

(b) the number of such delegations from India which went abroad during 1973-74 and the extent to which India has benefited by such visits?]

विदेश मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री : (श्री सुरेन्द्र पाल सिंह) : (क) 48 ।

(ख) 35 ।

इन यात्राओं से पारस्परिक हित के मामलों पर संबद्ध सरकारों के साथ विचारों का लाभगारी आदान-प्रदान करने के अवसर मिले । भारत के हित से संबद्ध द्विपक्षीय प्रश्नों पर विचार-विमर्श करने से भारत और संबद्ध विदेश से लाभ के कई क्षेत्रों में समझ-बूझ बढ़ी और प्रबंध किए गए ।

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SURENDRA PAL SINGH): (a) 48.

(b) 35.

These visits provided opportunities for useful exchange of views with the respective governments on matters of mutual interest. Discussions on bilateral questions of interest to India have resulted in arrangements and understanding being reached in a variety of fields of benefit to India and the foreign countries concerned.]

Aluminium Corporation of India

*633. SHRIMATI KUMUDBEN MANISHANKER JOSHI: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to take away Aluminium Corporation of India from the purview of the Aluminium Control Order, 1971;

[] English translation.

(b) whether any recommendation to this effect has been made by the Bureau of Industrial Costs and Prices; and

(c) if so, what action Government propose to take in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI K. D. MALAVIYA):

(a) to (c) Uniform prices for aluminium and some of its products were notified under the Aluminium (Control) Order, 1970, with effect from 24th May, 1971. The Aluminium producers had been pressing for increase of the controlled prices of aluminium on account of increases in the prices of raw materials. The Bureau of Industrial Costs and Prices, who were requested to examine the costs of production of the Aluminium producers, including the Aluminium Corporation of India, and suggest suitable revision of controlled prices, have submitted their recommendations. These are under consideration of Government.

Meeting of Non-Aligned Countries on West Asia

*634. SHRI DEBANANDA AMAT: SHRI M. K. MOHTA: SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO: SHRI SUNDAR MANI PATEL: SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: SHRI THILLAI VILLALAN:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether a meeting of non-aligned countries is likely to take place in the near future on the West Asian question;

(b) if so, by when and where the conference is to take place; and

(c) whether any agenda has been finalised; and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SURENDRA PAL SINGH): (a) to (c) Some time ago it was decided to

hold a meeting of the Coordinating Committee of Non-Aligned Countries at ministerial level in Algiers from 19th to 21st March 1974, with a view to considering the Middle-East question and problems relating to development and international economic relations in the framework of the decisions taken during the Algiers Summit Conference of Non-aligned Countries in September 1973. Details of discussions held during the meeting are awaited.

Allegations made against Regional Passport Office, Tamil Nadu

*635. SHRI LOKANATH MISRA:
SHRI DEBANANDA AMAT:
SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO: SHRI
SUNDER MANI PATEL:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a report which appeared in the 'Indian Express' of the 24th December, 1973, regarding the inefficient and unsatisfactory functioning of the Regional Passport Office in Tamil Nadu;

(b) whether it is a fact that a large number of applications for issue of passports have been lying undisposed with that Office for a period ranging from six months to two years;

(c) whether any investigation has been made into the various allegations reported to have been made against that Office by the applicants for passports; and

(d) if so, the details of the finding and steps taken by Government thereon?

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

(b) to (d) Due to the very large increase in the number of passport applications since the middle of 1973 and the inadequacy of the strength of the staff of our Regional Passport Office, Madras, there have been cases where delays have taken place in the issue of passports. The working of this office has been carefully gone into and it as found that it was impossible for the existing staff of that office to cope with the very large increase in the number of applications. Therefore, the Government is taking steps to raise the strength of the staff in the Regional Passport Office to the required level. It has also been decided to establish a separate Regional Passport Office in Kerala.

With these measures the situation in Regional Passport Office, Madras, is expected to improve considerably.

Policy on export metals

*636. SHRIMATI LAKSHMI KUMARI CHUNDAWAT: SHRI MAHENDRA BAHADUR SINGH:
SHRI SAWAISINGH SISODIA:

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

(a) whether Government propose to review the policy regarding export of metals; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI K. D. MALAVIYA): (a) and (b) Export policy for metals is reviewed from time to time. The policy for 1974-75 is under review and the details will be available after some time.

*637. [Transferred to the 24th March, 1974.]