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India seeks market access for mangoes in South Africa

PTI

New Delhi, 14 January 2013: Seeking market access for mangoes, India has asked South Africa to fast track the process of pest analysis for the fruit.

The issue was raised by Commerce and Industry Minister Anand Sharma during his meeting with South African counterpart Rob Davies at Johannesburg, an official in the Commerce Ministry said. Sharma was there for a two-day visit.

"India has requested that the concerned South African Authorities, who are in the process of conducting Pest Risk Analysis for import of mangoes from India, may expedite the process and consider granting market access to Indian mangoes as our request of market access is pending for a long time now," the official said.

In September 2010, the country had forwarded technical information for market access of mangoes to the South African National Plant Protection Organisation, the official said, adding India has again sent an additional information in October 2011 which was sought by South African authorities. "Thereafter there has been no response from the South African side," the official added.

According to agri-export promotion body APEDA, India's mango exports are expected to rise marginally to 70,000 tonnes this year on expectation of better availability of the export-quality fruit.

The country is estimated to have exported 65,000 tonnes of mangoes in 2010 season (March-July). The country's total mango production was at 15-16 lakh tonnes during 2011.

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South Africa, India want trade talks to be finalised soon

Business Line (The Hindu)

New Delhi, 14 January 2013: India and South Africa are pushing for an early finalisation of the country's preferential trading agreement with Southern African Customs Union (SACU) that could result in two-third duty cuts for select items traded between the partners.

Commerce and Industry Minister Anand Sharma requested his South African counterpart Rob Davies to expedite response of other SACU members to India's proposal on the margin of preference in the PTA, an official release said. Other members of SACU include Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland.

Sharma and Davies met in South Africa on Monday to review the India-SACU PTA negotiations. PTA is a limited free trade agreement that includes select products.

"India has proposed that duties on select products be slashed on an average by 70 per cent as part of the PTA," a Government official told *Business Line*.

Sharma expressed India's concerns at the temporary suspension placed by South Africa on frozen boneless buffalo meat imports from India. The Minister said that the matter may be looked into as Indian meat conforms to the highest international norms and standards.

Both ministers also decided to meet before the next BRICS trade ministers' summit and also agreed to coordinate stances on World Trade Organisation (WTO) issues.

Sharma expressed satisfaction at the steps taken towards having a long-term arrangement for bilateral trade in gold, diamonds and minerals between India and South Africa.

South African officials have agreed to assist public sector sourcing agency MMTC in meeting relevant officers for enabling it to import various minerals directly from the small and medium mine owners and producers of coal and other minerals.

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