

**Bilateral trade with Central Asian countries**

2926. SHRI SAMBHAJI CHHATRAPATI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether India has taken a very positive initiative to increase bilateral trade with Central Asian countries through India- Central Asia Business Council organised in the first week of February, 2020;
- (b) the details of the major achievements of this meet after it was highlighted that despite huge scope and three decades old close relations, the volume of trade has not increased beyond US dollars two billion annually;
- (c) whether certain collaborative areas could be identified for giving a push in near future; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI V. MURALEEDHARAN): (a) Yes.

(b) FICCI from India and the nominated national chambers of commerce from each of the five Central Asian countries, viz. Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan met on 06 February, 2020 in New Delhi to launch the India-Central Asia Business Council. The participants of the meeting resolved to maximize the economic potential of India and the Central Asian countries for mutual benefit through the promotion of sustainable growth and development and leveraging on economic complementarity. They reaffirmed their intent to enhance their investment and trade relations and identified Agriculture; Energy; Health and Pharma; Education and Skills Development and Information Technology as potential sectors of cooperation.

(c) Yes.

(d) The India-Central Asia Business Council decided to establish four working groups in the field of Energy (Oil and Gas and Renewable Energy); Agro, Food Processing and Textiles; Tourism and Pharmaceutical and life-sciences.

**Hosting of India-Central Asia Dialogue**

2927. SHRI SAMBHAJI CHHATRAPATI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether India has offered to host Second India-Central Asia Dialogue with participation of Afghanistan during 2020;