

Action against Smugglers**Representations from Cement
Industry against Levy of
Import Duty**

*65. SHRI C. B. ATHARE PATIL:
Will the Minister of FINANCE be
pleased to lay a statement showing:

(a) the number of smugglers apprehended for smuggling into and smuggling out of the country contraband items, after the present Government have taken over;

(b) details of items seized and value thereof and also the countries to which these were intended to be smuggled or from which smuggled; and

(c) what action has been taken against the persons so apprehended and what stringent measures have been taken or are proposed to be taken by Government to stop such crimes?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN): (a) According to the reports received by Government, 213 persons were arrested under the Customs Act for their involvement in smuggling during the period 14th January, 1980 to 29th February, 1980.

(b) The main items seized were watches, silver, synthetic fabrics, calculators etc. and their total value was about Rs. 5.65 crores. It is reported that these items were smuggled from (or were intended to be smuggled to) Persian Gulf countries.

(c) Appropriate action under the law has already been initiated. The persons involved in smuggling have been arrested and their prosecution in courts of law is under consideration. Government propose to further intensify measures against smuggling, including action under the Conservation of Foreign Exchange and Prevention of Smuggling Activities Act, 1974.

*70. SHRI F. H. MOHSIN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in view of the critical power situation in the country, the production in the cement plants has been very badly hit resulting not only in the considerable loss of excise revenue but also necessitating imports;

(b) whether representations have been made by the cement industry against the levy of 40 per cent import duty on captive diesel generating sets, which is likely to inflate the cost of plant and production of energy; and

(c) if so, the action which Government propose to take either to waive this heavy duty or atleast reduce it so as to help optimum production of cement and save the industry from impending ruination?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN): (a) During the year 1979 the figures of production of cement in the country and the revenue realised on account of central excise duty on cement showed a marginal decline over the corresponding figures in 1978 and imports were effected to bridge the gap between demand and supply. However, the shortfall in production of cement is attributable not only to power cuts but also to shortage of coal and railway wagons.

(b) and (c). No representation has been received from the cement industry in the Ministry of Finance against the levy of 40 per cent import duty on captive generating sets.