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Efforts on to raise India's exports: Govt

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ATTRIBUTING widening trade deficit to rising prices of crude oil, exchange rate fluctuation and import of gold, the Government today said efforts were on to increase country's exports, which crossed \$300 billion in 2011-12.

"As per the provisional figures provided by DGCI&S, Kolkata, the balance of trade deficit (on merchandise account) increased by 55.8 per cent to \$184.9 billion in 2011-12 from \$118.7 billion in 2010-11," Minister of State Commerce and Industry Joytiraditya Scindia said during Question Hour in the Rajya Sabha.

He admitted that widening trade deficit is an issue that India is confronting, but efforts were on to increase exports.

Scindia said exchange rate fluctuation, rising prices of crude oil in global markets, imports of coal, fertiliser and edible oil along with jump in import of gold have contributed to the trade deficit.

These imports contributed about \$161 billion in the trade gap. Trade deficit is the gap between import and export.

Indian currency depreciated against US dollar by about 15 per cent in one year period through March, 2012.

With India crossing the milestone of \$300 billion exports in 2011-12, Scindia said given the global economic scenario, the country's performance was a "shining" example.

He pointed out that India's share in global exports has increased to 1.8 per cent in 2011-12 from one per cent four years ago, and it has become 20th largest exporting country. Scindia also said the Department of Commerce has prepared a strategy paper for doubling India's merchandise exports to \$500 billion in 2013-14 from \$251 billion in 2010-11.