

King Meets Modi Following Signing of India–UK Trade Agreement

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King Charles III met Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Sandringham House on 24 July 2025, shortly after the formal signing of the long-negotiated Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between the United Kingdom and India. The meeting highlighted the strengthening of bilateral ties and the significance of the new trade deal for both economies.

The agreement is expected to boost annual trade between the two nations by over £25 billion by 2040. It eliminates tariffs on 99 per cent of Indian exports to the UK and substantially reduces import duties on British goods such as Scotch whisky, electric vehicles, and cars. In a gesture symbolising environmental cooperation, Prime Minister Modi presented King Charles with a sapling of the rare Sonoma Dove tree, aligning with both nations' shared climate commitments and Modi's "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam" (One Tree for Mother) campaign.

The FTA, which has been under negotiation since January 2022, is India's first comprehensive trade deal with a European nation. It includes a Double Taxation Avoidance Convention and long-term frameworks for collaboration in technology, aerospace, artificial intelligence, and agriculture. British manufacturers, particularly in the automotive and whisky sectors, stand to benefit significantly, with Indian duties on these products reduced from as high as 150 percent to 75 percent.

Sunil Bharti Mittal, co-chair of the India–UK Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Forum, described the deal as a strategic milestone for India's trade ambitions and noted its potential to shape future negotiations with the European Union. However, he noted that talks with the United States would pose different challenges.

During Modi's two-day visit to the UK, he also held a bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Keir Starmer at Chequers. Starmer praised the agreement as the most ambitious trade pact since the UK left the European Union; however, such rhetoric warrants scrutiny. While the agreement is commercially meaningful, Starmer's framing appears tailored to boost Labour's credibility on trade, a position where the party has traditionally lacked strength.

The India–UK FTA is projected to raise UK gross domestic product (GDP) by nearly £5 billion annually by 2040 and create thousands of new jobs. The King’s meeting with Modi served to reinforce the diplomatic weight of the deal and the broader strategic relationship. It reflects a practical, growth-focused partnership that plays well into Britain’s post-Brexit economic agenda.