

abolish the present import policy under Open General Licence for the import of dry and fresh fruits from Afghanistan;

(b) if so, whether Government intends to issue fresh Import Licences in this behalf; and

(c) if the answer to parts (a) and (b) above be in the affirmative, by when the licences are likely to be issued?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND STEEL AND MINES (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) The O.G.L. import policy is applicable to dry-fruits (excluding cashew nuts) and Dates (wet or dried) imported in Indian sailing vessels. Fresh fruits are imported only through National Agricultural Co-operative Marketing Federation (NAFED). No decision has been taken to change this policy.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Geneva agreement to absorb fluctuations in world commodity trading

178. DR. RAFIQ ZAKARIA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) what concrete benefits will accrue to India as a result of the recent Geneva agreement for a 700 million dollar common fund to absorb fluctuations in world commodity trading; and

(b) whether the fund is expected to help our balance of trade position with America and the European Economic Community and if so, what are the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND STEEL AND MINES (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) The agreement establishing the Common Fund for Commodities adopted in Geneva last month envisages a total capital of US \$ 750 million. The Fund will consist of two accounts. The First Account of US \$ 400 million is intended for financing of international

buffer stocks and internationally co-ordinated national stocks. The Second Account of US \$ 350 million is intended for financing of measures in the field of commodities other than stocking including research and development, productivity improvements, marketing and measures designed to assist as a rule by means of joint financing or through technical assistance, vertical diversification. The Fund will thus through its two Accounts make available financial assistance for various commodity related measures designed to sustain stabilize and improve export earnings. Commodities of export interest to India such as Jute, Tea and Coir may become eligible for such assistance. However, this will be possible only after appropriate international commodity arrangements for these commodities have been concluded.

(b) Improvement in export earnings from the commodities as a result of measures undertaken with financial assistance of the Common Fund could lead to improvement in the balance of trade position of India with the U.S.A. and the E.E.C.

"Wet lease operation" by the Indian Airlines

179. SHRI ERA SEZHIYAN: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the particulars of the routes which were put under the scheme of 'wet-lease operation' by the Indian Airlines during the last five years;

(b) the terms and conditions especially in respect of the operation cost, responsibility of maintenance and scrutiny; and

(c) the percentage of the fare to be paid by the particular operators to Indian Airlines?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI CHANDULAL CHANDRAKAR): (a) In view of the shortage in capacity for carriage of passengers and freight the following routes were operated under