

[5 July, 2004]

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negotiations. The framework should cover not only market access issues but also provide a roadmap for resolution of outstanding implementation issues relating to the existing WTO agreements and the special and differential treatment issues on which there has been little progress since the adoption of the Doha Work Programme.

### **Free trade among SAARC countries**

13. SHRIMATI N. P. DURGA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in the first week of January, 2004 SAARC countries have signed an agreement to allow free trade among the member-countries to eliminate trade barriers and bring down the tariffs;

(b) whether any time-frame has been fixed to operationalise the free trade;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) how India is going to safeguard its interests on sensitive items?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGO VAN): (a) Yes, Sir. The SAARC member countries have signed the Agreement on South Asian Free Trade Area during the Twelfth SAARC Summit held in Islamabad, Pakistan on 6th January, 2004.

(b) and (c) As per the provisions of the Agreement, the Agreement shall enter into force on 1st January, 2006 upon completion of formalities, including ratification by all Contracting States and issuance of a notification thereof by the SAARC Secretariat.

(d) The sensitive items will be put in the Negative List of India on which no tariff concession will be extended.

### **Restoration and conservation of temple in Angkor region of Central Combodia**

14. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state: