

Smuggling on India-Bangladesh border

1621. DR. H. P. SHARMA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the reports that organised rings of smugglers have been actively engaged in smuggling across India-Bangladesh border; and

(b) the steps taken to prevent these activities effectively and to round up the smuggling rings and the financiers thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PRANAB KUMAR MUKHERJEE): (a) Government are aware of the smuggling activities across the India-Bangladesh border and involvement of some organised rings in such smuggling.

(b) Some of the measures which have been adopted to check smuggling across the Indo-Bangladesh border are as under:—

- (i) customs staff has been posted along the border, who undertake preventive patrols;
- (ii) close liaison is maintained with the Border Security Force and the States' Police at different levels for anti-smuggling work;
- (iii) personnel of the Border Security Force and the local police in the border areas have been empowered to take action under the Customs Act, 1962 for anti-smuggling work;
- (iv) the provisions of the Maintenance of Internal Security Act as amended by the Maintenance of Internal Security (Amendment) Ordinance, 1974 are also being applied to de-

tain smugglers with a view to check smuggling across this border.

Financial assistance to pilgrim centres for Development as Tourist Centres

1622. SHRI C. H. MOHAMMED

KOYA: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any scheme for providing financial assistance to pilgrim centres for development at tourist centres;

(b) if so, the various pilgrim centres which have received Central assistance under the scheme during the last three years, State-wise;

(c) whether Government of Kerala have requested the Union Government for such assistance; and

(d) if so, the decision taken on this matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SURENDRA PAL SINGH): (a) and (b) Since the abolition of part-II schemes, or centrally aided schemes, the development of facilities for pilgrim traffic has been the responsibility of the State Governments. The development of facilities for foreign tourists is mainly the responsibility of Central Government. The Central Department of Tourism is however constructing tourist bungalows at Rameshwaram (Tamil Nadu) and Mantralaya (Andhra Pradesh) Youth Hostels at Puri (Orissa) and Amritsar (Punjab) and tourist reception centre at Varanasi (U.P.) but these facilities are not primarily intended for pilgrim traffic.

(c) and (d). Proposals amounting to Rs. 24.00 lakhs were received from the Government of Kerala for the development of facilities for pilgrims at Sabrimala, Guruvayur, Malayathur and Mamburam. Since these places are mainly of regional importance, the development of facilities would be the responsibility of the State Government which has been informed accordingly.