

State Plans. The main programmes include the Externally-Aided Forestry Projects, Rehabilitation of Degraded Forests, Strip Plantations, Farm Forestry, Production Forestry, Control of Shifting Cultivation, Fuelwood and Fodder Projects Schemes, Integrated Afforestation and Eco-Development Projects Scheme, Desert Development Programme, Drought Prone Areas Programme, etc.

(b) Creating a massive people's movement with the involvement of women of the development, protection and management of forests is one of the basic objectives of the National Forests Policy (NFP 1988). The Ministry of Environment and Forests has issued guidelines dated 1st June 1990 to the State Government to evolve mechanisms for the involvement of village communities and voluntary agencies in the protection and development of degraded forest areas based on usufruct sharing.

The Ministry of Environment and Forests has schemes of Parayavaran Vahinis and Eco-Clubs. Under the former, campaigns and activities for environmental awareness generation have been undertaken in about 183 districts of the country. The scheme of Eco-Clubs targets school children for afforestation and general environmental awareness raising activities. Publications, Short Documentaries and Films are also funded by the Ministry of Environment and Forests for dissemination of information and awareness generation in this regard. Besides, celebration such as Van Mahotsavs, Wildlife Week, Earth day etc. in the country also help in generating awareness about environmental and forestry issues.

#### Borivali Caves

5157. SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware of the controversy about the character of Borivali caves in Maharashtra;

(b) if so, the exact status of the caves at the time of their declaration as a protected monument of historic importance; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to resolve the controversy?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE) (KUMARI SELJA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) At the time of declaration as monument of national importance, the Caves, Watch-Tower and Old Portuguese Church were under the occupation of the Government as these monuments have been shown in the Printed List of Protected Ancient Monuments in Bombay Presidency including Sind as owned by the Government and rarely worshipped. The land appertenant to these monuments has been shown as Gurcharan in the revenue records of 1883.

(c) The Government has filed a case in the Court of Law for settlement of the dispute and establishing ownership rights which the Archaeological Survey of India has claimed to be theirs since the monument is under central protection.

#### Medicinal Plants

5158. SHRI GOPI NATH GAJAPATHI : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware of the large scale destruction of Medicinal Plants in Orissa;

(b) whether the Government have also received reports in this connection from other States;

(c) whether it is due to the defective policy of the Government; and

(d) if so, the steps taken for the proper preservation of medicinal plants particularly in Orissa?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH) : (a) to (d). The information is being collected, and will be laid on the Table of the House.

#### Firms Cry Foul Over Railways

5159. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the newsitem captioned "Firms cry foul over Railways' awarding of tenders" published in 'The Economic Times' dated April 15, 1995;

(b) if so, the facts of the matter reported therein;

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto; and

(d) the action taken or proposed to be taken by the Government to set matters right?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c). An open Tender for supply of High Tensile Steel wire was floated by the Railway board with the specific condition that only the entrepreneurs, holding ISI certification may participate. Counter offers to 22 parties holding requisite ISI certification out of the 41 participants were made. Issues mentioned in the news item are presently subjudice in the High Court of Delhi.

(d) Court verdict is awaited.

#### Import of Spices

5160. SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether some of the spices are being imported at present;