

and transport.

(iii) Encouragement for establishment of Joint Ventures and projects in the area of agriculture, agro industry, telecommunication, medical equipment, non-conventional energy and computers.

(iv) Encouragement to public and private sector organisations to participate in international fairs held in each others country and exchange of visits of delegations.

(v) Promotion of third country ventures in trade and industrial sectors.

This MOU signed on 17th May, 1993 envisages holding of further consultations from time to time to give effect of this cooperation.

PDS Items Smuggled to Bangladesh

944. SHRI G. DEVARAYANA IKA:
SHRI GURUDAS KAMAT:
SHRI CHAND KHANDLWAL;
SHRI MATI SAROJ DUBEY:
SHRI SANAT KUMAR
MANDAL:
SHRI Y. SREENIVASA
PRASAD:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware that large quantities of PDS items are smuggled across the border to Bangladesh and Myanmar;

(b) if so whether the Union Government have discussed the issues with the north eastern States;

(c) if so, the details of the discussions held; and

(d) the concrete steps taken to check illegal smuggling of PDS items from the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.V. CHANDRASHEKARA MURTHY) (a) : Smuggling of PDS items across the borders of Bangladesh and Myanmar is a cause of concern to Government.

(b) : Yes Sir.

(c) : During the discussions, decisions were taken for invoking action under the Essential Commodities Act by the State Governments and stopping up the vigilance by Customs and BSF authorities.

(d) : All concerned agencies are action in a fully integrated manner to stop the menace of smuggling.

Interest Rates on Agricultural Credit

945. SHRI NITISH KUMAR:
DR. CHINTA MOHAN:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the interest rates on agricultural credit and other types of rural credit are proposed to be increased as reported in the press;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the financial institutions are contemplating to increase the rate of interest on the loans provided for agriculture production in the country

(d) if so, the reasons therefor

(e) whether the Government have issued the directives to these financial institutions also in this regard; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND MINISTER OF