

# India, EU eye early harvest deal by July

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Negotiations for a proposed trade pact between India and the 27-nation European Union are progressing at a faster pace and both the sides are looking at concluding the talks for an early harvest trade agreement by July this year, a government official said on Wednesday.

The early harvest or an interim trade agreement would include issues such as intellectual property rights (IPRs), government procurement, tariff, and non-tariff barriers, the official said.

An Indian official team from the commerce ministry is visiting Brussels this week for the next round of negotiations on the trade agreement with the European Union (EU). This visit comes in the backdrop of recently-concluded eleventh round of talks between chief negotiators of both the sides on May 16 here in the national capital. "We are looking for an early harvest. We are trying to do it as early as possible... targeting by July for early harvest," the official added. The two sides have agreed to conclude the agreement in two phases on account of the uncertain global trade environment, particularly due to the US tariff actions under President Donald Trump.

India has followed the practice of negotiating trade pacts in two phases with Australia. The early harvest pact would lead to a full fledged free trade agreement. Besides demanding significant duty cuts in automobiles and medical devices, the EU wants tax reduction in products like wines, spirits, meat, poultry and a strong intellectual property regime. Indian goods' exports to the EU can become more competitive if the pact gets concluded successfully.