



January 2023

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about trade negotiations with India.

A UK-India Free Trade Agreement (FTA) would be a substantial opportunity for both of our economies and a significant moment in our bilateral relationship, which Ministers across HM Government are working hard to strengthen in the decade ahead. I am encouraged that trade negotiations are underway, with the fifth round of talks having concluded on the 29th July 2022.

India is one of the world's biggest and fastest-growing economies. A bold FTA would put UK businesses at the front of the queue to supply India's growing middle class, forecast to increase to a quarter of a billion consumers by 2050. By which time, India will be the third largest economy in the world, with a bigger population than the US and EU combined.

The size and growth of the Indian economy means a deal would unlock opportunities in every nation and region of the UK and across all parts of our economy. Tens of thousands of UK jobs are already supported by trade with India, and an FTA has the potential to almost double UK exports to India, boost our total trade by as much as £28 billion a year by 2035, and boost wages across the UK by as much as £3 billion.

The Government ran a consultation on its intent to negotiate an FTA with India in 2021 to help determine its negotiating priorities and to allow business, Non-Governmental Organisations and the public to have their say. On the 13th January, the Government published its negotiating strategy, informed by the 283 responses received to the consultation.

Analysis estimates that an FTA with India could boost the economies of all nations and regions of the UK. Indian-owned businesses employ more than 95,000 people throughout the UK, with most people employed in the West Midlands, followed by London and Wales. Indian investment in the UK created 15,000 new jobs in the last three years alone. A deal will cement stronger pathways for Indian investors, supporting industries and creating opportunities for workers throughout the UK for years to come.

The Government's negotiating strategy makes clear that it will not compromise the UK's high environmental, labour, food safety and animal welfare standards in any trade deal with India.

Protecting the NHS is a fundamental principle of the UK's trade policy. In any trade deal, including with India, the Government has been clear that the NHS, the price it pays for drugs and the services it provides to its patients will not be on the table. No trade agreement could change the fact that it is for the UK Government and devolved administrations to decide how to run our health services.

Meaningful transparency and scrutiny throughout negotiations is crucial to securing the best trade deals for the UK. Since Brexit, the Government has put in place extensive parliamentary scrutiny



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arrangements prior to trade agreements being signed, including by publishing its negotiating objectives and scoping assessments ahead of trade negotiations, and by making regular statements to Parliament.

Looking forward, once the FTA has been signed, the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act (2010) provides the legislative framework by which this international agreement will be scrutinised by Parliament. Under the Act, the Government must lay the FTA before Parliament for 21 sitting days and provide explanation of the treaty's provisions and the reasons for seeking ratification. If Parliament is not willing to support the FTA, it can resolve against ratification and indefinitely delay any primary or secondary legislation which would implement it.

Naturally, the Government will only agree a deal that is in the best interests of the British people and the economy.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris'.

**CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY**