

THE STATESMAN
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 11, 2018

India, EU to resume FTA dialogue tomorrow

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
GUWAHATI, 10 APRIL

India and the European Union will meet on Thursday in Brussels to take forward discussions on the Free Trade Agreement between the two regions, a top diplomat said today.

"The goods and services trade with India exceeded 100 billion euro last year. The current trade deficit is very balanced between India and the EU," EU Ambassador to India Tomasz Kozlowski told reporters here.

Identifying India as a "natural partner", he said the country will remain one of the main trade destinations for the EU.

On the Free Trade Agreement (FTA), Mr Kozlowski said: "We are in the process of formalising the FTA. This is a complex issue, but we are

approaching with an open mind. On 12 April, another meeting will take place in Brussels between the FTA chief negotiators."

The European Union and India have decided to work in partnership in a host of areas such as water management, climate change, renewable energy and sustainable development, he said.

Talks for an India-EU FTA began in 2007, but was put on hold in 2013. The matter came up for discussion again during the 14th India-EU Summit held in Delhi in October last year, followed by the EU's chief negotiators for the FTA meeting the Indian side informally in November.

Mr Kozlowski said the EU and India have decided to step up their association in handling radical and terror ele-

ments in both the region as well as at the global level.

"Radicalisation is a challenge to both India and the EU. So, we have decided to convene a meeting between the law enforcing agencies to have better coordination and handle the challenge in a better way," he said, adding the talks will take place in May in New Delhi and NIA will represent India.

The diplomat said that the EU upgrades the list of terror outfits and terrorists every six months.

Regarding the issue of immigration, he said migration is a big challenge globally, especially since 2005. "We had challenge in handling it, but it is now under control. We are not accepting any new migration for any economic reason and doors are closed for that," Mr Kozlowski