

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2398
ANSWERED ON:23.07.2004
INDO-BANGLA BILATERAL TRADE
Singh Shri Uday

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether India and Bangladesh have formed a Joint Working group to identify obstacles and opportunities in bilateral trade and propose to enhance business and investment activities;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the items have been identified for which trade between both the countries would be enhanced; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGO VAN)

(a) to (d): During the 6th Meeting of the India-Bangladesh Joint Economic Commission (JEC) held in Dhaka on July 14-15, 2003, it was inter-alia agreed that the Joint Working Group at the level of Joint Secretaries from the two Ministries of Commerce would meet in Dhaka by the middle of October, 2003 to begin negotiations on a bilateral Free Trade Agreement. The First Meeting of this Group was held in Dhaka on October 20-22, 2003 in which the draft Free Trade Agreement was also discussed and both the sides felt that further discussion was required in the matter. The Second Meeting of this Joint Working Group was held in New Delhi on March 23-24, 2004 when the delegations of both the countries deliberated on various Non Tariff and Tariff issues of strengthening trade between the two countries. Both the sides decided to have further discussions so as to jointly explore the possibility of signing the same. India has requested Bangladesh Government to provide us with their formulations of the various issues. Any negotiations on entering into such a Free Trade Agreement will consider identifying items for enhancing bilateral trade.