

India Engages in Trade from a Position of Strength, Focusing on Non-Competitor Nations for Balanced and Beneficial Partnerships: Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Shri Piyush Goyal

Recent FTAs Open New Opportunities for Indian Exporters, Promote Industrial Collaboration and Supply Chain Resilience: Shri Piyush Goyal

India's Services Sector Recognised as Core Strength; Start-Ups and Supply Chain Resilience Key Focus: Shri Piyush Goyal

Strengthening Supply Chains Critical for Resilience and Self-Reliance; Government Encourages Domestic Capacity and Industry Collaboration: Shri Piyush Goyal

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Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Shri Piyush Goyal, emphasised that India has undergone a significant shift in recent years and that it now negotiates from a position of strength, reflecting the country's growing economic confidence and global stature in terms of India's approach to Free Trade Agreements and other trading arrangements. The Minister said that at the Annual Conference and 105th Annual General Meeting of ASSOCHAM in New Delhi today. He said that the country is now engaging primarily with nations that are not competitors to India, ensuring that trade partnerships are balanced and mutually beneficial.

He noted that this strategic approach allows India to safeguard its domestic industries, promote exports, and create opportunities for investment and technology collaboration, while avoiding agreements that could disproportionately benefit the other party at India's expense.

The Minister informed that India's foreign exchange reserves continue to be robust at around USD 700 billion, reflecting the strong fundamentals of the Indian economy. He said that in every respect, the people of India, businesses, and industry together represent a new dynamism, enthusiasm, and confidence that were not witnessed a few years ago.

The Minister said that the world today recognises India as an important trading partner and a trusted country to work with. He observed that the days when India used to negotiate trade agreements from a position of weakness are over, and that the Indian passport now commands respect and value across the world. Shri Goyal pointed out that while the world is facing challenging global times, India continues to demonstrate resilience and remains the fastest-growing economy. He referred to the recent IMF projection that raised India's growth forecast from 6.4 to 6.6 percent and also mentioned that retail inflation in September had been the lowest in eight years at 1.54 percent.

The Minister stated that gone are the days when India entered into imbalanced free trade agreements without recognising its own strengths. He said that the Indian economy has been systematically prepared to address present and future challenges, guided by a clear vision and a strong commitment to the nation-first philosophy. He recalled the five principles, the Panch Pran, articulated by the Prime Minister on 15 August 2022, which he said encapsulate the pathway towards making India a developed nation by 2047.

The Minister elaborated that the Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) signed with Mauritius, Australia, the United Arab Emirates, and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries mark a new chapter in India's trade engagement with the world. He said that these agreements have been structured with a strategic and balanced approach, keeping India's economic priorities and long-term growth objectives at the forefront. Shri Goyal highlighted that unlike many other trade partners, these countries do not directly compete with India in key manufacturing sectors, which allows Indian industries to benefit from greater market access without facing the risk of unfair competition.

He underlined that the recent FTAs has open new opportunities for Indian exporters by creating access to high-income markets, encouraging investments, and enabling the flow of advanced technologies. He said these partnerships are designed to promote industrial collaboration, enhance supply chain resilience, and support the government's vision of making India a global manufacturing hub. The Minister pointed out that these agreements also have strong provisions for cooperation in innovation, research, and skill development, thereby ensuring that Indian businesses remain competitive in a rapidly evolving global landscape.

Shri Goyal further added that the government has ensured that India's interests are fully safeguarded in these FTAs, particularly in sensitive sectors. He noted that through these comprehensive and forward-looking trade pacts, India is not only strengthening its position in global trade but also paving the way for more equitable and sustainable economic growth.

He said that the government has worked to make India an attractive destination for business through ease of doing business measures, decriminalisation of laws and simplification of processes and compliance. The Minister added that India is fully committed to its sustainability goals and has already achieved 250 gigawatts of renewable energy capacity, representing 50 percent of the country's transmission grid. He said that by 2030, India will achieve 500 gigawatts of clean energy capacity, making it one of the best destinations for data centres and clean energy investments.

The Minister emphasised that India recognises services as its core strength and expressed confidence that in another two years, the country's services exports will likely exceed merchandise exports. He stated that India holds a clear advantage in the services sector, which not only generates employment and drives economic activity but also provides a strong impetus to manufacturing, real estate, and the overall demand for goods and services. The Minister mentioned that the government is actively engaging with start-ups working on recycling waste to extract rare earth elements such as loam and aldo. He added that discussions are also underway with start-ups to establish rare earth processing facilities in India, a domain currently concentrated in a limited geography. Highlighting the importance of self-reliance and resilience, he urged all stakeholders to regularly assess and strengthen their respective supply chains.

The Minister stressed the critical importance of assessing and strengthening supply chains to ensure long-term resilience and sustainability. He said that recent global disruptions have highlighted the need for countries and industries to build secure, diversified, and self-reliant supply networks. Shri Goyal observed that India must carefully evaluate every link in its supply chains—from raw material sourcing to production and distribution—to reduce dependence on a few geographies and avoid potential vulnerabilities.

He mentioned that the government has been actively encouraging industry stakeholders to map their supply chains and identify areas where domestic capacities can be enhanced. He said that through greater

collaboration between the public and private sectors, India can develop robust value chains that not only meet domestic demand but also serve as reliable partners in the global trade ecosystem. The Minister noted that this effort aligns with the government's broader vision of "Aatmanirbhar Bharat," aimed at promoting self-reliance while integrating India more deeply into global value chains.

Shri Goyal also referred to his interactions with various Export Promotion Councils (EPCs) and industry associations, where he has repeatedly emphasised the need to strengthen supply chains through innovation, local manufacturing, and efficient logistics. He stated that India's focus should be on building agility and adaptability into its trade systems so that industries can respond effectively to future challenges and opportunities.

He said that the MSME sector faces several challenges and that collective efforts by industry bodies like ASSOCHAM can help address them effectively. He praised ASSOCHAM for its role in engaging with startups, MSMEs and industries across India, and said that the organisation has been an important partner in policy dialogue, trade facilitation and international cooperation. Shri Goyal said that with shared resolve, teamwork and commitment, India can continue to overcome challenges and move steadily towards becoming a developed and self-reliant nation by 2047.

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