

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
FINANCE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1845
ANSWERED ON:26.07.2002
ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES ACROSS THE BORDER
A. VENKATESH NAIK;RAMSHETH THAKUR

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) Whether India sought greater cooperation among Asia-Pacific countries in sharing information and intelligence with regard to customs in order to combat illegal activities across the border;
- (b) if so, whether India has discussed the matter with the Asia Pacific countries; and
- (c) if so, the response of the Asia-Pacific countries thereto?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN)

(a): Yes Sir; India has Memorandum of Understanding/Bilateral Agreements for Mutual Administrative Assistance in customs matters with several governments of the world including one government in the Asia Pacific region. As a measure of public policy, Government favour signing of such Memorandum of Understandings/Agreements with many countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

(b) & (c): Issues relating to the need for greater cooperation in sharing information and intelligence among customs authorities were discussed in the 9th World Customs Organisation Regional Conference of Heads of Administrations held in Hong Kong from 8-12 April, 2002. The Conference agreed on the need of better regional cooperation among themselves and proposed a guideline for Regional Mutual Administrative Assistance, which can be adopted by all members. A WCO Meeting of Heads of Customs Enforcement Services of the Asia-Pacific region was held in New Delhi from 14-16 May, 2002. This meeting also emphasised the need for increased exchange of information and intelligence for the purpose of combating smuggling.