

FTAs will unlock export opportunities for farmers, MSMEs

PM Modi wants to ensure FTA benefits reach workers and small businesses, says Commerce Minister Goyal

NEW DELHI

COMMERCE Minister Piyush Goyal said on Wednesday that the multiple free trade agreements (FTAs) concluded in recent years have opened immense opportunities for India's exporters, and the Narendra Modi government's focus is on ensuring these benefits reach the farmers, workers, women, youth, MSMEs, and small businesses, enabling them to take more Made in India products to global markets.

"To help them make the most of these opportunities, the Centre's Department of Commerce is organising dedicated FTA outreach initiatives in collaboration with state governments," the minister said in a post on X.

Appreciating Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant's participation in one such outreach event in the state and his efforts to encourage local businesses to explore new export markets, Goyal said: "More such initiatives will be organised across the country to help every state unlock its unique export potential, ensure greater utilisation of our FTAs and give fresh momentum to India's export growth."

The India-New Zealand FTA came into force on Tuesday with duty-free access for 100 per cent of Indian exports. The FTA will unlock significant opportunities for MSMEs, farmers, women, youth and labour-intensive sectors. It also opens new pathways for our professionals, while safeguarding India's core interests.

Goyal had pointed out that India's farmers will gain wider market access for fruits, vegetables, spices and other agricultural produce, alongside cooperation to improve productivity, support higher incomes and strengthen livelihoods.

The minister also said that



sensitive sectors, including dairy, remain protected, keeping farmers' welfare at the heart of the government's approach.

He further stated that New Zealand's commit-

ment to facilitate \$20 billion in investment into India holds immense potential to strengthen manufacturing, infrastructure, services and innovation, supporting enterprise and employment.

"As we embark on this promising journey tomorrow, I extend my best wishes to our exporters, businesses, MSMEs and entrepreneurs. I encourage them to make full use of this agreement,

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build lasting partnerships and translate its potential into tangible gains for our people," the minister further stated.

CAIT chief hails India-NZ FTA as PM's Dussehra gift to traders

NEW DELHI

THE India-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (FTA) -- which comes into effect -- is a major gift from Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the country's business community on Dussehra, Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) Secretary General and Chandni Chowk MP Praveen Khandelwal said on Tuesday.

In an interview with IANS, Khandelwal said the biggest feature of the agreement is that Indian goods exported to New Zealand will attract zero per cent duty, making Indian products more competitive in the global market.

"I am confident that traders, industries and small artisans across the country will gain significant business opportunities through exports. On behalf of the country's nine crore traders, I extend my Vijayadashmi greetings and thank Prime Minister Narendra Modi for this initiative," he said. Khandelwal said many Indian sectors, especially automobiles, auto spare parts, grains and pulses, electronics, electrical and pharmaceuticals, will now get access to a large market in New Zealand.

He said the FTA reflects India's growing manufacturing strength and supports the vision of 'Local to Global', 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' and 'Viksit Bharat'.

Khandelwal said the pact would create significant export opportunities for sectors including textiles and apparel, leather and footwear, gems and jewellery, engineering goods, automobiles and auto components,



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pharmaceuticals, chemicals, agricultural produce and processed food products.

According to CAIT, zero-duty access to the New Zealand market is expected to enhance the competitiveness of Indian products and benefit MSMEs, artisans, farmers, manufacturers, women entrepreneurs and exporters.

The agreement also provides for New Zealand to facilitate \$20 billion in investments into India while expanding opportunities for Indian professionals and youth.

India and New Zealand have set a target of achieving bilateral trade in goods and services worth NZ\$7 billion by 2030, with industry representatives describing the FTA as a potential driver of exports, employment generation and economic growth.

Khandelwal said the pact demonstrates how Prime

Minister Narendra Modi's trade-focused diplomacy is helping Indian businesses access new global markets while continuing to safeguard sensitive domestic sectors. He urged traders, manufacturers and MSMEs to leverage the agreement to expand the global footprint of 'Made in India' products.

Gains for India

New Zealand is giving 100 per cent duty-free market access from Tuesday itself. It covers all tariff lines or product categories and 100 per cent of India's current exports to New Zealand.

This is the first FTA for India where it receives full duty-free access across all tariff lines from entering into force. Elimination of import duty would remove the existing tariff disadvantage of pre-FTA rates of up to 10 per cent faced by Indian exporters in the New Zealand market. The major sectors that would be benefited include fruits and vegetables; coffee, tea, cocoa and spices; cereals; processed foods; textiles and clothing; leather and footwear; pharmaceuticals; engineering goods; marine products; plastics and rubber.

India protects sensitive sectors

India's exclusion list primarily includes products considered sensitive from a domestic perspective.

The major categories are dairy products (milk, cream, whey, yoghurt, cheese); animal products (other than sheep meat); vegetable products such as onions, chana, peas, corn, almonds); sugar and artificial honey; animal, vegetable or microbial fats and oils.

Trade agreement may double bilateral business in 2-2.5 years: BRISEC chief

NEW DELHI

INDIA's annual trade with New Zealand could double in two to two-and-a-half years, well ahead of the five-year target, following the implementation of the India-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (FTA), BRISEC Chamber of Commerce and Industry Chairman Harvansh Chawla said on Tuesday.

Chawla said the agreement would make a significant difference to bilateral trade, although its impact may take six months to a year to become visible. India's current annual trade with New Zealand stands at around \$2.8 billion, and the target is to double it over the next five years.

"As I mentioned, I believe



our target of doubling trade within five years could be achieved in just two to two-and-a-half years," Chawla said.

"I also believe that, in the coming years, India and New Zealand will become very important trading partners for each other. New Zealand will be important for India, and India will be important for New Zealand," he told IANS.

He said the expansion in bilateral trade could also create employment oppor-

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tunities as businesses grow and new factories are established. "I believe that as our trade doubles, employment will also increase. New factories will be set up and businesses will expand. For instance, a company with a turnover of Rs 100 crore today could see it rise to Rs 125 crore. This will have a positive impact on every-

one," he stated. Highlighting the need for government support to ensure that the benefits of the trade agreement reach ordinary citizens, Chawla said exporters needed better access to affordable financing and dedicated support schemes.

"Indian traders currently need cash the most. The government should introduce schemes specifically to support exports. Schemes already exist, but they need to be expanded," he said.

"Interest rates on export financing must be reduced. Traders may receive orders, but they need funds to execute them, which largely come from banks. Banks should introduce more flexible schemes for exporters with lower interest rates," he added.

Canada, India trade relations improving at rapid pace: Report



NEW DELHI

THE relations between Canada and India continue to improve at a rapid pace. There is growing confidence that negotiations on a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) are nearing a conclusion. That momentum should allow leaders to conclude negotiations during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Canada in December, according to an article published by the Business Council of Canada.

The CEPA would be an important achievement and featured regularly in recent discussions among Canadian and Indian business leaders seeking stronger economic ties. But in the broader context of Canada-India relations, the agreement should be viewed as the beginning, not the end, of the bilateral journey.

Parallel negotiations are ongoing for the Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement. Canadian businesses remain deeply interested in stronger investment protections,

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making an investment treaty the logical next priority once the CEPA is concluded. Canada must also ensure that the CEPA is fully implemented and that businesses are equipped to take advantage of the opportunities it creates, the article states.

It highlights the importance of Mumbai, India's financial hub, as poised to play an important role in the next stage of economic relations between the two countries. The scale of construction across Mumbai is remarkable. It is difficult to imagine another city undergoing as much transformation, at such speed and scale, as Mumbai will over

the next decade or so, the article observes. It underlines that both Canadian and Indian business leaders see the need for the two countries to work more closely so that they are less vulnerable to economic coercion. India has faced significant disruptions to its supply chains and trade, and it is actively pursuing reliable partners such as Canada. This was a useful reminder that the bilateral relationship is not only about market access. It is also about diversification, economic resilience, and building dependable partnerships in a more uncertain global economy.

Canada must conclude the CEPA, pursue a modern investment agreement, implement the trade deal effectively and engage more deliberately with fast-growing states such as Maharashtra. India is building quickly, Canadian capital is already present, and the political relationship is improving. But Canada faces stiff competition from countries and companies that are equally determined to secure a place in this market, the article added.

India's growing market, economic growth offer scope for firms: Ficci

BERLIN

INDIA offers German companies a compelling investment proposition, driven by its large and growing domestic market, strong economic fundamentals, and supportive policy environment, industry chamber FICCI said on Wednesday.

Ficci Secretary General Anant Swarup also said German technological expertise, precision engineering and innovation capabilities complement India's scale, skilled workforce and cost competitiveness.

"India presents a compelling investment proposition for German companies, combining a large and growing domestic market, strong economic fundamentals, expanding infrastructure and a supportive policy environment," Swarup said.

He is accompanying Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal here. The minister is here on an official visit and is leading a large delegation of businessmen. The minister will also visit the Netherlands.

The visit is important as India and the 27-nation European Union (EU) has final-



ised a free trade agreement. The pact is expected to be signed in December and may be implemented next year.

Germany and the Netherlands are members of the EU.

Swarup said that an important attraction for global companies is India's significant untapped consumption potential.

"Per capita consumption across several sectors, including automobiles, steel, chemicals, plastics, electronics and consumer durables, remains substantially below global averages," he said.

He added that as incomes rise and urbanisation accelerates, this gap offers enormous

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opportunities for German companies to invest in manufacturing capacities to serve

both domestic and global markets.

"We see particular opportunities in advanced manufacturing, industrial automation, automotive technologies, specialty chemicals, renewable energy and electronics," he said.

He expressed hope that Goyal's visit will enable meaningful partnerships, joint ventures and trade prospects for the Indian industry.

"Germany is one of India's most important economic partners in Europe, and we see significant potential to deepen cooperation in advanced manufacturing, automobiles and auto com-

ponents, engineering goods, electronics, green technologies and Industry 4.0," he said.

The India-EU FTA offers an important opportunity to build integrated value chains, with India emerging as a competitive manufacturing and sourcing hub for German industry.

Swarup said the focus must now shift towards converting these opportunities into concrete investments, joint ventures and stronger trade flows.

The bilateral trade between India and Germany rose by about 5 per cent to USD 31 billion (exports USD 11.52 billion and imports USD 19.5 billion) in 2025-26.

Germany is the 10th largest investor of India. The country has received USD 495 million FDI in the last fiscal year.

India's primary imports from its top European trading partner includes heavy machinery, aircraft, electrical equipment, and precision medical instruments.

Meanwhile, exports to Germany focus on electronics and smartphones, automotive components, organic chemicals, textiles, and packaged pharmaceuticals.

Outer space should remain realm for cooperation: Sudha Murty tells UNGA

UNITED NATIONS

INDIA has said outer space should remain a realm for cooperation, not conflict, calling for a legally binding international instrument to prevent an arms race in space.

"India is a major space-faring nation. Our space programme has both developmental and security dimensions," Member of Parliament Sudha Murty said here on Tuesday, while delivering India's statement on outer space at the UN General Assembly First Committee.

"India believes that outer space belongs to all of us. We are one Earth, one family with one future. It is our view that outer space should remain a realm for cooperation, not conflict," she said.

Noting the emergence of new actors in the outer space domain, Murty said dual-use space technologies and assets had become a reality.

"A difference of opinion continues on approaches to preventing an arms race in outer space and on which approach should take priority," she said.

India reiterated its preferences for

a legally binding instrument on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS) that is universally acceptable, verifiable and negotiated multilaterally at the Conference on Disarmament. Murty said India is also open to universal and non-discriminatory, non-binding norms and transparency and confidence-building measures, but stressed that these could complement, not substitute, a legally binding instrument.

India also emphasised that threats to the safety, security and sustainability of outer space, the risk of misun-

derstanding and miscalculation, and the threshold for what constitutes the use of force in space must be considered together.

"A selective focus on some threats or others would be counterproductive. Verifying space behaviour, including access to relevant information and data, also poses real challenges. Mandates of various fora focusing on space security, safety, and sustainability must be respected," Murty said.

She added that overlaps and the creation of multiple standards on the same set of issues should be avoided.