

pertaining to the period January, 90 to October, 92 were not found in order and the concerned hotels have been asked to remove deficiencies. These bills will be paid as soon as deficiencies are removed.

[Translation]

**Air Service for Buddhist Pilgrims**

578. SHRI DHARMANNA MONDAYYA SADUL :  
SHRI GOVINDRAO NIKAM :  
SHRI UPENDRA NATH VERMA :

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to start direct air service to countries such as China, Japan, Korea, Thailand, Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, Taiwan, Vietnam etc. to enable the people of the countries to visit Buddhist spots in India;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefore ?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM AND MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD) : (a) to (c) Direct services are already being operated by Air India Indian Airlines to Japan, Thailand and Myanmar. Although Air Services Agreements have been signed with China and Vietnam, there is no plan at present for airlink with these countries due to low traffic potential. Airlink between India and Korea is provided by Korean Airlines. There is at present no Air Services Agreement between India and Cambodia, Laos and Taiwan.

[English]

**External Debt**

579. SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD :  
SHRI RAJENDRA KUMAR SHARMA :  
SHRIMATI SHEELA GAUTAM :  
DR. MUMRAZ ANSARI :  
SHRI RAM PRASAD SINGH :  
SHRI AMAR PAL SINGH :  
SHRI PANKAJ CHOWDHARY :  
SHRI MANJAY LAL :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) the outstanding external debt against the country as on date and the amount to be paid annually as interest thereon;

(b) the percentage of interest amount to the G.D.P.;

(c) whether the country's external debt is increasing and there are possibilities of debt trap; and

(d) if so, the concrete measures the Government propose to take to remain out from the debt trap ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (DR. DEBI PROSAD PAL) : (a) The external

debt as on 31.3.95 is estimated to be USD 99.0 billion. The interest payment during 1994-95 was USD 4.1 billion.

(b) The interest payment as a proportion of G.D.P in 1994-95 was 1.37%.

(c) No Sir. The debt outstanding between 31.3.95 and 30.9.95 declined by USD 5.2 billion and was estimated at USD 93.8 billion on 30.9.95.

(d) Government has been following a debt management strategy aimed at reducing the debt service ratio to comfortable levels. This includes measures to promote the growth of exports and other current receipts, reduce the growth of total debt, reduce the growth of expensive and short-term components of debt and to encourage non-debt creating inflows such as foreign investment.

**Trade Deficit**

580. SHRI RUPCHAND PAL :  
DR. MAHADEEPAK SINGH SHAKYA :  
SHRI PARAS RAM BHARDWAJ :  
SHRI NAWAL KISHORE RAI :  
SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH :  
SHRI MOHAN SINGH (DEORIA) :  
SHRI SRIKANTA JENA :  
SHRI MANJAY LAL :  
SHRI HARI KISHORE SINGH :  
SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGRAHI :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the value of rupee has come down considerably as against foreign currencies mainly US dollar in January and February, 1996;

(b) if so, the details of its impacts on the exportable and importable items;

(c) the details of trade deficit at the end of 1995 as compared to last three years;

(d) the increase registered in the trade deficit during January and February, 1996 due to decline in the value of Indian currency;

(e) the details of its likely impacts on Indian Economy;

(f) whether the exporters are discouraged due to rise in the value of foreign exchange as a result of which the export of the country has declined;

(g) whether the Government have formulated any short term/long term strategy to bridge the trade deficit in 1996; and

(h) if so, the details thereof and if not, the steps taken by the Government in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (DR. DEBI PROSAD PAL) : (a) The exchange rate of the rupee against the US dollar depreciated during January 1996 until February 6, 1996. Since then, the rate recovered to Rs. 35.28 per US dollar on 28.2.1996, which