

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

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1152
TO BE ANSWERED ON 14th DECEMBER, 2022

DIGITAL SERVICES AGREEMENT

1152. SHRI RAHUL RAMESH SHEWALE:
SHRI GIRISH BHALCHANDRA BAPAT:
SHRI CHANDRA SEKHAR SAHU:
DR. PRITAM GOPINATHRAO MUNDE:

Will the Minister of **COMMERCE & INDUSTRY** (वाणिज्य एवं उद्योग मंत्री) be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Australia has shown keen interest in exploring a digital services agreement with India under a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA), if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether both the countries have started negotiations on the same and if so, the time by which final decision is likely to be taken in this regard;
- (c) whether negotiation for the CECA began in 2011 and was suspended in 2016, if so, the reasons therefor and the present status thereof;
- (d) whether Australia is planning to set up a Centre of Excellence for Critical and Emerging Technology Policy in Bengaluru; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

वाणिज्य एवं उद्योग मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्रीमती अनुप्रिया पटेल)

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

(a) & (b): The India-Australia Economic Cooperation and trade agreement (Ind-Aus ECTA) was signed on 2nd April 2022 and will enter into force on 29 December 2022. As per Article 14.5 of Chapter 14- Final Provisions, the Negotiation sub-committee established under the agreement shall commence negotiations on amendments to this Agreement, on a without prejudice basis, to transform this Agreement into a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA). Amongst the indicated areas, a chapter on Digital trade is one of the

indicated areas on which negotiations will take place under the CECA. Negotiations for a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation agreement are yet to start.

(c): Negotiations on India-Australia bilateral Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement commenced in 2011 and 9 rounds of negotiations were held till 2015. Thereafter, no negotiations were held as both the countries were part of the then ongoing Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) negotiations.

In September 2021, India and Australia formally re-launched CECA negotiations with the intention of concluding an Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (Ind-Aus ECTA) to swiftly liberalise and deepen bilateral trade in goods and services, and to then use this foundation for further negotiations on a more comprehensive CECA. The India-Australia Economic Cooperation Trade Agreement (Ind-Aus ECTA) was signed on 2nd April, 2022 and will enter into force on 29th December, 2022.

(d) & (e): A proposal to explore the setting up of a Centre of Excellence for Critical and Emerging Technology in Bengaluru is being discussed between India and Australia.
