

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY
(DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE)

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2786
TO BE ANSWERED ON 19th MARCH, 2021

**ELECTRONIC COMMERCE AND DIGITAL SERVICES IN THE
NEW FOREIGN TRADE POLICY**

2786. SHRI SUJEET KUMAR:

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

- (a) whether Government plans to include chapters on electronic commerce and digital services in the Foreign Trade Policy 2021-26 and if so, whether Government would include a policy on electronic commerce chapters in the Free Trade Agreements it enters; and
- (b) if so, the status of India's position on issues critical to the plurilateral negotiations on electronic commerce ongoing at the World Trade Organization, especially the moratorium on customs duties on electronic transmissions?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
(SHRI HARDEEP SINGH PURI)

- (a) : The work for preparation of new Foreign Trade Policy is ongoing. India negotiates Free Trade Agreements with its trading partners, the scope of which is determined on a case to case basis depending on areas of mutual interest. These negotiations aim to safeguard and promote India's strategic and trade interests and are guided by the domestic legislative and regulatory framework.
- (b) : At the World Trade Organisation (WTO), India is not participating in the plurilateral discussions under the Joint Statement Initiative (JSI) on e-commerce. Our view is that JSI runs contrary to the exploratory and non-negotiating mandate of the 'Work Programme on E-Commerce'.

The issue of the Moratorium on duties on electronic transmissions is a key aspect of the e-commerce discussion. In March 2020, at the WTO, India and Africa had tabled a joint submission titled, 'The E-Commerce Moratorium: Scope and its Impact' which, inter alia, brings out developing country concerns in this regard, including on retention of policy space for digital advancement. In July 2018 and June 2019 India, along with South Africa, had submitted at the WTO on the key issues associated with the implementation of the e-commerce moratorium.
