

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:207
ANSWERED ON:27.02.2007
TRADE RELATIONS BETWEEN ASEAN- BIMST
Mondal Shri Abu Ayes

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

- (a) whether the Government has signed bilateral trade agreements with foreign countries;
- (b) if so, whether there are differences on the trade relations between the Association of South East Asian Nations(ASEAN) and Bangladesh-India-Myanmar-Srilanka -Thailand(BIMST) member countries;
- (c) if so, the trade policies of ASEAN and BIMST thereto;
- (d) whether the ASEAN and BIMST countries are maintaining the bilateral agreements but are not accepting multilateral trades; and
- (e) if so, the policy and economic principle of the Government therein?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH)

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (e) ASEAN and BIMSTEC are two different regional groupings. ASEAN is a 10 member group comprising Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. ASEAN has already implemented the ASEAN Free Trade Agreement (AFTA) among its members. ASEAN as a Group has also negotiated FTA with China. A number of other countries including India, Japan, Korea, Australia and New Zealand are currently negotiating FTAs with ASEAN. BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) is a 7 member group comprising Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand. BIMSTEC is currently negotiating a Free Trade Agreement among its members only. ASEAN and BIMSTEC member countries who are also members of WTO believe in a rule based multilateral trading system and are actively participating in the Doha Round negotiations under the WTO.