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).

Barthwal's comment came at a time when India is negotiating trade deals with regions in the Global North. These include the United States (US), United Kingdom (UK) and the European Union (EU).

In the case of the UK and EU, parleys have been particularly long drawn.

Both the negotiations were launched in 2022 and are yet to materialise.

In the case of EU, the first attempt to seal a deal started in 2007.



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