

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY
(DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE)

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3396
TO BE ANSWERED ON 01st APRIL, 2022

INTRA-REGIONAL TRADE ACROSS SOUTH ASIA

3396. SHRI ABDUL WAHAB:

Will the Minister of **COMMERCE & INDUSTRY** be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that the current intra-regional trade across countries in South Asia is just one third of its capacity;
- (b) if so, the position of Government regarding this slow integration;
- (c) whether India is willing to take lead in facilitating closer ties and thereby increase trade and other activities;
- (d) whether Government is committed to re-assess the prospects of SAARC and South Asian Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA); and
- (e) the details of existing trade agreement and revenues generated from the activity of buying and selling with South Asian countries?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
(SMT. ANUPRIYA PATEL)

(a) to (d): India's merchandise trade with South Asian countries has almost doubled in last ten years i.e. from USD 13,830 Million in 2010-11 to USD 25,455 Million in 2020-21.

India attaches utmost importance to the prosperity of its neighbourhood. Under 'Neighbourhood First' policy, India remains committed to building a connected, integrated, secure and prosperous South Asia. As a founding member, India continues to make significant contributions to South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) institutions and towards cultural, social, technological and economic development of the region.

- (e): India has the following existing trade agreements with South Asian countries;
- i. Agreement on South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA)
 - ii. Free Trade Agreement between India and Sri Lanka (ISLFTA)
 - iii. Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement (APTA)
 - iv. Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) between India and Afghanistan
 - v. Treaty of Trade between India and Nepal
 - vi. Agreement on Trade, Commerce & Transit between India and Bhutan
 - vii. Trade Agreement between India and Bangladesh
 - viii. Trade Agreement between India and Maldives

India's total merchandise exports to South Asian countries were USD 22,078 million in 2020-21. India's total merchandise imports from South Asian countries were USD 3,377 million in 2020-21.
