

Agencies charged with anti-smuggling work on the Indo-Bangladesh border.

Expansion of Banking Facilities in Rural Areas

*366. SHRI KALP NATH RAI:
SHRI UTTAM RATHOD:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the present number of branches of nationalised banks in rural areas;

(b) their number at the beginning of the Seventh Five Year Plan; and

(c) the details of programmes, if any, to expand further the services of nationalised banks in the rural areas?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE): (a) to (c). The number of branches of Public Sector Banks in rural areas as on 31.12. 1989 (latest figures available) was 33,640. The number of such branches as on 1.4.1985 (beginning of the Seventh Five Year Plan) was 29,837. The previous Branch Licensing Policy (1985-90) came to an end on 31.3.1990. The new Branch Licensing Policy is being finalised by Reserve Bank of India.

Abolition of Octroi and Sales Tax

*367. SHRI L. K. ADVANI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the matter relating to abolition of octroi and sales tax has been under consideration of Union Government for quite some time past;

(b) if so, whether any decision has been taken; and

(c) if not, the reasons for delay?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE): (a) to (c). Both Octroi and Sales Tax are State subjects under the Constitution. Abolition of Sales Tax is not under consideration of the Government. Abolition of Octroi has been the subject of enquiry by several Committees and expert study groups like the Indirect Taxation Enquiry Committee, Lakadwala Committee etc. who recommended gradual abolition/replacement of the Octroi duty. This was discussed in the Chief Ministers' Conference held in 1980 and it was generally agreed in the Conference that the Octroi would be abolished in a phased manner. The Central Council for Local Government and Urban Development also discussed the abolition of Octroi in its various meetings and based on the suggestion of the Council, the Ministry of Urban Development have constituted a Committee to examine the question of augmenting the resources of local bodies in the event of abolition of Octroi. The report of this Committee is being circulated by the Ministry of Urban Development to the State Governments for necessary action.

Bank Loans Under SEPUP

*368. SHRIMATI UMA GAJAPATHI RAJU: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the present beneficiaries of the bank loans under the Self-employment Programme for Urban Poor (SEPUP) is based on the outdated 1981 census and the formula of one person for every 300; and

(b) whether Government propose to review and increase the number of beneficiaries in the areas the scheme serves in view of considerable increase in population in the urban areas?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE): (a) and (b). Self