

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 PRASAD 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 PRASAD 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

was the level on January 4, 1996.

(b) The level of Exchange rate of the rupee at present is more realistic and will help ensure that export growth remains strong and import growth is contained. Both these factors will help to contain the trade deficit to manageable levels.

(c) and (d) India's foreign trade data are compiled on financial year (April-March) basis. Trade deficit as at the end of 1994-95 and those for the previous two years as also during April-December 1995 the latest period for which such data are available, are as follows :

	Rs. crores	Million
1992-93	9687	3345
1993-94	3350	1069
1994-95	7297	2324
April-Dec., 1995	11571	3535

(e) Recent changes in the exchange rate has corrected the erosion in competitiveness and will help ensure that export growth remains strong and import growth is contained.

(f) India's exports registered an increase of 24.2% in US \$ terms during April-December 1995 which is higher than the 16.9% growth during the corresponding period last year.

(g) and (h) The objective of the Exim Policy 1992-97 which is updated annually is to accelerate export growth on a sustained basis, to encourage imports substitution and provide enhanced opportunities in the domestic sector to participate and benefit from such growth.

[Translation]

Sub-regional office of ESI in Karnataká

581. SHRIMATI CHANDRA PRABHA URS : Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government of Karnataka has sent any proposal for the opening of a Sub-Regional Office of the E.S.I. Corporation at Hubli in Karnataka for the convenience of the industrial workers of Northern region of Karnataka;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the decision taken by the Union Government in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY) : (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. A proposal for setting up of a Sub-Regional Office at Hubli in Karnataka was sent by the State Government to the ESI Corporation on 19.9.95. The matter has been examined in the light of the guidelines approved by the Standing Committee of the ESI Corporation. As number of the Insured Persons at Hubli falls short of the minimum norm of one lakh, it has not been found possible to open

a Sub-Regional Office of ESI Corporation at Hubli for the present.

Textile Mills in Gujarat

582. SHRIMATI BHAVNA CHIKHLIA : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a) the number of cotton spinning and weaving mills in Gujarat as on date and the number of mills out of them taken over by the National Textile Corporation and the Gujarat State Textiles Corporation;

(b) the number of mills referred to Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction for winding up;

(c) the number of mills in regard to which decision has been taken for modernisation thereof; and

(d) the amount allocated for modernisation of the said mills particularly in tribal and backward areas ?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY) : (a) There were 133 Cotton/Man-made Fibre Textile Units and 34 exclusive weaving units in Gujarat as on 31.1.96. As per available information, 17 mills have been taken over by Gujarat State Textiles Corporation. The number of mills under the NTC in Gujarat is 12.

(b) The cases of 45 Sick Cotton/Man-made Fibre Textile mills including exclusive weaving units in Gujarat, have been referred to BIFR as on 30.9.95. Out of these, BIFR has recommended winding up in respect of 20 cases. The case of NTC (Gujarat) Ltd., is among those referred to the BIFR.

(c) and (d) BIFR draws up rehabilitation packages through Operating Agencies appointed by it for revival of the viable sick mills. Modernisation may form a part of rehabilitation package. Out of 45 cases, BIFR has sanctioned rehabilitation scheme under Sec. 18(4) in 6 cases and AAIFR has sanctioned rehabilitation scheme in 2 cases. Separate data for mills in tribal areas, is not maintained.

[English]

Revenue Loss Due to Hawala

583. SHRI CHITTA BASU :

SHRI BRAHMANAND MANDAL :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) the annual loss in rupees which the country have to incur due to illegal transaction of foreign exchanges (Hawala);

(b) if so, the steps taken so far to plug this leak;

(c) whether the Government propose to make a thorough probe into working of the Hawala; and

(d) if so, the details thereof ?