

India-EU FTA to enter final lap in next round

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FACING A 2025-END DEADLINE to conclude negotiations on their free trade agreement (FTA), negotiators from India and the European Union (EU) will try to bring their talks to the final stretch in their next round of talks in September.

The 13th round of talks on the FTA will be held from September 8 to September 12. "A lot of issues at the negotiator level will be finalised. That is the effort. A lot of effort is going on in every area to see where convergence can happen. Wherever we are not able to arrive at a decision, we will put it up for political direction," a senior official said.

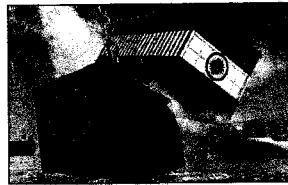
In the last round of talks, both sides exchanged offers on goods and services liberalisation. The FTA has 23 chapters, or policy areas, of which, five have been finalised till the 11th round in June. In the 12th round many differences were bridged on remaining chapters.

After the 13th round of negotiations, the EU trade commissioner Maroš Šefčovič is expected to visit India.

The official said that there is a huge potential in the EU and we are focusing on that. With the EU, India would have covered the entire Europe with the FTAs. The agreement with the UK has been signed with the four-

FINAL TALK

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nation European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and will come into force from October 1.

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The FTA covers 23 policy areas or chapters, including trade in goods and services, investment, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, technical barriers to trade, trade remedies, rules of origin, customs and trade facilitation, competition, trade defence, government procurement, dispute settlement, intellectual property rights, geographical indications, and sustainable development.