

FTAs with Israel, Austria, Eurasian and Gulf countries

2630. SHRI DEVENDER GOUD T.: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that the Ministry is discussing Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with Israel, Austria, Eurasian and Gulf countries;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) what is the existing trade status with each of the above countries; and
- (d) how India looks at Brexit and if Britain exits from the European Union (EU), what opportunities India will have in Britain?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRIMATI NIRMALA SITHARAMAN): (a) to (c) The Department of Commerce is negotiating a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Israel. The eighth round was held in Israel from 24-26 November, 2013 wherein discussions took place on market access in goods, rules of origin, custom procedures and trade in services. In the subsequent inter-sessional consultations, the focus has been on a balanced outcome in both goods and services. Although India is negotiating the India-European Union Broad-based Bilateral Trade and Investment Agreement (India-EU BTIA) which includes Austria, there are no bilateral negotiations. The EU BTIA negotiations began in 2007 with sixteen rounds of negotiations concluded. Moreover, three rounds of stocktaking meetings have been held recently on 18th January, 2016, 22nd February, 2016 and 15th July, 2016. A Joint Study Group (JSG) has been set up for considering the feasibility of entering into an FTA between India and Eurasian Economic Union (EaEU) comprising of 5 countries namely Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Armenia and Kyrgyzstan. The first meeting of the JSG with EaEU was held on 31st July, 2015. A Free Trade Agreement is also being negotiated with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) which comprises Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates. The second round of negotiations was held on 9-10 September, 2008 in Riyadh, with the GCC now reviewing all their economic engagements. India's bilateral trade (in US\$ million) with Israel, Austria, Eurasian and Gulf countries during the last three years is as under:

Sl. No.	Country	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
1.	Israel	6058.52	5617.89	4955.53
2.	Austria	1,165.24	1,179.02	1,167.02
3.	Eurasian Countries			

Sl. No.	Country	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
(i)	Russia	6,015.66	6,346.23	6,183.88
(ii)	Kazakhstan	917.84	952.35	504.84
(iii)	Belarus	211.11	230.31	200.61
(iv)	Armenia	74.17	92.29	37.59
(v)	Kyrgyzstan	35.18	38.53	26.90
4.	Gulf countries			
(i)	Kuwait	18,214.69	14,580.85	6,209.58
(ii)	United Arab Emirates (UAE)	59,540.24	59,167.99	49,729.88
(iii)	Saudi Arabia	48,622.60	39,268.98	26,714.15
(iv)	Oman	5,763.45	4,131.69	3,863.86
(v)	Bahrain	1,202.60	919.23	1,011.00
(vi)	Qatar	16,677.04	15,659.69	9,925.09

Source: DGCIS

(d) The full impact of the decision of Great Britain to leave the European Union may take some time to unfold. The opportunities for India would depend on Great Britain's negotiations of terms of exit with the European Union and their future negotiated trade relations.

Fall in import of gold

†2631. SHRI P.L. PUNIA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that import of gold is going down in the country since last March and import of gold has reduced by 51 per cent during April-May, 2016, the details thereof;

(b) the reasons for fall in the import of gold and the efforts being made by Government to improve this situation, the details thereof; and

(c) the extent of job loss caused by a fall in gold import, the details thereof?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.