

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) to (d) Besides the scheme of National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation, which has been under operation since 1992-93 for the welfare of Other Backward Classes, more schemes for the welfare of Backward Classes have been launched recently with a view to improving the educational and socio-economic conditions of the target groups. The copies of the schemes containing detailed norms and conditions have been circulated to all the States/Union Territories.

Assistance to Voluntary Cultural Organisations

3051. SHRI RAMCHANDRA BAINDA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the number of proposals received by the Government from Voluntary Cultural Organisations of Haryana for financial assistance during each of the last two years;

(b) the details of proposals approved by the Government or are under consideration of the Government; and

(c) the amount sanctioned so far and the amount actually provided during the above period, organisation-wise?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT, MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF DEPARTMENT OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Repatriation of Illegal Immigrants

3052. SHRI M. RAJIAH: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the West Bengal Government has expressed its inability to tackle infiltration from Bangladesh in the absence of an agreement between New Delhi and Dhaka on the repatriation of illegal immigrants;

(b) if so, the problems pointed out by the State Government in implementing the directive; and

(c) the steps proposed to check border infiltration?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): (a) The Government of West Bengal has filed an Affidavit/Status Report in the Supreme Court in Writ Petition Number 125/98 filed by All India Lawyers Forum for Civil Liberties. In this Affidavit, the Government of West Bengal has stated that "unless the Union of India enters into an International Agreement with the Government of Bangladesh simplifying the procedure governing repatriation of Bangladeshi nationals who are illegally staying in India, the herculean task of detecting and convicting such illegal immigrants will be rendered nugatory and futile".

(b) In the aforesaid Affidavit, the Government of West Bengal has stated that "while it is relatively easy to detect, prosecute and push back Bangladeshis intercepted during transit, it is quite difficult to identify those who have already settled in the districts due to the following reasons:—

(i) Their features, dress and language are largely similar to the residents of West Bengal;

(ii) Many of them have acquired ration cards and have been enlisted in the electoral rolls with the help of local touts and unscrupulous officials and politicians;

(iii) Many sections of the local people, including political leaders of all hues, harbour a sympathy for them and are reluctant to cooperate in their identification and deportation; and

(iv) The sheer number of such Bangladeshis believed to have entered into India after 1971, makes it humanly impossible to prosecute all of them under the Foreigners Act, get a conviction and a court order in respect of each one of them and thereafter push them back to Bangladesh."

(c) A series of measures have been taken by the Government to curb the problem of infiltration of Bangladeshi nationals into India. These measures include raising of additional battalions of Border Security Force, reduction of gaps between the border outposts, intensification of patrolling both on the land and the riverine border, accelerated programme of construction of border roads and fencing, increase in the number of outpost towers, provision of surveillance equipments etc. The matter has also been taken up with the Government of Bangladesh on various occasions. The progress of these measures is reviewed regularly at various levels.