

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4483
ANSWERED ON:19.12.2014
PROGRESS OF SAFTA
Rao (Avnithi) Shri Muthamsetti Srinivasa

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

- (a) whether the progress of the South Asian Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA) is not satisfactory upto the desired level;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether SAFTA issue figured in the recent SAARC summit; and
- (d) if so, the details and the outcome thereof along with the response of the Government thereto?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) (SMT. NIRMALA SITHARAMAN)

(a) & (b) Details of India's trade with South Asian Countries during the last 5 years is as under:

(Values in US \$ Millions)

Year	Exports	Imports	Total Trade	Trade Balance
2009-10	8,390.69	1,657.34	10,048.03	6,733.35
2010-11	11,659.22	2,173.37	13,832.59	9,485.85
2011-12	13,296.50	2,430.08	15,726.58	10,866.42
2012-13	15,110.80	2,679.95	17,790.74	12,430.85
2013-14	17,503.92	2,472.98	19,976.89	15,030.94

Source-DGCI & S

During the last 5 years, India's trade with the South Asian countries, have increased continuously.

(c) & (d) Trade facilitation under South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) is one of the issues discussed at the 18th SAARC Summit held in November 2014, Kathmandu. SAARC Leaders agreed to effectively implement the existing preferential facilities under SAFTA and directed SAFTA Ministerial Council and SAFTA Committee of Experts to accelerate free trade in goods and services in the region, putting into operation simplified and transparent rules of origin; implementation of trade facilitation measures; harmonisation of standards relating to Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) and sanitary and phyto-sanitary measures; harmonised, streamlined and simplified customs procedures; elimination of non-tariff and para-tariff barriers; and smooth and efficient transit and transport facilities. The Leaders called for accelerated free trade in goods and operationalisation of SAARC Agreement on Trade in Services (SATIS) by finalisation of schedule of commitments.