

# BRICS trade ministers likely to ink framework pact on MSMEs, services, non-tariff measures

Trade ministers to meet today in Delhi

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Trade Ministers from the five BRICS nations – Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa – are expected to sign a framework agreement on increasing co-operation amongst micro small and medium enterprises, promoting trade in services and addressing non-tariff measures when they meet in New Delhi this week.

Sharing information on intellectual property rights, e-commerce, sanitary & phytosanitary (SPS) norms and other regulatory mechanisms is on the agenda too, a Commerce Ministry official told *BusinessLine*.

New Delhi is also hopeful of in-



Commerce Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will represent India, which holds the chair this year, in the meeting on Thursday.

cluding facilitation of business visas in the services pact and is pushing for a special dispensation for the same.

“A joint communiqué will be released by the Trade Ministers

from the five BRICS countries at the end of their meeting. Hopefully all key issues that have been discussed by officials so far such as MSMEs, services, NTMs and transparency in sanitary &

phytosanitary and other regulatory measures will be included in it,” the official said.

Commerce & Industry Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will represent India, which holds the chair this year, in the meeting on Thursday.

The BRICS economies comprise 43 per cent of the world population and account for more than a third of the world gross domestic product. The five countries contribute 17 per cent to global trade.

## Intra-BRICS trade

Intra-BRICS trade has been rising over the past few years but is still much below potential. In 2012, BRICS countries traded amongst each other in goods worth \$281.4 billion which increased to \$297 billion in 2014. But intra-regional trade amongst the five nations is still below five per cent of their

total global trade. “BRICS countries are very conscious of the below potential trade between them and focussed effort is being made to improve the situation,” the official said.

The on-going BRICS trade fair in New Delhi organised for the first time showcasing about 20 key sectors such as aerospace, agro processing, auto components, chemicals, green energy, pharmaceuticals, textiles, IT, engineering goods and tourism is aimed at expanding trade ties.

New Delhi has put considerable stress on promoting a mechanism for cooperation amongst MSMEs in BRICS.

“We have proposed a mechanism for cooperation to regulate tariffs, check NTMs, ensure transparency in sanitary & phytosanitary measures and exchange information on regulatory mechanisms,” the official said.