

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND CIVIL SUPPLIES AND CO-OPERATION (SHRI ARIF BEG): Based on latest provisional data India's overall imports and exports (including re-exports) during April—December 1977 amounted to Rs. 3917.92 crores and Rs. 3952.44 crores respectively as compared with Rs. 3767.70 crores and Rs. 3637.12 crores in the corresponding period of the previous year. The balance of trade during April—December '77 showed a surplus of Rs. 34.52 crores as against a deficit of Rs. 130.58 crores in April—December 1976.

The foreign exchange reserves (excluding gold, SDRs, and Government holdings) increased from Rs. 2862.99 crores on 31st March 77 to Rs. 3995.80 crores on 17th Feb. 78 showing an increase of Rs. 1132.81 crores since March 31st.

It may however be mentioned that the movement in foreign exchange reserves is the net outcome of a number of factors besides exports and imports. These include receipts and outgo under invisibles, capital transactions, etc.

Feeder Air Services to Places of Tourist Interest

1684. SHRI C. N. VISVANATHAN: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the particulars of the plans for providing feeder air services to important places of tourist interest;

(b) the extent of Central and State responsibility in this regard; and

(c) the outlays proposed and the time frame therefor?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PURSHOTTAM KAUSHIK): (a) to (c). A project report on third Level Air-operations has been received and is under consideration of Government. The report deals with proposals to connect small towns of tourist and

other interests not connected by Indian Airlines, economics of operation, nature of Government assistance and such other relevant details.

Export of Coir and Coir Goods

1685. SHRI AGHAN SINGH THAKUR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND CIVIL SUPPLIES AND COOPERATION be pleased to state:

(a) the total quantity and value of coir and coir goods exported this year;

(b) how the position stands as compared to that of last year; and

(c) the future prospect of export in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND CIVIL SUPPLIES AND CO-OPERATION (SHRI ARIF BEG):

(a) and (b). Total exports during 1977-78 (April 1977—January 1978) were of the order of 36,883 tonnes valued at Rs. 20.78 crores as against 38,120 tonnes valued at Rs. 19.34 crores during the corresponding period in 1976-77.

(c) The present trend of our exports indicates that the target of Rs. 25 crores fixed for 1977-78 will be achieved. Also, better prospects appear to exist for our finished products in West European Markets.

Consultation for the Merger of Chairmanship of Air India and I.A.

1686. SHRI RAGAVALU MOHARANGAN: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for having a common Chairman for the Boards of Air India and I.A.C.;

(b) whether it is a fact that the former Chairman of Air India was not consulted regarding the merger of Chairmanship in spite of his considerable experience and stewardship in the line; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor?