



Department for International Trade

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Dear Dianne,

I am writing to update you and your committee on the sixth round of the UK-India Free Trade Agreement negotiations. You will also note the Joint Outcome Statement issued by the UK and Indian Chief Negotiators which can be found here ([LINK](#)).

A delegation of UK officials undertook technical talks in New Delhi from 12-16 December. As with previous rounds, this was conducted in a hybrid fashion - a number of UK officials travelled to New Delhi for negotiations and others attended virtually.

Technical discussions were held across 11 policy areas over 28 separate sessions. They included detailed draft treaty text discussions in policy areas such as goods market access, services, and procurement.

Coinciding with the start of the round, on 12-13 December the Secretary of State also visited New Delhi to meet her counterpart, Minister Piyush Goyal. They discussed the negotiations and the wider UK and India trade relationship. Discussions covered each nations' respective ambitions for the deal, and they welcomed the progress made so far. The Secretary of State also made clear on our red lines in the negotiation, in particular our high environmental and labour protections, public health, animal welfare and food standards, and our right to regulate in the public interest. The Secretary of State was also clear that in this negotiation, as with all our FTA negotiations, the NHS and the services it provides is not on the table.

The Secretary of State also met a number of UK and Indian businesses. She heard first-hand about the significant opportunities that a future-facing FTA could bring as well as the challenges that some businesses currently face and how governments can help break down barriers to trade and investment.

The UK India trade relationship was worth £29.6 billion in the year to Q2 2022. I am clear that a balanced deal which respects the domestic sensitives of both sides will strengthen the economic links between the UK and India, boosting the UK economy and bringing benefits to UK businesses, families and consumers.

My department continues to welcome your interest in the Government's FTA programme, and I remain committed to the transparency and scrutiny of new trade deals, while ensuring Committees and all Parliamentarians are appropriately informed.

I would like to reiterate the commitment made by my department to make the Chief Negotiator and relevant Senior Civil Service experts available to brief the committee in private as negotiations progress. I would be happy to talk to your committee if you feel this would be useful.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D. Johnson', with a horizontal line underneath.

Lord Johnson of Lainston CBE
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