

(b) The training of pilots is required to be carried out as per the career pattern, agreed between Indian Commercial Pilots Association (ICPA) and the Management. As per the present career pattern, Commanders on A-320 type of aircraft are to be trained as Commanders on A-300 type of aircraft. At present, Indian Airlines is unable to upgrade A-320 Commanders as A-300 Commanders due to shortage of Commanders on A-320 type of aircraft.

However, in order to maintain the planned schedule, Indian Airlines has offered contractual appointment to A-300 Commanders who have retired during the last two years. In addition, one retired Air India Commander has also been appointed on contract basis.

#### Trade Deficit

876. SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the trade deficit has increased enormously in the recent months;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the details of import and export position at present; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government to improve the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) Trade deficit during April-June, 1995 is provisionally estimated at US \$ 824.20 million which is higher than the deficit during the corresponding period last year.

(b) The increased level of deficit could be attributed to an increase in both oil and non-oil imports, the latter comprising raw materials, intermediates, capital goods and export-linked imports; the higher-level of non-oil imports is due to a higher industrial growth and an accelerated export performance.

(c) Details of exports and imports during the first quarter (April-June), 1995-96 and growth thereof are as under :

	US \$ Million	% Growth
Imports	7991.70 (P)	37.5
Exports	7167.50 (P)	27.7

(P : Provisional).

(d) Recognising that international trade is a key component of global economic activity today, the

Government have taken a number of steps to encourage and maintain strong export growth. India's trade policy was liberalised in July '91 to respond to the opportunities and challenges posed by the domestic and international developments. The trade policy is aimed at creating a freer environment for trade, strengthening the export promotion structure, removing procedural irritants through simplification and streamlining of procedures, increasing export production, improving efficiency and sharpening competitive edge, facilitating input availability, focussing on quality and technological upgradation besides introducing and strengthening schemes for export promotion. Efforts have been made to provide cheaper export credit and provide tax exemption on export profits. Export Promotion is a continuous process and steps are taken to boost exports in consultation with trade, industry and concerned institutions.

#### Expansion of Fleet by Air India

877. SHRIMATI KRISHNENDRA KAUR (Deepa) : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Air India to expand fleet by wet leasing" appearing in the Hindustan Times dated June 24, 1995;

(b) if so, the details of the points mentioned in the news-item and the present position/decision taken to acquire the aircraft; and

(c) the routes on which these aircraft are likely to be deployed?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Air India is taking steps to improve its product, image and on time performance. As regards acquisition of additional aircraft on lease basis, no final decision has been taken so far.

#### Seized Hashish

878. SHRI SIMON MARANDI : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether hashish and some other objectionable items have been seized by customs department from several foreign nationals who were going abroad from Indira Gandhi International Airport, New Delhi;

(b) if so, the number of such foreign nationals from whom charas, hashish and other objectionable items have been seized since January, 1995 till date;

(c) the details of the seizure made in this regard;