

India to attend WTO mini-ministerial being hosted by Norway

Will oppose new
issues, press for
special
dispensation in
fisheries subsidies

AMITI SEN

New Delhi, October 3

Norway is hosting a mini-Ministerial meeting of about 20 World Trade Organisation (WTO) countries, which include India, the US and the EU, to work out the areas where an agreement is possible at the next full-fledged Ministerial in 2017.

WTO Director-General Roberto Azevedo will also attend the mini-ministerial in Oslo, his office confirmed to *BusinessLine*.

India, which will be represented by Commerce and Industry Minister Nirmala Sitharaman at the meet on October 21-22, will try to ensure that new issues that do



Commerce Minister Nirmala Sitharaman

not belong to the on-going Doha Round and go against its interest do not creep into the agenda, a Commerce Ministry official said.

It will also focus on safeguarding its interests in the area of disciplining fisheries subsidies that many WTO members, including the US and the EU, want an agreement on next year.

"While we do not expect any major outcome from the mini-ministerial, we have to be careful because developed countries have been making

a case for new issues to be brought in such as labour, environment and investments," the official said.

Although India agrees that there is a need to address the concern of over-fishing by targeting subsidies, it wants to continue with the subsidy schemes for its small and marginal fishermen which are important for their livelihood security.

New Delhi also wants some discussions on its proposal to have a trade facilitation agreement on services, on the lines of the trade facilitation agreement for goods, to give a leg-up to its services sector.

In the Nairobi Ministerial meet last year, there was a disagreement between many developed members and developing countries including India on the need to continue with the Doha Round which has been on for 15 years.