

Foreign Minister's Visits Abroad

672. **SHRI MUKHTIAR SINGH MALIK:** Will the Minister of **EXTERNAL AFFAIRS** be pleased to state:

- (a) the names of the countries visited recently by him;
- (b) the purpose of each visit; and
- (c) the outcome of each visit?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SURENDRA PAL SINGH): (a) The Foreign Minister visited Canada, Algeria, the United States and Afghanistan during the months of August, September and October this year.

(b) and (c). The Minister led the Indian delegation to the meeting of the Commonwealth Heads of Governments held from August 2 to August 10 in Ottawa, Canada. The meeting provided the Minister an opportunity to meet the Heads of Governments and other senior Commonwealth representatives for an exchange of views on various matters of international concern.

The Foreign Minister visited Algiers in connection with the conference of the Heads of Non-Aligned nations, held from September 2 to September 10. Apart from the outcome of the conference, incorporated in the already published Economic and Political Declarations, the visit also provided him an opportunity to discuss various bilateral and international issues with leaders of non-aligned nations present in Algiers.

The Foreign Minister led the Indian delegation to 28th General Assembly meeting of the United Nations in New York. The Foreign Minister availed himself of this opportunity to make a brief visit to Washington and had talks with the U.S. Secretary of State, Dr. Henry Kissinger and exchanged views on matters of mutual interest, and further normalisation of relations between India and U.S.A.

The Foreign Minister paid a goodwill visit to Kabul from October 29 to November 1 and exchanged views with the leaders of the Afghan Government on matters of mutual interest with particular reference to closed economic, technical and cultural ties.

Reported Portuguese Claim over Goa

673. **SHRI MUKHTIAR SINGH MALIK:**

SHRI BIRENDER SINGH RAO:

Will the Minister of **EXTERNAL AFFAIRS** be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of Government has been drawn to the press reports dated the 28th September, 1973 to the effect that Portugal is still claiming Goa as its territory and two representatives on its behalf are to be included in the Portuguese Parliament; and

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SURENDRA PAL SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir

(b) Government attach no importance to these reports. Whatever Portugal does to claim her non-existent connection with Goa, it does not make any difference to the realities of the situation.

Experience for Assistants being posted to Indian Supply Mission in London and Washington

674. **SHRI MUHAMMED SHE-RIFF:**

SHRI RAMJI RAM:

Will the Minister of **SUPPLY AND REHABILITATION** be pleased to state:

(a) whether an agreement was reached between the Department of Supply and the Ministry of External Affairs in 1968 that only Assistants with five years purchase experience

should be posted to the India Supply Mission in London and Washington;

(b) whether the Department of Supply reduced the required minimum purchase experience of five years to three years on the 18th August, 1973 in violation of the agreement reached with the Ministry of External Affairs; and

(c) in view of the violation of the agreement referred to in part (b) above, whether the panel of Assistants formed out of interviews held on the 25th and 27th September, 1973 will be declared null and void and only Assistants with at least five years' experience called for interview to form a correct panel?

THE MINISTER OF SUPPLY AND REHABILITATION (SHRI R. K. KHADILKAR): (a) An agreement was reached in 1960 that technical posts which includes the post of Assistant, would be filled by the non-IFS personnel selected by the Department of Supply while non-technical posts would be filled by the IFS(B) personnel selected by the Ministry of External Affairs. This point of view was reiterated in 1968 by this Department.

(b) The minimum purchase experience of five years was reduced to three years by the Department of Supply in the case of Assistants in August 1973 only in the public interest and as such there is no question of violation of any agreement as referred to in part (a) of the Question.

(c) Question does not arise.

New Prices of Steel

675. SHRI MUHAMMED SHE-RIFF:

SHRI BISHWANATH JHUN-JHUNWALA:

Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the new steel prices have been announced by the Joint

Plant Committee of Government during October, 1973 in accordance with the dual pricing policy announced by Heavy Industry Ministry; and

(b) if so, the salient features of the new prices announced?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI SUBODH HANSDA): (a) Revised prices of steel were announced by the Joint Plant Committee in October, 1973.

(b) (i) There is no change for the three main categories of the Plates, Structural and Railway materials which are predominantly used by State and Central Government, public sector and basic industries;

(ii) The prices of other categories of steel have been increased by varying amounts;

(iii) These prices have been made applicable from the midnight of 14/15th October, 1973;

(iv) The interest of the exporters of engineering goods is being protected.

Coal Mines under Government Control and in Private hands

676. SHRI MUHAMMED SHE-RIFF:
SHRI KRISHNA CHANDER HALDER:

Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) the number of coal mines in the country under Government control as well as in private hands;

(b) whether Government have considered the question of taking over some more coal mines from private hands; and

(c) if so, the broad outlines of the proposals;