

(c) the action proposed to be taken by Government in this regard ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING/

सूचना और प्रसारण मंत्रालय में उप मंत्री (SHRI DHARAM VIR SINHA) (a) and (b) These bulletins are broadcast on the short-wave on Delhi and on medium-wave from Calcutta stations. Both these broadcasts are received well in Eastern India. The reception of short-wave broadcasts from Delhi may not be particularly good at and around Delhi because of technical reasons. No complaints about inaudibility of these broadcasts have been received from the target areas.

(c) Does not arise.

AIR NEWS BULLETIN ON FIRE AT SRINAGAR

910 SHRI GULAM NABI UNTOO Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING/सूचना और प्रसारण मंत्री be pleased to state

(a) whether it is a fact that the All India Radio in its English bulletin broadcast at 3.30 hours on the 21st March, 1971 gave news item that Srinagar city was under heavy fire and that one thousand persons had been rendered homeless,

(b) whether it is also a fact that the same news was denied by the State Government of Jammu and Kashmir,

(c) if the reply to parts (a) and (b) above is in the affirmative, what action has been taken in this regard ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING/सूचना और प्रसारण

मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (SHRI DHARAM VIR SINGH) (a) Yes, Sir. AIR broadcast a news item based on PTI report, that several houses and shops at Srinagar had been burnt and an estimated one thousand people had become homeless as a result of a big fire.

(b) A State Government official informed AIR that the report was not correct.

(c) The news item was immediately withdrawn and the attention of the Press Trust of India who had circulated the news item, was drawn to the inaccuracy.

POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS COMMUNICATIONS IN ANDAMANS

911 SHRI SITARAM JAIPURIA Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS/संचार मंत्री be pleased to state

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have drawn up a scheme involving Rupees 40 lakhs for improving post and telegraph communications in the Andamans, and

(b) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS/संचार मंत्री (SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA) (a) and (b) A scheme including the following proposals for the development and improvement of P&T facilities in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands is currently under examination.

(i) Formation of a separate Postal Division for the administration of the Postal Services on the Islands. This would also enable the Islands to be regarded as a separate unit of recruitment for the clerical grades in the Post Office and would obviate the need to bring staff from the mainland.

(ii) Utilisation of all available steamer services both passenger and cargo, for conveyance of mails between the mainland and the Islands.

(iii) Utilisation of sailings of all Government vessels between the various Islands on other duties for conveyance of mail, between various post offices.

(iv) Opening of a floating mobile Post Office on an experimental basis by the inter-island steamer serving the Southern group of Islands.

(v) Improvement of the Wireless Telegraph and Radio links between the mainland and the Islands.

(vi) Provision of Wireless Telegraph/Radio Telephone links for inter-island communication working between Port Blair

and five side stations viz. Mayabunder, Nan Cowrie, Rangat, Diglipur and Campbell Bay.

(vii) Relaxation of the condition of minimum income for opening of rural Post Offices on the Islands.

(viii) Employment of part-time staff to enable expeditious sorting of mails received for delivery

(ix) Delivery of telegrams in Port Blair through Motor Cycle despatch riders

(x) Acceptance of Telegraphic Money Orders upto Rs. 100 for transmission through Police Wireless network

The developmental proposals are all within the present policy of the Department for extension of P&T facilities in the country with special reference to the less developed areas. There will thus be no additional financial implications specially for the Islands, as a result of these proposals. Some of the proposals e.g. constituting the Islands as a separate recruitment unit, will mean appreciable savings, as it will obviate the payment of special allowances to the staff brought over from the mainland.

The Postal Division has already been opened and its effect on the postal services will be apparent within the next few months. Orders have also been issued for opening the Mobile Post Office in the inter-Islands steamer and for the employment of part-time staff.

The provision of Wireless Telegraph/Radio Telephone links between the mainland and the Islands is expected to be completed by the end of 1972.

The provision of the Wireless Telegraph/Radio Telephone links between Port Blair and the five side stations on the other Islands is expected to be completed by the end of this year.

The other proposals are under examination and an early decision will be taken.

#### INDIA'S TRADE GAP IN 1970-71

912 SHRI SITARAM JAIPURIA : Will the Minister of FOREIGN TRADE/विदेश व्यापार मंत्री be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that India's trade gap has considerably fallen down during the last year ,

(b) if so, what are the export and import figures for the year 1970-71 , and

(c) what steps are being taken by Government to make India's trade surplus ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE/विदेश व्यापार मन्त्रालय में उप-मंत्री (SHRI A C GEORGE) (a) Yes, Sir

(b) India's exports and imports during 1970-71 totalled Rs. 1530.65 crores and Rs. 1628.17 crores respectively

(c) It is the declared policy of Government to undertake effective steps to bring about a better balance in our foreign trade. The export target for the Fourth Five-Year Plan is an average annual rate of growth of 7%. To that end, Government have adopted a number of measures to increase production of export products, to strengthen the competitive ability and to facilitate their marketing abroad. The Export Policy Resolution laid on the Table of Parliament in July '70 gives a broad indication of policies that Government plan to adopt so as to ensure that our exports grow in line with plan targets.

#### EXPORT OF SALT

913 SHRI N G GORAY Will the Minister of FOREIGN TRADE/विदेश व्यापार मंत्री be pleased to state

(a) whether it is a fact that we have lost our salt export to Japan in spite of the warning given by that country that it might be forced to obtain salt from other countries , and

(b) if so, what is the amount of our loss on this score and what steps are being taken by the Government and the Salt Manufacturers Association to restore the trade?