

India-UK FTA in final stages: UK trade secy

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Negotiations on the proposed free trade agreement (FTA) between India and the United Kingdom (UK), which commenced 19 months ago, are now in their final stages, according to a top UK government official on Thursday.

The two countries are “actively discussing” aspects related to the bilateral investment treaty (BIT) and local business mobility issues. Kemi Badenoch, UK secretary of state



for business and trade, made these comments on the sidelines of the G20 Trade and Investment Ministerial

in Jaipur.

Badenoch further clarified that visa and visa liberalisation matters were not part of the FTA

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▶ Of the total 26 chapters in the proposed FTA, 19 have been closed

▶ Pending issues include rules of origin, bilateral investment treaty, intellectual property rights, among others

▶ Visa and visa liberalisation not being discussed within FTA framework

framework since they fell under immigration issues. Instead, only business mobility is included within the framework.

“With any negotiation, the hardest bit tends to come at the end. We have closed many chapters and accomplished many, perhaps simpler, tasks. We’ve reached agreements in several areas, and now we are in the final stages. I can’t give a deadline; anything can happen,” Badenoch told reporters.

“I’m working closely with my counterpart, Minister Piyush Goyal, to ensure we can deliver something that both countries will find mutually beneficial,” she added.