

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (DR. KARAN SINGH): (a) and (b). Plans and estimates have been prepared, and it is proposed to take up the work during the Fifth Plan period.

**Steps to Check Smuggling of watches into India**

4312. SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a large scale smuggling of foreign watches; and

(b) if so, what steps Government are proposing to take to stop such smuggling?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI K. R. GANESH): (a) In view of the large seizures made by the Customs authorities from time to time of foreign watches attempted to be smuggled into the country it can be said that foreign watches are being smuggled into India on a large scale.

(b) The steps taken by the Government to prevent smuggling and the steps proposed to be taken in this regard are as follows:—

Systematic collection and follow up of information, keeping a watchful eye on the suspected smugglers, rummaging of suspected vessels or aircraft, and checking of vulnerable sectors along the coast and the land frontiers. Additional launches and vehicles are being provided from time to time for effective interception, prevention, etc. Some senior officers of the rank of Collectors of Customs, Additional Collectors of Customs and Assistant Collectors of Customs have been posted in vulnerable areas to look after anti-smuggling work exclusively. Customs Act, 1962 has been amended making additional provisions to take special measures for the purpose of checking illegal import of certain commodities and facilitating their

detection. A Bill to further amend the Customs Act, 1962 to provide more severe punishments for smuggling offences and to plug loopholes has been passed by the Parliament. Steps have been taken to acquire fast sea crafts.

The question of augmenting anti-smuggling staff is under active consideration. The position is kept under constant review.

**I. & B. Ministry's Proposal for taking over Metro Cinemas at Bombay and Calcutta**

4313. SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to refer to the reply given to Unstarred Question No. 8509 on the 27th April, 1973 regarding Information and Broadcasting Ministry's proposal for taking over Metro Cinemas at Bombay and Calcutta and state:

(a) whether Government have now accepted the legal validity of the transfer of shares of the Metro Theatres at Calcutta and Bombay to M/s. Tramarsa S.A. of Geneva;

(b) if so, whether any inquiries are still being held into the allegedly irregular purchase of these cinemas by certain Indian private parties acting on behalf of M/s. Tramarsa; and

(c) if the inquiries have been called off, the reasons therefore?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI K. R. GANESH): (a) the transaction was between two non-residents in respect of the shares of a non-resident company. Since the seller and the purchaser are both non-residents they do not come within the purview of the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act 1947.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) In view of (b), question does not arise.