

SAFTA decides to reduce tariff

Afghanistan will formally enter regional trade block on August 7

HIMALAYAN NEWS SERVICE

KATHMANDU: Fifth meeting of the South Asia Free Trade Area (SAFTA) decided to reduce the tariff to zero per cent on 30 per cent of products out of the sensitive list.

Along with it, Afghanistan — the eighth member of SAARC — will also be formally entering the regional trade block effective from August 7, according to the Ministry of Commerce and Supplies.

According to the ministry, sixth meeting of SAFTA Sub-Group on Non-Tariff Measures on the sidelines of SAFTA Committee of Experts also reviewed the progress of the implementation of the SAFTA.

During the meeting, it also decided to forward list of export interest products by Least Developed Countries (LDCs) within SAARC to get Non Tariff facility from Non LDCs.

After the submission of the export interest products by LDCs, the SAARC secretariat will work on it for the facility. The SAFTA meeting also discussed to identify niche market for the export possibility of products from Least Developed Countries and study the possibility for enhancement of intra regional trade within the SAARC countries.

During meeting on June 13, Nepali team was led by secretary at the ministry of commerce and supplies Sushil Jung Bahadur Rana, while joint secretary Toya Narayan Gyawali led the Nepali representatives during SAFTA Committee of Experts meeting on June 11 – 12, in Male, Maldives.

The next meeting of SAFTA will be organised in Pakistan.

SAFTA Ministerial Council is the highest decision-making body of SAFTA and is responsible for the administration and implementation of the agreement, whereas SAFTA Committee of Experts has the mandate to monitor, review and facilitate implementation of the various provisions of the agreement and to undertake any task assigned to it by the SAFTA Ministerial Council.

The meeting in Male also discussed issues relating to administration and implementation of SAFTA in order to achieve full potential of the agreement and to enhance intra regional trade flows under SAFTA.

SAARC members include Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.