

(c) whether Government have noticed that in some business firms for commercial purposes such as DTC and in the market figures workout in these coins as, for instance, the price of kerosene oil is rupees 1.88 per litre; and

(d) if so, what steps Government propose to take in this regard in the interest of common people ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY) : (a) to (d) The minting of one, two and three paise coins has already been discontinued. They are, however, still in circulation. The Reserve Bank of India has been advised to gradually withdraw from circulation these coins by not re-issuing them once these coins are received in Currency Chests. In order to avoid difficulty/inconvenience to the public in completing transactions when these coins are gradually withdrawn from circulation, suitable advice/instructions have already been issued to all State Governments' Union Territories, P. & T. Department, Railway Board etc. to round off all the transactions to the nearest multiple of 5 paise.

News-Item Captioned "Multi-Crore Contraband Racket"

7543, SHRI NAWAL KISHORE SHARMA : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether his attention has been invited to a press report which appeared in the Weekly "Blitz" dated the 19th February, 1983 under the heading "Multi-crore contraband racket";

(b) the full facts of the racket unearthed and contraband goods seized;

(c) whether any persons have been arrested and if so, the particulars thereof;

(d) whether it is a fact that Gujarat has become the main centre of smugglers; and

(e) the measures taken to check the activities of smugglers which are on the increase ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PATTABHI RAMA RAO) :

(a) to (c) Yes, Sir. Acting on information, the Customs authorities in Gujarat maintained surveillance at vulnerable points at Salaya, Barar and the areas around these places and seized contraband goods including video cassette recorders, colour television sets, two-in-ones and synthetic fabrics, totally valued at about Rs. 56.54 lakhs from a truck on 2-2-1983. Subsequent investigations and follow-up action led to further seizures of similar contraband goods from another truck, two dry wells and a godown in the vicinity. The total value of seizures (including the aforesaid seizure of Rs. 56.54 lakhs) effected is Rs. 2.48 crores. 14 persons have been arrested in this connection.

(d) and (e) Reports received by Government indicate that the Gujarat region continues to be vulnerable to smuggling. Government are fully alive to the situation. The field formations in the region have been instructed to remain vigilant. The preventive and intelligence machinery of the Customs department has been geared up and appropriate anti-smuggling measures have been taken in close co-ordination with the concerned Central and State Government authorities. The matter is also kept under constant review.

Agricultural Credit To Tribal People By Financial Institutions

7544. SHRI JAI NARAYAN ROAT : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the agricultural credit provided to tribal people by various financial