

## Misinformation Threatens the Progress of India–UK Free Trade Agreement

August 2, 2025

— Categories: *Economics*



© GETTY IMAGES

Download IPFS

The India–United Kingdom Free Trade Agreement (FTA) is positioned as a significant step in the bilateral relations between the two countries. However, as negotiations advance, deliberate misinformation and disinformation campaigns threaten to undermine public understanding and support for the agreement. Both governments are being urged to address misleading narratives to maximise the agreement’s potential.

The FTA, reported to be in advanced stages of negotiation, aims to strengthen economic ties by reducing tariffs, increasing investment opportunities, and supporting trade in sectors such as pharmaceuticals, digital services, and education. For India, it opens the door to a greater share of the UK market, while the United Kingdom stands to gain access to one of the fastest-growing economies in the world. Yet, despite these prospects, civil society movements in both countries have emerged that question the agreement, sometimes using selective information, unverified claims, or misleading narratives.

Misinformation is often disseminated through social media, commentary, and advocacy groups that present the FTA as a threat to domestic industries, labour protections, or national sovereignty. While scrutiny of trade agreements is vital in democratic systems, concern arises when critiques are based on speculation rather than verified information. A common concern is the belief that the deal will lead to a dilution of standards, particularly in agriculture and manufacturing, despite assurances from both governments that existing regulatory protections will remain intact.

To counter these narratives, both governments are expected to ensure that clear and accurate information about the FTA is available to the public. Rather than allowing misinformation to fill the vacuum, official channels should actively clarify the agreement's objectives, benefits, and safeguards. This may include publishing detailed summaries, impact assessments, and regular updates in accessible language, enabling the public to form judgments without depending on unreliable sources.

In democratic societies, open debate is essential, but it must be grounded in facts. For the India–UK FTA to succeed, public discourse must distinguish between constructive criticism and coordinated misinformation. The agreement may yield economic benefits for both countries, but only if public discourse is informed by verified facts rather than conjecture.