

Indo-Polish Trade Agreement

*18. SHRI GHOUSE MOHIUDDIN SHEIKH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that an Indo-Polish trade agreement has been signed in January, 1981; and

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND STEEL AND MINES (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Yes, Sir,

(b) The Trade and Payments Agreement envisages the continuance of the bilateral trade in Indian rupees. The Agreement is valid for a period of five years ending 31st December, 1985.

Development of tourism in the Lakshadweep Islands

*19. SHRI NARSINGH NARAIN PANDEY: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to develop tourism in the Lakshadweep Islands specially in Kavaratti and Minicoy Islands; if so, what are the details thereof; and

(b) whether any survey for the purpose was conducted there taking into consideration all aspects of the problems of this area; if so, what is Government's reaction in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI A. P. SHARMA): (a) During the Five Year Plan 1980-85, the Department has, subject to availability of funds, proposed the purchase of a 45-seater motor launch for the operation of inter-island cruises.

(b) A survey was undertaken jointly by the Central Department of Tourism and Air-India in 1973 for assessing the tourism potential of the Lakshadweep Islands. As a result, entry restrictions to one of the islands, namely the Bangaram Island, were relaxed for introducing tourism. 16 cottages (32 beds) have been cons-

tructed on this island by the Hotel Corporation of India. These have been leased out to the Travel Corporation of India, an approved travel agency, which is promoting tourism to the Bangaram Island.

Price situation in the country

*20. SHRI SYED AHMAD HASHMI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the present price situation in the country as compared to that during the last two years; and

(b) what measures are proposed to be taken for bringing down and stabilising the prices of essential commodities?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN): (a) During the current fiscal year, between March 29, 1980 and January 24, 1981, the Wholesale Price Index increased by 13.3 per cent compared with 19.5 per cent and 1.4 per cent in the corresponding periods of 1979-80 and 1978-79 respectively.

(b) A number of anti-inflationary measures have already been taken which have helped in moderating the inflationary pressures during the current year. Government is keeping the price situation under surveillance and further measures will be taken in the light of emerging trends.

Separate Corporation for Visakhapatnam Steel Plant

*21. SHRI VIREN J. SHAH: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government of Andhra Pradesh have requested the Central Government for the setting up of a separate Corporation for the Visakhapatnam steel project for its effective planning and execution;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard;

(c) what action Central Government have taken in the matter; and

(d) what is the progress made so far in the execution of the steel project?